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# Enhancing ESL Learners' Vocabulary Learning of Metaphorically-used Words

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**Abstract**—The present study examined the role of awareness of metaphor in learners' lexical learning. A total of 35 intermediate English as second language (ESL) students participated in this study. Participants were randomly divided into two small groups. One ( $N = 17$ ) served as the control group and the other ( $N = 18$ ) as the experimental group. Both groups were taught several metaphorically-used expressions over a period of six weeks. The groups differed in that the experimental group received systematic and explicit explanations of the source and target relationships that underlie metaphor, while the control group did not receive such instruction. Pre-tests and Post-tests were administered in order to measure lexical understanding of metaphorical items. Two journal entries were given out to students at two different intervals throughout the teaching period in order to tap into their views of how their lexical understanding of metaphor was changing, or not changing, over time. Results revealed that those students who received systematic and explicit explanations on the concrete experiential basis of metaphor showed greater understanding of metaphorical meanings, and seemed more inclined to unpacking their metaphoricity by looking at what lies behind them.

**Index Terms**—lexical learning, metaphor, metaphor awareness, cognitive linguistics

## I. INTRODUCTION

It is commonplace that vocabulary learning is central to the development of learners' English language skills. Its centrality has driven burgeoning research into several areas such as the interplay between vocabulary and incidental learning (e.g. Huckin & Coady, 1999; Wode, 1999), vocabulary learning and extensive reading (e.g. Nation, 2015), the rate of vocabulary learning and retention (e.g. Waring & Takaki, 2003), and the role of collaboration in vocabulary learning (e.g. Dobao, 2014), just to mention a few.

With the proliferation of Corpus Linguistics and popularity of the lexical approach in the 1990's, the centrality of lexis has had unprecedented implications for language learning and teaching. The inclusion and implementation of the lexical approach in our teaching practices has enabled us to view language teaching and learning from a different angle. Unlike traditional teaching approaches that have widely promoted a grammar-lexis dichotomy, the lexical approach puts forward the idea that although grammar and lexis are intertwined, lexis is fundamental in creating meaning, and grammar is subservient to lexis. In this way, it is understood that language is grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalised grammar (Lewis, 1993). The immediate pedagogical implication of this principle is that more time should be spent on helping learners develop their stock of phrases, and less time on the teaching of rules and patterns.

As far as the teaching of vocabulary is concerned, language teachers very often have to make momentous, and sometimes difficult, decisions about what in a word should be taught. Nation's (2001) description of what is involved in a word highlights three key elements of lexical knowledge: form, meaning and use. Not only do these elements have implications for what learners should be learning about a new lexical item, but also for what should be taught to promote successful lexical learning. Additionally, several other scholars (e.g. Milton, 2009; Nassaji, 2004; Nation, 2001; Read, 2000) have distinguished two fundamental dimensions of vocabulary knowledge - vocabulary breadth and vocabulary depth. The former, also referred to as vocabulary size, alludes to the number of words a person knows (Milton, 2009; Nation, 2001). The latter, sometimes known as quality of vocabulary knowledge, makes reference to several aspects of word knowledge that are central to adequate and successful use of lexicon in communication (Nowbakht, Moinzadeh, & Dabaghi, 2015, p. 249). Some of these aspects include knowledge of spelling, pronunciation, register, frequency, collocational patterns and meaning.

English language teachers generally show considerable expertise in teaching these features quite successfully. However, there are certain intricate features of language that tend to cause great barriers to the effective delivery of vocabulary instruction. One of these concerns itself with meaning, especially metaphorical meanings of words.

Dealing with meaning usually seems unproblematic to language teachers. However, as Guo (2007, p. 153) points out, the adequate and successful teaching strategies to teach metaphorical meanings to second language learners are always difficult to come by. Different teachers use different strategies to the presentation of the metaphorical or, in general, the figurative content of lexis. While some are in search of approaches to introduce learners to the systematicity of metaphorical meanings, others continue to rely solely on traditional ways which view meaning as arbitrary.

The present study is grounded on the view that a great deal of the metaphorical content of lexis is motivated by systematic patterns of thought that are rooted in our bodily experiences. This is in line with the tenets of the theory of conceptual metaphor (CM) from Cognitive Linguistics (CL), approach which underpins the present study.

## II. LEXICAL LEARNING, METAPHOR AND AWARENESS OF METAPHOR

It is commonly accepted that lexical learning is a central part of mastering a second language (Schmitt, 2008). Several researchers (e.g. Nation, 2001; Nation, 2015; Nowbakht et al., 2015) have acknowledged the centrality of vocabulary to communication and understanding each other. Some have gone further to state that 'lexis is the core or heart of language' (Lewis, 1993, p. 89). Moreover, Wilkins (1972) pointed out that while little meaning can be conveyed without grammar, no meaning at all can be conveyed without vocabulary.

The nature of words can be of two forms: literal or figurative (Deignan, 1999). Each of these categories has their own features. In Truth-Conditional semantics, words with literal content are statements that refer to phenomena that are true with respect to reality (Carston, 2011). By contrast, figurative words are those that seem semantically defective in that they are not truthful in relation to the world. From a psycholinguistic point of view, literal and figurative language are thought to be processed differently. Literally-intended words are said to be processed automatically while the processing of metaphorically-used words is presumably slower (Glucksberg, 2003). Irrespective of the possible processing differences, what is important to stress is that sufficient evidence has demonstrated that our lexicon is largely figurative, particularly metaphorical, hence its centrality to language teaching and learning.

The significance of vocabulary to second language pedagogy has given rise to several theories, techniques and teaching approaches aimed at achieving good vocabulary learning. Traditional theories of vocabulary learning suggest that frequency of encounters with words is an essential factor affecting learners' lexical development (Anderson, 1982; Hulstijn, 2001). Elgort and Warren (2014) point out that this frequency view of vocabulary learning also accounts for context word learning in texts. This means that greater occurrence of a word within the context of a text is likely to affect lexical learning. This frequency theory of word learning may prove useful for literally-used words, not for metaphorically-intended ones. This is particularly because literal meanings tend to be much more concrete, salient and familiar than metaphorical meanings (Giora & Fein, 1999). This suggests that greater occurrence of a literal word in a sentence or text is likely to enhance its saliency which may therefore help learners develop more familiarity with its meaning in context. However, this frequency-based view of word learning may not be of any use to learners or readers having multiple encounters with metaphorically-used words. Giora and Fein (1999) point out that metaphoric words are more abstract and less salient than literal ones, thus imposing a cognitive burden on learners (Kalyuga & Kalyuga, 2008).

Another widely-used approach to vocabulary learning rests on the belief that the context within which the word occurs affects lexical learning (Elgort & Warren, 2014, p. 367). This belief assumes that a greater number of contextual clues would help learners guess the meaning of unknown words from context. There are, however, several studies that point to the fact that words that are easier to guess are also easier to forget (e.g. Borovsky, Kutas, & Elman, 2013; Frishkoff, Collins-Thompson, & Perfetti, 2008). The conflicting issue with the view of guessing meaning from context is that availability of contextual clues may assist learners in guessing or inferring meaning of unknown words, strategy that can support word retention in the short term, but not necessarily lead to vocabulary learning in the long term (Elgort & Warren, 2014).

Although research into the two above-mentioned approaches to vocabulary learning, the frequency-based and contextual clue views, has not overtly indicated their suitability and adaptability to the learning of words with metaphorical content, one could infer that, based on their basic tenets and assumptions, the learning of metaphorical vocabulary is by no means constrained to the number of encounters learners may have with an unknown word or the contextual affordances to guess or infer its meaning in context. Learning metaphorical words requires an approach that enables learners to understand the systematicities behind the relationships between the different domains involved in the metaphor.

A relatively recent theory that has sparked the interest of scholars wishing to investigate vocabulary teaching and learning in systematic ways is Cognitive Linguistics (CL). CL is not a single unified theory; rather, it is a multidisciplinary approach to language and language learning that comprises a set of different approaches. One of the most of fundamental and well-developed approaches to language is what is known as the 'Conceptual Metaphor Theory' (CMT) (Evans & Green, 2006).

To properly understand the origins of the theory along with its contributions, it is of great importance to recall what the context was like within which the theory emerged. Prior to the emergence of the CMT, there was the belief, primarily promoted and supported by the philosophy of language, poetry and literature, that metaphor was a property of, and very often a problem for, language (Katz, Cacciari, Gibbs, & Turner, 1998). In this way, metaphor was commonly referred to as a linguistic device primarily serving ornamental and decorative functions in language, particularly in poetry (Steinberg, 1999). This relatively narrow view clearly showed some of the limitations and constraints of metaphor as being linked solely to a feature of language.

Challenged by the proponents of the CMT, such constrained belief was taken a step further. Lakoff and Johnson (1980a) pointed out that metaphor is not just a matter of language; metaphor is pervasive in everyday activities in life

and permeates not only language but also thought. In other words, they put forward the idea that metaphor is by no means a device of poetic imagination and rhetorical flourish; that is, it is not a characteristic of language alone. On the contrary, and most importantly, it was pointed out that people can't get along well without metaphor as it is pervasive tool that manifests itself in both how people talk how they think and structure concepts in their minds.

This is precisely the central idea that forms the basis of the CMT. As put forward by Lakoff and Johnson (1980a, 1980b, 1999) and Evans and Green (2006), the central tenet of the CMT can be summarized as a theory in contemporary cognitive science which regards metaphor as a significant constituent of human cognition. What's interesting to highlight about this view, though, is that metaphor, from a CMT perspective, does not simply reside in the individual's mind. In other words, it is not a phenomenon that originates in the mind and finishes in the individual's speech. On the contrary, metaphor arises from our early physical, bodily and sensorimotor experiences with the outside world. This is precisely what forms the basis of the CMT; that metaphor is not simply a stylistic or ornamental device of language; rather, it is something that permeates the ways in which individuals reason and conceptualise the world. What this suggests is that all the reasoning we do and language we express, which are rooted in our minds, have emerged from our early experiences in the world, particularly from our sensorimotor and bodily interactions with the concrete reality.

Pedagogical applications of the CMT to the teaching of metaphorical vocabulary have been primarily in the direction of raising language learners' awareness of the underlying patterns of metaphors. Several studies have shown that knowledge of conceptual metaphor and of its patterning has a positive effect on students' ability to acquire vocabulary (e.g. Beréndi, Csábi, & Kövecses, 2008; Boers, 2004; Charteris-Black, 2000; Deignan, Gabrys, & Solska, 1997; Gao & Meng, 2010; Kövecses & Szabo, 1996). For example, Gao and Meng (2010) investigated the extent to which an enhanced awareness of metaphor could help English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners acquire and retain vocabulary. The investigation is a traditional experimental study in which a control and an experimental group were utilised throughout the course of the experiment. Each of the groups received a different kind of teaching intervention. The control group went through, what the authors have labelled, 'The Traditional Teaching Model of Metaphorical Expressions' while the experimental group went through 'The Teaching Model Focusing on the Enhancement of Metaphor Awareness'. The former involved the grouping and presentation of metaphorical words according to their pragmatic and functional usages. The latter involved the grouping and presentation of metaphorical words according to a shared metaphorical theme which was "to enhance the learners' metaphor awareness" (2010). This methodological procedure, in which chunking and presenting words on the basis of common metaphorical themes, seems to be facilitative of and conducive to the development of metaphor awareness to learn metaphorical language.

Having adopted a similar methodology, the present study is grounded on the premise that an enhanced awareness of metaphor contributes to language learners' development of lexical learning of metaphorical words.

### III. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The methodology utilised in this study falls within what has been traditionally called mixed methods (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Creswell, 2003). The rationale for using a mixed methodology lies in the benefits of what Dawson (2009) calls 'triangulation'. The advantages, in her view, of using and combining two seemingly distinct research paradigms relate to how the weaknesses in both quantitative and qualitative research can be counteracted. In a similar vein, Creswell (2003) points out that the combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches in a study can yield much richer data and therefore enable the researcher to look at the phenomenon of study from different interrelated perspectives.

In the present study, the inclusion and combination of these two methodological approaches became manifest in the methods utilized for data collection and the ways in which the data were analysed. As described in 4.1, two methods were used in the data collection process of this study. The quantitative tool was a vocabulary test while the qualitative instruments comprised journal entries.

The data for this study derives mainly from two data sets. One is a vocabulary test aimed at measuring learners' understanding of metaphorically-used words. The test was administered before and after the teaching intervention period.

In regard to the composition of the test, it had three items that attempted to measure students' understanding of lexical metaphors in different ways. The first two items were intended to measure learners' understanding of single metaphorical words while the last item focused on idioms. The first section was a multiple-choice section that included 10 lexical items presented in the context of sentences. The lexical items were in bold to deliberately draw students' attention to them. For each sentence students had to indicate whether the word in bold was 'literal' or 'metaphorical'. Most of the lexical items were single words, others were multi-word units, especially complex prepositions. The second section was a fill-in the gaps activity, while the last was a short-answer section. It is worth noting that the same test was administered before and after the intervention period to both groups. As a result, none of the metaphorically-used lexical items in the test were utilized in the teaching intervention in order to avoid familiarity with the items being a possible influence on learners' scores in the posttest. To ensure that pretest scores did not influence the results of the posttest, no feedback whatsoever was given to students until the end of the intervention program.

The other data set was a journal entry that was given to both groups, controlled and experimental, on two different occasions during the teaching intervention. The journal entry had two questions that were intended to tap into learners' views of the possible impact of the teaching on their perceptions of learning metaphorical vocabulary. The questions in journal entry 1 were as follows:

1. How easy or difficult has it been for you to understand metaphorical words?
2. In what ways have the teaching sessions helped you better understand metaphorical words?

The questions in journal entry 2 were similar. Only one question differed with respect to the questions in journal entry 1:

1. In what ways have the teaching sessions helped you better understand metaphorical words?
2. Have your perceptions of learning metaphorical words changed over time?

#### A. *Participants*

35 ESL students participated in this study. Students participated voluntarily in a five-week teaching period, which would focus on vocabulary learning. All 35 participants were given a consent form that provided a brief description of the study and information on the confidentiality of their identity. The participants were all upper-intermediate students undertaking an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) class, and came from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds whose first languages (L1s) were Korean, Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Spanish and Italian.

For the purpose of the teaching intervention period, the total group of participants was randomly divided into two groups of 17 and 18. Students were invited to attend a one-hour session, after their normal class timetable, twice a week. The teacher-researcher met each of the groups on the same days at different times.

#### B. *Data Analysis*

As already mentioned, two data sets were utilised in this study where one, the vocabulary tests, was quantitative while the other, the two different interviews, was qualitative. As far as the quantitative data set, the two vocabulary tests were marked and the scores pertaining to each of the test items were entered in an Excel Spreadsheet in order to compute basic statistical values, namely Mean and Standard Deviation, and also to represent the data in graphs. Additionally, for the sake of statistical significance, the results of both the experimental and control groups were compared by conducting an independent-samples t-test.

The analysis of the journal entries was assisted and facilitated by QSR NVivo 10, a software used for qualitative analysis. Once entries were entered into NVivo, the data was coded and analysed for recurrent patterns. These patterns were further analysed in search of emerging themes in the data.

#### C. *The Teaching Intervention Period*

Once the students were recruited and randomly divided into two groups, they all underwent a five-week teaching period. There were two one-hour sessions each week. In total, participants were exposed to 12 hours of teaching throughout the intervention. The control and experimental groups received different forms of instruction. Although both groups were exposed to the same vocabulary items and idioms throughout the teaching period, students' attention was drawn to different semantic aspects of words. The teaching sessions for the control group focused mainly on three aspects:

1. The use of dictionaries and understanding of dictionary meaning;
2. The difference between literal and metaphorical meanings of words;
3. The identification of metaphorical meanings of words in sentences.

The instruction for the experimental group followed systematic teaching of different elements underpinning metaphorical words. Such systematic procedure can be observed in the following table.

TABLE 1:  
DESCRIPTION OF THE METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURE IMPLEMENTED OVER THE FIVE-WEEK PERIOD

Week 1	Session 1: ➤ Pretest administered
	Session 2: ➤ Use of dictionary ➤ Develop familiarity with different dictionary meanings
Week 2	Session 3: ➤ Use of dictionary ➤ Identification of literal and metaphorical meanings of words
	Session 4: ➤ Familiarity with terms (conceptual metaphor, concrete domain and abstract domain) ➤ Definition of terms - conceptual metaphors and to distinguish concrete from abstract domains ➤ <i>Journal 1 for both groups (control and experimental)</i>
Week 3	Session 5: ➤ Session 4 procedure was replicated
	Session 6: ➤ Students are introduced to a variety of conceptual metaphors
Week 4	Session 7: ➤ Students are presented with metaphorical words in sentences and are asked to judge their metaphoricality ➤ Students discuss in groups the above lexical items
	Session 8: ➤ Students are presented with metaphorical words in sentences and are asked to judge their metaphoricality ➤ Students discuss in groups the above lexical items
Week 5	Session 9: ➤ Posttest is administered
	Session 10: ➤ <i>Journal 2 for both groups</i> ➤ Feedback and test scores are provided and discussed with students

The sessions were oriented towards raising learners’ awareness of the underlying relationships between the source and target domain of a metaphor. Those lexical items and idioms which did not have the traditional form of a conceptual metaphor as *A is B*, where B is the source while A is the target domain, were also presented to the experimental group as being metaphorically motivated by the same experiential and sensorimotor principles underlying the traditional *A is B* conceptual metaphor.

The following sections report on the findings from the vocabulary tests as well as the responses to the journal entries.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Having analysed the test data, one can observe that the teaching intervention program influenced learners’ lexical learning in the experimental group. The figure below shows the pretest and posttest results of the control group.

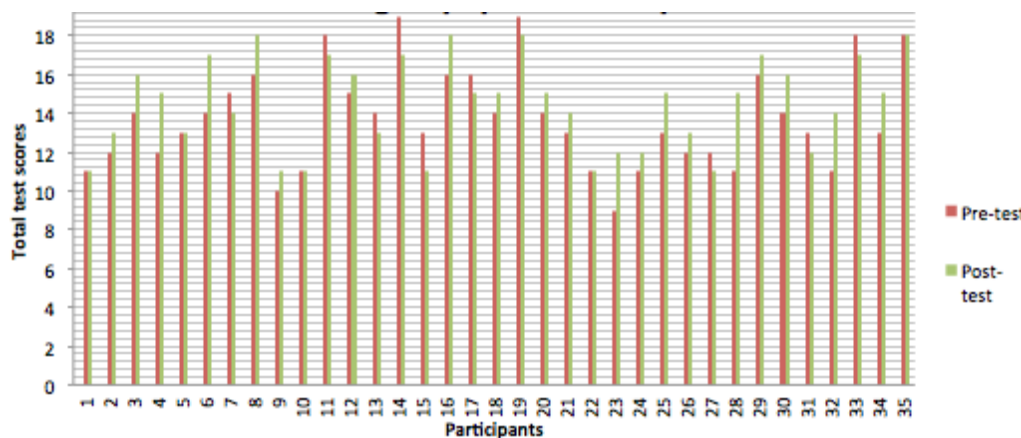


Figure 1: Pretest and posttest results of control group

A closer look at the data reveals some improvement in the scores. The average values of the posttest scores (M=17.3) are greater than the central tendency in the pretest (M=14.9). Although the learners in the control group did not receive explicit instruction of the lexical and conceptual systematicities underpinning conceptual metaphors, they showed differences in their test performance.

A brief summary of the findings by describing the general tendencies is observed in Table 2 which shows the most commonly used measures of central tendency.

TABLE 2:  
PRETEST AND POSTTEST MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE CONTROL GROUP

Measures	Pretest	Posttest
Count	35	35
Mean	13.7	14.4
SD	2.6	2.3
Mode	11	15

The table provides a clearer overview of the variations in the students' test scores. Although these are rather self-explanatory, it is worth highlighting that the most frequently occurring score in the posttest was 15, and only 11 in the pretest. Despite the absence of an explicit treatment of conceptual metaphor and its underpinning systematicities, this clearly points to a developed capacity in the learners' understanding of metaphor.

The application of a systematic procedure aimed at drawing learners' attention to the underlying domains of metaphor had an impact on learners' overall understanding of metaphorical words. This is reflected in Figure 2 which shows an overall improvement in test scores for most students.

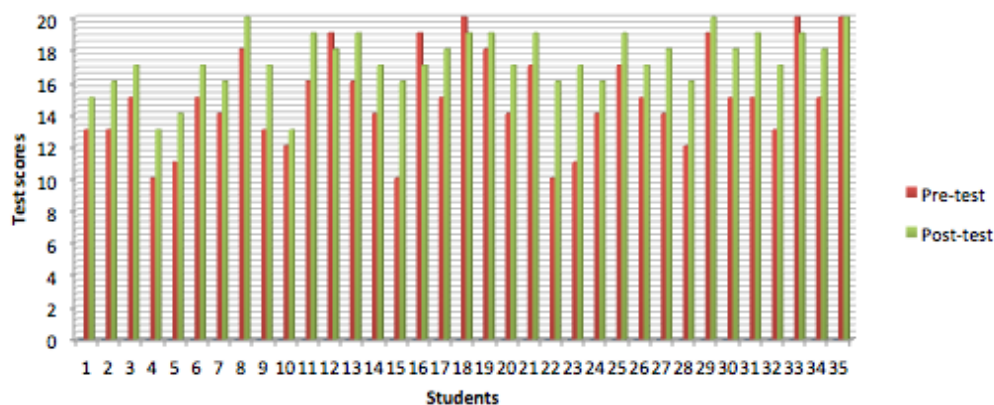


Figure 2: Pretest and posttest results of experimental group

Looking more closely at the data in the above figure, one can observe that just a few learners (12, 16 and 18) scored higher in the pretest than in the posttest. Although it is unknown to the researcher in this study what contributed to this opposite trend in comparison with the rest of the learners, one could speculate that the critical factor contributing to learners' overall improvement of lexical metaphor understanding was not familiarity with the same test used twice (pretest and posttest).

The table below provides a synthesis of descriptive measures of central tendencies in the experimental group's analysed data.

TABLE 3:  
PRETEST AND POSTTEST MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Measures	Pretest	Posttest
Count	35	35
Mean	14.9	17.3
SD	2.9	1.8
Mode	15	17

First, of interest is to observe that 15 was the score that occurred most frequently in the pretest in this group, while only 11 in the control group's pretest scores. Even more interesting is to see that the control group's posttest score of most frequency was 15, which was the frequent score in the pretest results of the experimental group. This table also shows another interesting tendency, that which relates to the average distance of the scores from the mean. The SD, for example, in the pretest results was almost 3, while in the posttest 1.8, thus indicating that test results after the teaching intervention period were more homogeneous, and that less variation, or average distance, was observed in relation to the mean.

In looking at the average scores, it can be seen that the variation between pretest and posttest results was greater in the experimental group than in the control group. This is indicative of a possible influence of the approach to metaphor on learners' understanding of metaphorical lexis. To determine whether or not the increase of the experimental group in the posttest scores was statistically significant, a paired-samples t-test was computed on the data. As Dörnyei (2007, p. 215) states "this procedure examines different results obtained from the same group". In this way, such statistical test was carried out to compare the test scores of students in the experimental group before and after the teaching intervention period. There was a significant difference in scores for the pretest ( $M=14.91$ ;  $SD=2.95$ ) and posttest ( $M=17.31$ ;  $SD=1.81$ ),  $t(7.4833) = -2.40$ ,  $p < .05$ .



In an attempt to compare the scores of the group that underwent teaching intervention with those of the control group, an independent-sample t-test was computed on the data sets. A summary of the statistics can be seen in Table 4.

TABLE 4:  
RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT-SAMPLE T-TEST

Mean <sub>a</sub> –Mean <sub>b</sub>	t	df	P	one-tailed	<.0001
-2.8571	-5.67	68		two-tailed	<.0001

The results of the statistics computed on the scores of the control group’s posttest ( $M=14.457$ ;  $SD=2.368$ ), and the scores of the experimental group’s posttest ( $M=17.313$ ;  $SD=1.811$ ),  $t(-5.67)$ , showed great statistical significance at  $p<0.001$ . This significance points to the potential impact of an awareness-raising tool on the teaching and learning of metaphorical lexis. It seems that drawing learners’ attention to the underlying metaphorical patterns of words impacted students’ capacity to identify the metaphoricality involved in words, to discriminate literal from metaphorical meanings, and to better comprehend their meanings, which in turn contributed to their overall lexical learning.

Aside from the numerical improvement as evidenced by the vocabulary tests, learners’ reflections recorded in their written entries shed some light on the developmental changes in students’ views and understandings of metaphor in relation to vocabulary.

V. STUDENTS’ JOURNAL REFLECTIONS

Analysis of learners’ reflections through the journal entries showed an interesting development in the students’ perceptions of metaphor, and of its relevance to vocabulary learning. Although the control and experimental groups dealt with metaphor differently during the intervention period, it is worth noting that several similarities were found in their comments, which are reflected in the following themes that emerged from the data. The following are the two most salient themes in the first journal to both groups.

1. Complexity of some lexical items
2. The value of dictionaries

A. Theme 1: ‘Complexity of Some Lexical Items’

A rather common underlying assumption in students’ responses points in the direction that the difficulty in understanding metaphor in English lies in the nature of words, where some, according to students, are more difficult than others. This is observed in the following comments:

‘I think it’s difficult for me to understand metaphors simply because some words in English are more difficult, those words that are more similar that my own language are more easier to understand and understand the metaphors too’ (Student 5, Journal 1, Control group).

The difficulty to understand metaphors is associated with the complexity of some words in English. A similar observation is made by another learner:

‘In my language there are lots of metaphor words, and I know them, I can use them and remember all of them, but in English is different. I think English has more words than in my own language so it’s more difficult to learn all the words and remember the literal or metaphor meanings’ (Student 8, Journal 1, Experimental group).

Reference is made to the metaphorical words the learner knows in his L1. The complexity in learning and remembering metaphors in English is attributed to the English language having a greater lexicon. This perception seems to be held by another student who provides a specific example of how English seems to be a lexically richer language than his own.

‘In my language I only know one word for walk, which is camminare, but in my English class I learnt so many different ways like pace, stroll, stride, walk, and others, so I believe it’s more difficult to learn the metaphors because of the specific vocabulary in English’ (Student 12, Journal 1, Experimental group).

In answering the second question in the journal, two themes emerged from the analysis of responses. One was the learners’ overall intention to know more about metaphor, and the other was in relation to the centrality of vocabulary to the overall improvement of language skills.

B. Theme 2: ‘the Value of Dictionaries’

By the time the experimental group wrote their first journal (week 2, session 4), students had been instructed mainly on two key things: first, learners were encouraged to pay close attention to how literal and metaphorical meanings are presented in dictionaries, and, second, key concepts relating to conceptual metaphor were introduced to them. Acknowledging the importance of these two procedures, some learners commented that:

‘I think that using the dictionary in a good way is really important because we are not used to it’ (Student 8, Journal 1, Experimental group).

Coming to acknowledge the value of using dictionaries well is important as most language learners’ main resource for meaning, at least in classroom contexts, is the dictionary. Similar comments are found in entries from the control group where one stated that:

*'I always thought that using a dictionary was a really simple thing, it's not difficult actually but we need to know that some meanings are more common than others and maybe the least use words have more metaphor meaning' (Student 6, Journal 1, Control group).*

It seems that student 6 is beginning to understand that some word meanings are more salient than others. However, his perception of the presence of metaphorical meanings in the least frequently used words is in opposition to the very pervasive nature of metaphor in language and thought (Evans & Green, 2006; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980a, 1980b; Tyler & Evans, 2003).

Close attention to dictionary meanings enabled students to not only differentiate between literal and metaphorical, but to appreciate the examples provided in dictionary entries as "windows to other metaphors". The following student indicated that:

*"If I pay a lot of attention to the meanings in the dictionary I can see that some meanings are more literal and some not. I can see the same thing in the examples, and these help me to think about other sentences of metaphor in my own language" (Student 9, Journal 1, Experimental group).*

Another similar comment is found in student 11 entry:

*"When I was looking for the word path in the dictionary I understood that for example 'my path to success' is a metaphor because a path is way to somewhere" (Student 14, Journal 1, Experimental group).*

Both these learners seem to value the systematic use of dictionaries in having access to literal and metaphor meanings. Not only has the dictionary provided knowledge of word 'meaning' but of use.

*"I think these teaching classes so far can help me to learn about the meanings that I can get from the dictionary and how can I use them, this is important for us" (Student 4, Journal 1, Control group).*

In the experimental group a similar observation was made by student 17:

*"One thing that I have learnt in this class is that the dictionary can give me a lot of things, not just the pronunciation and meaning but also the real examples of the way we can use the metaphor words in real life" (Student 17, Journal 1, Experimental group).*

The learner's comment relates closely to the elements of lexical knowledge involved in a word. Nation (2001) indicated that learning a word entails learning its form, meaning and use. It is interesting that the learner has come to realize that the example sentences in dictionary entries provide some knowledge base of how certain words, especially metaphorical, can be used in different contexts.

By the time students wrote their second journal entry (week 5, session 10), the nature of their responses reflected the ways in which the teaching sessions had changed their perceptions of metaphor. The emerging themes in students' second journal are as follows:

1. *Learn and experience metaphors*
2. *Metaphors everywhere*

### C. *Theme 1: 'Learn and Experience Metaphors'*

The first question in journal 2 related to the ways in which the teaching sessions helped students have a better understanding of metaphor. Students in the control group generally commented that metaphor was important, and that they needed to learn more about them.

*"I think I learned that it's important to identify metaphorical and literal words for our understanding of messages, like written or oral, and that I have to learn more about metaphor" (Student 6, Journal 2, Control group).*

Since one of the aims of the sessions for the control group focused on differentiating literal from metaphorical meanings as well as their identification in sentences, this student seems certain that our use of language can be literal or metaphorical, and that being able to distinguish them is important for comprehension. That the student expresses a wish to learn more about metaphor is a good indication of the learner's recognition of how central metaphor is to his lexicon and, perhaps, overall language skills.

The systematic and explicit exposure to patterns underlying conceptual metaphor seems to have enabled students in the experimental group to develop an understanding that metaphor is not just a linguistic phenomenon, but one that bases its essence and nature on how we experience the world and interact with it. Our own experiences and interactions with the world are central to how our conceptual system is shaped.

*"I remember that in my primary and high school lessons I study some metaphors so when I was learning about metaphor in this classes it came to my mind all the metaphors in my language that I learned when I was young" (Student 13, Journal 2, Experimental group).*

Although the learner does not make explicit mention of what has been learnt in the intervention sessions, it is interesting how he intersects his prior learning experiences of metaphor with his current experience in the teaching sessions. A more clearly articulated observation is seen in the following comment:

*"the classes are very useful because I can understand that the literal meanings are connected with the metaphorical meanings, that the metaphor we use come from the way we think about the world" (Student 18, Journal 2, Experimental group).*

Another learner in the same experimental group made a very clear observation on how her perceptions about metaphor changed over time:

*“At the beginning of the classes I didn’t know the reason of learning metaphor because I thought it was a vocabulary class, but after all the classes, practice and texts that we used in the class I realise that I use more metaphors than what I believe in the past and that we need to have more experience with the metaphor for we can learn more” (Student 15, Journal 2, Experimental group).*

These comments reveal interesting aspects of how the teaching sessions have shaped learners’ understanding of metaphor. Their views of metaphorical language are no longer confined to arbitrary aspects of language, but evidence developed reasoning and an enhanced awareness of the experiential basis of metaphor and of the role of metaphor in language, and in particular, in vocabulary learning.

#### *D. Theme 2: ‘Metaphors Everywhere’*

Referring back to a learner’s comment (student 8, experimental group) where he expressed that “English has more words than in my language” and this made it more difficult to learn and remember metaphors in English, his perception of metaphor has now changed:

*“I think so, my perceptions have changed in this time because I understand that metaphors are everywhere and that they are not difficult. We just have to be more aware about their existing, and I think that every language have metaphors and all people speak and think in metaphor ways” (Student 8, Journal 2, Experimental group).*

This reflection evidences the ways in which the teaching sessions have shaped the learner’s understanding of metaphor. Besides the learner’s explicit acknowledgement of change in his perceptions, the student seems to now understand that metaphor is a pervasive phenomenon in all languages. A rather similar comment is made by another student in the experimental group.

*“Yes I think I have changed my perceptions for different reasons, one because now I understand very well that all the language is metaphoric, and that every culture and language has metaphors, and also that all the texts that people read also have a lot of metaphor. I think that when I read next time I will try to find the metaphors” (Student 13, Journal 2, Experimental group).*

The ubiquity of metaphor is acknowledged and appraised by a student who makes a rather critical observation on the meanings conveyed through metaphor:

*“my views are changed and I will try to use this change in my views in teaching my students, I will try to use materials with metaphors and teach my students that metaphors are everywhere, in the newspapers, books and coursebooks of whatever topic” (Student 19, Journal 2, Experimental group).*

Unlike the clear changes observed in the perceptions of metaphor held by students in the experimental group, learners in the control did not specifically point to a change in their views; rather, general comments on the learning of metaphorical words were made. The following quote is a clear example of this:

*“I believe I have to learn more metaphors and I really think I learn more in this course. Maybe in the future I can learn more because it’s a good way for expanding my vocabulary and for understanding people and other texts” (Student 7, Journal 2, Control group).*

Of a similar kind is the observation and response given by the following learner:

*“I believe that I have changed my thinking, I think about the metaphors as really useful for improving my reading skills and before I didn’t think this way. And I also change that the vocabulary in the dictionaries can also give you a lot of meanings about the metaphor word, and this I didn’t really know” (Student 5, Journal 2, Control group).*

As can be observed, students in the control group did not clearly address the second question in journal 2. No mention is made of whether (and if) their perceptions of metaphor changed over time. Their comments, just like in previous responses, show a rather strong inclination to only relating metaphor to vocabulary, but not particularly to the experiential basis of metaphorical language and thinking.

The nature of responses by students in the experimental group reveals clearly the powerful ways in which the teaching intervention period have shaped learners’ perceptions, understandings and positions towards metaphor, especially in relation to the learning vocabulary.

All in all, the analysis of the students’ voice as evidenced by samples of their journal responses, especially those by students in the experimental group, shed some interesting light on the possible benefits of a metaphor awareness-raising teaching tool. This is ratified by several researchers (e.g. Boers, 2004; Charteris-Black, 2000; Deignan et al., 1997) who have shown that an enhanced knowledge of metaphors has a positive influence on students’ capacity to acquire metaphorical vocabulary.

## VI. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This paper set out to examine ESL learners’ learning and understanding of metaphorically-used words. In particular, this study was designed to determine the effects of metaphor awareness on students’ improvement of lexical learning. From a quantitative perspective, some of the most significant findings to emerge from this study are that the experimental group’s test scores were statistically significant and, therefore, higher than what the learners scored in the pretest, thus indicating a possible influence of the metaphor-awareness teaching intervention on the students’ ability to understand and learn metaphorical vocabulary. From a qualitative stance, students’ responses to journal entries revealed

not only the complex ways in which learners engaged with metaphor throughout the teaching period, but the changes and development of their views and understandings of metaphor in relation to vocabulary learning.

The findings of this investigation have significant implications for both the understanding of metaphor in English language teaching and learning and the teaching of metaphor in diverse language teaching and learning contexts. Firstly, the students' voice in the first journal was quite clear in reiterating the observed difficulty of metaphorical language. This points to the necessity to implement approaches to vocabulary teaching that deal systematically with the experiential basis of metaphor, thus enabling learners to understand metaphor as an everyday phenomenon of language and thought, not as a complex lexical or literary process. Secondly, in the process of implementation, English language teachers must make informed decisions as to how metaphorical lexis will be introduced to students. In general, figurative language, being metaphor the most pervasive form, has traditionally been pedagogically dealt with as fixed expressions that are learnt mainly through rote learning and memorisation (Chen & Lai, 2012, p. 239). For this reason, it is pivotal that metaphor be treated systematically rather than in arbitrary ways. To see this crystallised, it is important to call for a change in attitudes and practices towards the teaching of vocabulary. Although the successful introduction and wide acceptance of the lexical approach re-shaped our views and understandings of what is involved in learning a word, much of what we see in English language textbooks and find in teachers' pedagogical practices reflects traditional approaches to vocabulary teaching, which, to a great extent, continue to view it as incidental to the overall purpose of language teaching.

#### APPENDIX A

##### Vocabulary test

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_

This test has three sections. You have 30 minutes to complete the test.

I. Read the sentences below and decide if the word in bold is used literally or metaphorically in the sentence.

1. Students **flooded** on to the counter to get discounted tickets for the field trip.
  - Metaphorical
  - Literal
  - I don't know
2. Italy is a fabulous country. Venice is definitely **worth** a whole week.
  - Metaphorical
  - Literal
  - I don't know
3. I went to visit a **close** friend of mine last weekend.
  - Metaphorical
  - Literal
  - I don't know
4. I've got my hands **full** at the moment. I don't think I can do two jobs at the moment.
  - Metaphorical
  - Literal
  - I don't know
5. My dad believes that it's always important to **dive** right into the problem.
  - Metaphorical
  - Literal
  - I don't know
6. I didn't know what to say in front of the audience. I was completely **lost** for words.
  - Metaphorical
  - Literal
  - I don't know
7. We've been going through some touch moments. We need a **shoulder** to cry on.
  - Metaphorical
  - Literal
  - I don't know
8. When I was at the party I felt completely **out of** place.
  - Metaphorical
  - Literal
  - I don't know
9. Hey, Paul! I couldn't take your call because I was **in the middle of** something.
  - Metaphorical
  - Literal
  - I don't know

10. There's another call for applications to exchange programs in Europe. It's certainly a **golden** opportunity for undergraduate students.

- Metaphorical
- Literal
- I don't know

II. Fill in the gaps: Use one of the following words in each space to complete the sentences. Please note there are **four** distracters in this group of words.

fish – fuel - ways - heart - brakes - dream - paths - steam - red light

1. Unfortunately I missed my friend's ride to university this morning so I had to do it under my own \_\_\_\_\_.
2. There was nothing in common between us, so it was a good decision to cancel the wedding. He was certainly not the man after my own \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Buying cloths for no reason? I got tired of doing that. I can now save more because I have put the \_\_\_\_\_ on spending.
4. I didn't like him at first. He seemed a real cold \_\_\_\_\_.
5. I believe their marriage has come to an end. Someone told they've gone their separate \_\_\_\_\_.

III. Idioms: What is your understanding of the following idioms **in bold**? Write down your ideas of what these idioms mean. You **don't** have to write long answers.

1. If you want to do it, I am not going **to stand in your way**.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The police **turned a blind eye to it**.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. They stayed together **through thick and thin**.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. He's **running out of steam**.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. I am **well on the road to recovery**.  
\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B

**Journal Entry 1**

Please reflect on the following two questions and write as much as you can.

1. How easy or difficult has it been for you to understand metaphorical words?
2. In what ways have the teaching sessions helped you better understand metaphorical words?

APPENDIX C

**Journal Entry 2**

Please reflect on the following two questions and write as much as you can.

1. In what ways have the teaching sessions helped you better understand metaphorical words?
2. Have your perceptions of learning metaphorical words changed over time?

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# ESL Student Perceptions of VLE Effectiveness at a University in South Korea

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**Abstract**—The purpose of this study is to determine students' perception of the advantages, effects on language skills, suggestions for improvement, and limitations regarding the use of a VLE (Blackboard) and their differences according to gender, year, number of Blackboard courses taken, and computer literacy. The respondents of this study were 686 randomly selected university students enrolled in English classes at the University of Suwon in South Korea. An adapted survey questionnaire consisting of 33 items was administered to the students. The Mean was used to determine the students' perceptions in the four areas followed by t-test and ANOVA to determine the differences in the students' perceptions. The results showed that the students had a somewhat disagree rating in the areas of Advantages, Language, and Limitations and somewhat agree rating in the area of Suggestions. Significant differences were found in the students' perceptions in the four areas when grouped according to gender and computer literacy; a significant difference was found in the area of Limitations when grouped according to year; and no significant differences were found according to number of Blackboard courses taken.

**Index Terms**—E-learning, perceptions, effectiveness, LMS, VLE, blackboard, ESL

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the area of educational technology, or e-learning, many different names are in use for the software tools which help to manage the learning process (Ahmed, et al., 2012, p. 88). Although some confusion exists with regard to the definition of such tools (JISC, 2006, p. 4), they generally combine some or all of these features and functions: communication tools e.g. email; collaboration tools, e.g. forums; creation of online courses and content; online assessment; and integration with school management information systems, e.g. student registration information (BECTA, 2004). Various commercial tools are available and where not referred to by specific name throughout this paper we use Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to refer to the e-learning platform.

A full year of ESL classes is mandatory for all Korean university students. The prevalence of 'English Fever' in Korea has meant massive amounts of money are spent on learning it but with relatively poor scores achieved (Park, 2009, p. 51). The high education standards and student population density in Korea 'make investments in e-learning very cost-effective' (Lee, et al., 2009, p. 1327). Korean university students' attitudes towards learning English has been found to be generally positive (Geddes, 2016) but as ESL teachers at Korean universities mainly use teaching techniques 'separate from the technological reality that students live in' (Webster & Son, 2015, p. 92), there is much potential to capitalize on students' attitudes and improve outcomes through the use of e-learning in ESL.

The University of Suwon (USW) introduced Blackboard Learn as the campus-wide VLE in the spring 2015 semester. The International College (IC) enthusiastically embraced the VLE for all ESL (English as a Second Language) classes, which are mandatory for all freshmen. Adoption by other departments and teachers has been slower. ESL classes are a mix of traditional "brick-and-mortar" teaching with the VLE used for sharing course documents, in-class materials and activities, and for hosting weekly online homework tests and midterm and final exams. The rationale for increased

VLE-use for ESL classes includes improving student academic outcomes and standardizing a department-wide curriculum which would reduce teachers' preparation workloads and hopefully improve time efficiency and increase productivity within the IC department.

Some English-language elective classes in the IC and Korean-language courses in other departments also use Blackboard in different ways: traditionally taught classes where the VLE is used mainly to share resources and contact students; hybrid classes where students use the VLE for online lectures and other study resources before class while also attending some face-to-face classes; and online-only classes, where students use the VLE for online lectures and other study resources and communicate with the teacher and other students in online discussions. While an increase in the number of hybrid and online classes is planned, the effectiveness of the VLE should first be measured.

Across higher education, evaluation of the impact of institutions' VLEs on learners has become an established practice (UCISA, 2012, p. 11). As the use of VLEs has grown rapidly, an understanding of how such technologies are being used and their impact on users is vital (Heirdsfield, et al., 2011, p. 1). Evaluation is important as it 'provides feedback for course developers on teaching and learning and is an important part of quality assurance' (Dyson & Campello, 2003, p. 11). Quality is a significant predictor of VLE usefulness and perceived satisfaction (Liaw, 2008) and if this cannot be assured, 'then online learning may be of little value' (Weaver, et al., 2008, p. 36). As such, this paper is a pilot in what will become a longitudinal study to justify the implementation of the e-learning platform, to assure quality, to gauge how to maximize its potential by evaluating its effectiveness in improving outcomes, by identifying barriers to usage, by measuring user satisfaction and by appraising its effects on learning and teaching methods. A critical factor in improving e-learning usage and effectiveness is to understand learners' attitudes towards it (Liaw, 2008, p. 865). Therefore, the main focus of this study will be on ascertaining student perceptions of its effectiveness. In so doing, this research will add to the literature on e-learning in higher education, particularly in Korean universities as work in this area was previously comparatively small (Lee, et al., 2009, p. 1327). Further interesting areas for research which were beyond the scope of this paper will be identified for future studies.

The research questions to be answered in this paper are as follows:

1. What is the students' overall perception of the advantages, effects on language skills, suggestions for improvement, and limitations regarding the use of Blackboard?
2. What are the students' perceptions of the advantages, effects on language skills, suggestions for improvement, and limitations regarding the use of Blackboard according to gender, year, number of Blackboard courses taken, and computer literacy?
3. Are there significant differences in the students' perception of the advantages, effects on language skills, suggestions for improvement, and limitations regarding the use of Blackboard when they were grouped according to gender, year, number of Blackboard courses taken, and computer literacy?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *Reasons for VLE Usage*

The quality of the VLE has received considerable attention in determining E-learning effectiveness. Factors regarding the VLE platform and its relation to E-learning effectiveness include VLE platform reliability, the value of VLE contents, VLE user-friendliness, and whether there is sufficient media (Wang, 2003).

In a longitudinal multi-institutional study surveying students' usage of a VLE, (Cosgrave, et al., 2011) (Risqueuz, et al., 2013), the main reason for usage was found to be sharing of course materials, such as lecture notes, with other uses, such as online discussions, quizzes and submitting assignments lagging far behind (Cosgrave, et al., 2011, p. 5). This study found that in general, students consider using a VLE to add value, with their satisfaction 'intrinsically linked with the educational design behind the use of the tools' (Risqueuz, et al., 2013, pp. 104-105). Although students viewed the VLE as 'an important aid to their learning and lectures not as a replacement', usage and satisfaction depended on the lecturers' ability or willingness to use it (Cosgrave, et al., 2011, p. 12). Lack of use of the VLE by the lecturer, rather than technical problems, was seen to be the most common barrier to student usage. Lecturers tend to use the VLE to solve specific problems, rather than to do new things (Risqueuz, et al., 2013, p. 103). Weaver, et al. (2008) noted a generally positive and satisfied VLE experience, with students believing that VLE effectiveness depended on how the teachers used it.

The importance of course content in determining high e-learning use and satisfaction was reported by Naveh et al. (2010). When used as a content repository, the VLE was still found to add value as a reliable, definitive curated repository of course material, providing students with a clear framework for the course' (Risqueuz, et al., 2013, p. 105). Poorly maintained courses and poor use of technology were concerns of students, highlighting the need for quality assurance in lending value to e-learning. However, it has been found that rather than being used simply as a content repository, VLEs could enhance learning skills when used as a 'communication, collaboration and knowledge-focused medium' (Lyndon & Hale, 2014, p. 63).

While providing valuable insights, the survey in the longitudinal study mentioned above was conducted online and received low response rates. Students with high digital literacy were more likely to respond (Risqueuz, et al., 2013, p. 102), thereby limiting its effectiveness for measuring the effect of student computer literacy on VLE usage. Additionally, as it was carried out across entire student populations where VLE usage varies from class to class, it provides no



evaluation of student perceptions on specific VLE learning outcomes. O'Sullivan found that just over half of the students surveyed were satisfied with the VLE with factors such as age, gender and level of computer literacy influencing usage and satisfaction (O'Sullivan, 2014), highlighting the importance of such variables.

### *B. Student Perceptions and Influencing Variables*

A study of students at a university in Taiwan with two months' e-learning experience (Liaw, 2008) drew no results in terms of the measured variables of gender, field of study, internet experience and e-learning experience, but reported high correlations between system and multimedia quality, interactive learning activities and learners' self-efficacy and positive attitudes towards e-learning.

In a study of students' perceptions towards the use of Blackboard as a distance-learning tool, Al-mashaqbeh (2006) finds no significant correlation between students' gender, year of study and the kind of course being studied and their usage of the VLE. Her results showed students to be positive about the VLE as a delivery tool. Similarly, Fageeh (2011) also notes a lack of significant correlation between respondents' year of study and level of IT literacy in which learners' acceptance of e-learning was surveyed.

Keller & Cernerud (2002) studied the perceptions of university students in Sweden with experience of at least two e-learning courses and considered the variables gender, age, IT literacy, attitudes toward technology and learning styles. They found that students did not generally regard access to e-learning as a benefit and that the individual variables were less important than how the university implemented e-learning. Of the variables, there was no relationship of age or learning style to the students' perceptions, however women were more positive than men and students with lower IT literacy were more positive than those identifying themselves as early adopters. It may be worth noting that since this study was done, technology has become a lot more common and widespread and as such, attitudes towards it may have changed.

Most learners in a survey of university students in the USA (Song, et al., 2004) perceived that the success of e-learning depends on learner motivation, course design, time management and level of ease with internet technology. Challenges to e-learning's success were perceived to be technical problems, time constraints, a lack of community, and difficulties understanding online course objectives.

### *C. E-learning in South Korea*

South Korea is one of the vanguard countries providing online education (ICEF Monitor, 2012) with almost 88 per cent of higher education institutes running an e-learning platform (Hwang, et al., 2010, p. 51). The results of a national poll found that for Korean students, e-learning is beneficial in terms of cost, time, system stability, and the diversity and quality of content as well as its effects on learning itself (Hwang, et al., 2010, p. 22). In a study investigating student satisfaction with blended learning at a university in South Korea, overall satisfaction was found to be high, with students shown to be very concerned with access to information, immediate feedback on assessments and ability to communicate with classmates and teachers and expressed varied preferences for traditional and blended learning depending on the type of class (Klemsen & Seong, 2013, pp. 84-85).

The Korean Association of the University e-Learning Center (KAELC) conducted a survey assessing students' e-learning satisfaction levels. Students' satisfaction rate was above average but not high. Overall results showed that students were more satisfied with E-learning design and operation and that female students were generally more satisfied than male students (Han, et al., 2013). Another study conducted by Woosong University in South Korea looked at student perceptions of learning English online. Half of the students responded that they preferred the online class over the offline class and learned better due to the greater flexibility offered regarding place and being able to learn at an individual pace (Lee, C.H. and Pyo, K.H., 2003).

Many Korean Universities have been given incentives and support by the Korean government to involve teachers in e-learning. One government-initiated program, 'E-Learning Content Development Program', provides financial and technical support to encourage content development. One study revealed that added financial and technical support resulted in higher training effectiveness and that this support came from superiors and the organization (Tracey et al., 2001). These types of support can equip teachers with the knowledge and expertise to overcome lack of use, which, as mentioned above, was seen to be the most common barrier to student usage.

## III. METHODOLOGY

### *A. Respondents*

The survey population consisted of 2,489 students taking ESL classes, the vast majority of whom are freshmen. The valid sample size of 686 is 27.5% of the population which ensures a margin of error of 0.0325 using Slovin's formula; a confidence level of almost 97%.

As shown in Table I, the respondents of this study were the 686 randomly selected college students from The University of Suwon who were enrolled for the Spring Semester of the Academic Year 2016-2017. They were classified according to gender, year, number of Blackboard courses taken, and computer literacy. There were 304 (44.3%) male and 382 (55.79%) female; 584 (85.1%) were freshmen, 54 (7.9%) were sophomores, 29 (4.2%) were juniors, and 19 (2.8%) were seniors; 162 (23.6%) had one Blackboard course taken, 281 (41.0%) had two, 136 (19.8%) had three, and

107 (15.6%) had four or more; 154 (22.4%) rated themselves not good in computer literacy, 297 (43.3%) rated good, 120 (17.5%) rated very good, and 115 (16.8%) rated excellent.

TABLE I.  
STUDENT PROFILE

	N	%
Total	686	100%
A. Gender		
Male	304	44.3%
Female	382	55.7%
B. Year		
Freshmen	584	85.1%
Sophomores	54	7.9%
Juniors	29	4.2%
Seniors	19	2.8%
C. Blackboard Courses Taken		
One	162	23.6%
Two	281	41.0%
Three	136	19.8%
Four or more	107	15.6%
D. Computer Literacy		
Not Good	154	22.4%
Good	297	43.3%
Very Good	120	17.5%
Excellent	115	16.8%

### B. Instrument

Due to the low average level of responses to online surveys of 30 per cent (Dommeyer, et al., 2004), an anonymous paper questionnaire was used as the research instrument. This questionnaire was adapted from a study conducted by Al Zumor et al (2013) of ESL students at a university in Saudi Arabia and was divided into three parts. The first part contained 33 questions. These questions measured students' perceptions in four areas: advantages of using the VLE (10 items); effects of VLE usage on language skills (eight items); suggestions for improvement (six items); and limitations (nine items). Respondents were asked to rate each item on a Likert scale of six answers where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = agree, and 6 = strongly agree.

The second part asked questions about respondents' sex, year of study, number of courses taken using Blackboard, and computer literacy.

### C. Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire was translated from English into Korean and 774 surveys were given to all ESL teachers to randomly distribute to students in their ESL classes between weeks 10 and 12 of semester one in 2016 when the freshman students had over two months' experience using the VLE. 712 surveys were returned, a completion rate of almost 92 per cent, of which 26 were invalid. The total of 686 valid surveys makes a completion rate of 96.3%. Answers from the valid surveys were encoded, tabulated and interpreted using SPSS. For the interpretation of results in the areas of advantages of the VLE, effects on language skills, limitations of the VLE and suggestions for improving the VLE, the following scale and description were used:

Value	Description
1.00 – 1.50	strongly disagree
1.51 - 2.50	disagree
2.51 - 3.50	somewhat disagree
3.51 - 4.50	somewhat agree
4.51 - 5.50	agree
5.51 - 6.00	strongly agree

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE II.  
STUDENTS' PERCEPTION REGARDING THE USE OF BLACKBOARD

Areas	Mean
A. Advantages	3.18
B. Language Skills	3.25
C. Suggestions	3.62
D. Limitations	3.22

The respondents gave a *somewhat disagree* rating in the areas of Advantages (M=3.18), Language (M=3.25), and

Limitations (M=3.22) and somewhat agree rating in the area of Suggestions (M=3.62). Specifically, the top two items with the highest mean in the area of Advantages were question 7 (Mean=3.64), “Blackboard helps me to use time effectively.” and question 5 (M=3.59), “Blackboard allows me to work at my own pace.” Both had a somewhat agree rating. On the other hand, the two items with lowest ratings were question 2 (M=2.53), “Blackboard improves communication between students and teachers.” and question 6 (M=3.03), “Blackboard helps me to develop knowledge of computers and the internet.” Both items had a somewhat disagree rating. This means that students valued Blackboard with regards to time convenience. However, Blackboard does not help with teacher-student communication and knowledge development in the field of technology.

This result corroborates with the study of Lee, C. and Pyo, K. (2003) wherein half of the participants expressed favor for online classes because of its flexibility of place and they were able to work on their own pace. In this same study, students who favored offline classes found online classes to have not much interaction with the instructors.

In Language Skills, the top two items with highest ratings were question 13 (M=3.72), “Using Blackboard improves my reading skills.” and question 11 (M=3.69), “Using Blackboard improves my listening skills.” On the other hand, the two items with lowest ratings were question 15 (M=2.48), “Using Blackboard improves my pronunciation.” and question 12 (M=2.62), “Using Blackboard improves my speaking skills.” This means that the students’ reading and listening skills were enhanced by Blackboard use. However, their pronunciation and speaking skills were apparently not improved since there was no interaction in the Blackboard activities.

This result is supported by the study of Lee and Pyo (2003) where Korean students enrolled in English classes found online classes to be helpful in developing their listening skills because they could repeat the listening lessons whenever needed and when they were interested.

In the area of Suggestions, the top two items with the highest ratings were question 21 (M=4.58), “All technical problems should be solved as early as possible.” and question 20 (M=4.23), “The number of places to access computers should be increased.” On the other hand, the two items with lowest ratings were question 19 (M=2.56), “I would like to see an increase in the number of Blackboard courses.” and question 24 (M=2.82), “Those that prove themselves as distinguished users of Blackboard should be rewarded.” This means that while technical difficulties, including accessibility of computers, was the students’ foremost problem in using Blackboard, they did not want to have more Blackboard courses offered or rewards given to distinguished Blackboard users.

In the area of Limitations, the top two items with the highest ratings were question 31 (M=3.97), “Using the interaction tools on Blackboard is less effective than face-to-face interaction in the classroom.” and question 30 (M=3.95), “Blackboard facilitates cheating and plagiarism.” On the other hand, the two items with lowest ratings were question 32 (M=1.99), “I do not have a computer and therefore I find it difficult to use Blackboard.” and question 25 (M=2.56), “I feel isolated from other students when I use Blackboard.” This means that the students found Blackboard to be a hindrance to classroom interaction between and among teachers and students and it allows students to cheat and plagiarize. In addition, having no computer and experiencing feelings of isolation when using Blackboard were the least important limitations for students.

The study of Lee and Pyo (2003) supported the above result where several students had a preference for offline classes in terms of interactions and classroom activities. Teachers who were involved in the study revealed a constant problem in online classes where students just copied assignments from their classmates or just cut and pasted other’s work.

TABLE III.  
STUDENTS’ PERCEPTION REGARDING THE USE OF BLACKBOARD ACCORDING TO GENDER

Category	Advantages	Language Skills	Suggestions	Limitations
Total	3.18	3.25	3.62	3.22
Male	3.41	3.43	3.80	3.11
Female	3.00	3.11	3.48	3.31

When grouped according to gender, both male and female gave a mean rating of *somewhat disagree* in the areas of Advantages, Language and Limitations. Within these individual areas, male students’ rating was higher than that of female students in the areas of Advantages (M=3.41 versus M=3.00) and Language Skills (M=3.43 versus M=3.11) but female students’ rating (M=3.31) was higher than that of male students (M=3.11) in the area of Limitations. In the area of Suggestions, the two groups’ ratings differed, as male students *somewhat agreed* (M=3.80) while female students *somewhat disagreed* (M=3.48). This means that male students perceived that Blackboard had more advantages and was helpful in improving their language skills. On the other hand, female students perceived the use of Blackboard as having more limitations. In a study examining female student perceptions regarding e-Learning, Kibello, Y. and Bao, M. (2014) noted key concerns raised over the issues of lack of face-to-face interaction and lack of motivation in the online environment. Important issues and recommendations are raised for consideration when promoting e-learning programs.

A study conducted by the Korean Association of the University e-Learning Center (KAELC) corroborated this result in that female students were generally more satisfied than male students (Han, et al., 2013).

TABLE IV.  
T-TEST BETWEEN GENDERS

Areas	t-value	Df	Sig.
Advantages	5.03	654	0.00*
Language Skills	3.83	630	0.00*
Suggestions	4.65	625	0.00*
Limitations	-2.84	649	0.00*

The results of an independent-samples t-test show that when the students were grouped according to gender, there were significant differences in each of the four areas. This suggests that male and female respondents had different opinions on the advantages of using the VLE, effects on language skills of using the VLE, suggestions for improving the use of the VLE, and on the limitations of using the VLE.

TABLE V.  
STUDENTS' PERCEPTION REGARDING THE USE OF BLACKBOARD ACCORDING TO YEAR

Category	Advantages	Language Skills	Suggestions	Limitations
Total	3.18	3.25	3.62	3.22
Freshmen	3.20	3.28	3.62	3.18
Sophomores	3.00	2.98	3.47	3.60
Juniors	3.23	3.27	3.83	3.11
Seniors	3.12	2.97	3.82	3.63

The results in Table V show that, according to year, students in all level gave a *somewhat agree* rating in the areas of Advantages and Language Skills. In the area of Suggestions, three levels gave a *somewhat agree* rating except for sophomores who gave a *somewhat disagree* rating. In the area of Limitations, sophomores and seniors gave a *somewhat agree* rating while freshmen and juniors gave a *somewhat disagree* rating. This tells us that students find blackboard learning less effective than traditional, face-to-face learning, however, granted the provision of proper training, technical assistance and availability of on-campus computers, they are interested in seeing an increase in the number of blackboard courses offered.

The most notable mention is regarding the area of Language Skills. Freshmen students scored the highest while seniors scored the lowest. This could be attributed to differences in second-language proficiency and/or level of exposure to VLE-type classes. Also, freshman may have a more optimistic view and comfort level with using computers in an online learning environment than seniors. The results of a study conducted in the Netherlands concluded that younger students were more optimistic about using information communication technologies in their lessons than older students (Kubiátko & Haláková, 2009). However, in a study of Korean university students done by Lee and Pyo (2003), it was concluded that freshmen students enrolled in English classes found online learning to be burdensome compared with the students in a higher level.

It is also worth mentioning that in the Limitations area, seniors scored the highest. This could also be because the older senior students may be less comfortable and technologically adept to VLE learning than the younger students, who had probably begun developing greater digital literacy at a younger age. Several studies point to year and age of study as an indicator of success in computer-based learning, showing that younger individuals and students are simply more familiar with computer-based technologies (Zickuhr & Madden, 2012); (Greenhow, et al., 2009).

TABLE VI.  
ANOVA ACCORDING TO YEAR

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Advantages					
Between Groups	2.210	3	.737	0.63	0.59
Within Groups	788.220	682	1.156		
Language Skills					
Between Groups	6.054	3	2.018	1.68	0.17
Within Groups	818.899	682	1.201		
Suggestions					
Between Groups	3.400	3	1.133	1.40	0.24
Within Groups	552.083	682	.810		
Limitations					
Between Groups	12.371	3	4.124	4.62	0.00*
Within Groups	607.925	682	.891		

When students were grouped according to year, the ANOVA results showed a significant difference in the area of Limitations, however no significant differences were found in the areas of Advantages, Language, or Suggestions. This means that there were differences in how freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors perceived the limitations of using blackboard, but no differences in how they perceived the advantages, language, and suggestions of using blackboard. Furthermore, these results showed that the students' year affected their perception of the limitations of using blackboard but did not affect their perception of the advantages, language, and suggestions of using blackboard. Low significance values may be attributed to the fact that a clear majority of these students have had limited exposure to and experience

with VLE learning and are not fully receptive to learning English on Blackboard.

TABLE VII.  
STUDENTS' PERCEPTION REGARDING THE USE OF BLACKBOARD ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF BLACKBOARD COURSES TAKEN

Category	Advantages	Language Skills	Suggestions	Limitations
Total	3.18	3.25	3.62	3.22
One	3.24	3.30	3.58	3.25
Two	3.13	3.17	3.60	3.22
Three	3.23	3.34	3.70	3.25
Four Plus	3.18	3.27	3.62	3.15

The results in Table VII show that the students in all four categories gave a *somewhat disagree* rating in the areas of advantages, language skills, and limitations. This means that the students perceived the use of Blackboard as not so advantageous and helpful in improving their language skills and has few limitations. On the other hand, in the area of suggestions, the students in all four areas gave a *somewhat agree* rating which means that they perceived a need for the Blackboard use to be improved. A somewhat related study conducted at Tamk University of Applied Sciences in Finland revealed that 'prior E-learning experience significantly correlates with perceived E-learning effectiveness, E-learning productivity and amount of learning' (Haverila, 2011).

TABLE VIII.  
ANOVA ACCORDING TO BLACKBOARD COURSES TAKEN

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Advantages					
Between Groups	1.682	3	.561	.485	.693
Within Groups	788.748	682	1.167		
Language Skills					
Between Groups	3.232	3	1.077	.894	.444
Within Groups	821.721	682	1.205		
Suggestions					
Between Groups	1.367	3	.456	.561	.641
Within Groups	554.116	682	.812		
Limitations					
Between Groups	.805	3	.268	.296	.829
Within Groups	619.491	682	.908		

When students were grouped according to the number of Blackboard courses taken, the ANOVA results show that there was no statistically significant differences for the areas of advantages of using the VLE, effects on language skills, suggestions for improving the VLE, or limitations of using the VLE. This may suggest that regardless of their experience of using Blackboard, they perceived the advantages, effects on language skills, and limitations of Blackboard to be the same. It may also suggest that they also provide similar suggestions and recommendations for improving the use of Blackboard.

TABLE IX.  
STUDENTS' PERCEPTION REGARDING THE USE OF BLACKBOARD ACCORDING TO COMPUTER LITERACY

Category	Advantages	Language Skills	Suggestions	Limitations
Total	3.18	3.25	3.62	3.22
Not Good	2.86	2.96	3.35	3.66
Good	3.18	3.23	3.57	3.18
Very Good	3.36	3.31	3.88	3.11
Excellent	3.44	3.63	3.84	2.87

The result shows that when the students were grouped according to computer literacy, all respondents in four categories namely: not good, good, very good, and excellent gave a *somewhat disagree* rating in the area of advantages; the respondents gave the same rating in the area of language skills except those who belong to the excellent category who gave a *somewhat agree* rating; in the area of suggestions the respondents gave a *somewhat agree* rating except for those who belong to the not good category who gave a *somewhat disagree* rating; and in the area of limitations the respondents gave a *somewhat disagree* rating except for those who belong to the not good category who gave a *somewhat agree* rating.

This means that when it comes to computer literacy, students who rated themselves as not good, somewhat disagreed that Blackboard use is advantageous in learning, is helpful in improving their language skills, and should be improved, however, they somewhat agreed that Blackboard use has a lot of limitations. The students who rated themselves as good and very good, somewhat disagreed that Blackboard use is advantageous in learning, is helpful in improving their language skills, and has a lot of limitations, however, they somewhat agreed that Blackboard should be improved. The students who rated themselves as excellent, somewhat disagreed that Blackboard use is advantageous in learning and has a lot of limitations and somewhat agreed that Blackboard use is helpful in improving their language skills and should be improved.

TABLE X.  
ANOVA ACCORDING TO COMPUTER LITERACY

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Advantages					
Between Groups	26.733	3	8.911	7.958	.000*
Within Groups	763.698	682	1.120		
Language Skills					
Between Groups	29.905	3	9.958	8.551	.000*
Within Groups	795.048	682	1.166		
Suggestions					
Between Groups	25.198	3	8.399	10.802	.000*
Within Groups	530.285	682	.778		
Limitations					
Between Groups	45.013	3	16.338	18.215	.000*
Within Groups	574.283	682	.842		

When students were grouped according to computer literacy, the ANOVA result showed significant differences existed in all four areas. This means that the students' computer literacy level affects their perception on the advantages of using the VLE, effects on language skills of using the VLE, their suggestions for improving the use of the VLE, and the limitations of using the VLE.

This would corroborate Northrup's study (2001) which suggested that learner engagement is higher with interactive communication and multimedia instruction: higher interactivity can lead to higher learner engagement and better learning outcomes but a lower level of computer literacy would also likewise adversely affect interactive communication and multimedia instruction. Students see the convenience Blackboard brings and how it makes the class more interesting and useful.

## V. CONCLUSION

### A. Conclusions

This study aimed to examine students' perceptions of the use of Blackboard and the following conclusions were advanced:

First, in using Blackboard, the students' perceptions of the advantages, effects on language skills, and limitations were somewhat disagree and their perception of the suggestions was somewhat agree. Specifically, Blackboard was perceived by the students to be helpful in their use of time, independent work, and in improving their reading and listening skills. On the other hand, Blackboard does not facilitate classroom interaction and it provides the possibility for students to plagiarize and cheat.

Second, when grouped according to gender, male students perceived the use of Blackboard as more advantageous and helpful while female students perceived it as having more limitations and agreed that improvements in Blackboard use should be made. Significant differences in the students' perception of Blackboard use were found in all four areas.

Third, when grouped according to year, students had varied ranks in each area and a significant difference in their perceptions was found only in the area of limitations.

Fourth, when grouped according to number of Blackboard courses taken, students who took three or more Blackboard courses perceived Blackboard to be more useful and helpful. No significant difference was found in the four areas.

Fifth, when grouped according to computer literacy, students found the use of Blackboard as not so advantageous, not so helpful in improving their language skills, needing improvement and having a few limitations. Significant differences in the students' perception of Blackboard use were found in all four areas.

### B. Limitations and Suggestions

Below is the outline of some limitations of this study and suggestions for how these can be improved upon in the future.

The questionnaire only featured statements where the students have to rate their perceptions. Open-ended questions could be added to the questionnaire followed by focus group discussions with respondents in order to ascertain reasons for answers given in the questionnaire and to enhance the quantitative results by including a qualitative aspect.

This study surveyed student perceptions only and not actual learning outcomes. A better idea of VLE effectiveness could be obtained by measuring learning outcomes and comparing to those of non-Blackboard ESL classes. As all ESL classes use Blackboard, a control group would need to be set up.

It may be of value to extend this research into a longitudinal analysis and to seek collaboration with other universities, both inside and outside Korea, in order to provide and gain meaningful insights into sector-wide trends and best practices.

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# Techniques of Translating *A Watchful Distance* by Zhou Guoping in China

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**Abstract**—Chinese philosophical literature is rarely introduced to foreign countries (Pohl, 1999, p. 303). Zhou Guoping, as a contemporary philosopher and essayist, has created essays with both depth and readability, and thus his works are deemed to be worthy of translation. This article aims to elaborate on the translator's techniques for transferring Zhou Guoping's famous collection of essays *A Watchful Distance*. Divided into four sections, this article uses actor-network theory as its theoretical framework and analyses the translator's position in translation activities from sociocultural perspective, gives corresponding translating techniques to problems related to creativity, conventionalised expressions, utterances and Chinese cultural elements in this book, and draws a conclusion upon the relationship between cultural homogeneity and corresponding translating techniques underpinned by actor-network theory. By discussing specific translating techniques used for Zhou's book, this article fills up the gap in the transfer techniques of *A Watchful Distance* to overseas cultures. However, the limitation lies in that the number of Zhou's works studied are restricted.

**Index Terms**—translating techniques, actor-network theory, Zhou Guoping

## I. INTRODUCTION

*A Watchful Distance* is a collection of Chinese philosophical essays written by Zhou Guoping. This book is so popular because the thoughts of Zhou provide guidance for, and enhance the spiritual strength of, readers who have encountered difficulties and setbacks in their lives and who are thus confused about the meaning of life. However, Chinese philosophical literature with as much depth and readability as this book is rarely introduced to overseas countries, mainly because certain differences exist in the sociocultural elements embedded in domestic and foreign cultures (Pohl, 1999, p. 303). Few previous articles have incorporated this sociocultural perspective in specific translation techniques, and most of these articles still linger at word-level equivalence, such as Lee (1985) and Bonnie (1991). Therefore, this article intends to use actor-network theory as a pillar to elaborate on how sociocultural gap could be filled in the translation of this book. This article will demonstrate the macro-level analysis, namely the determinants of general translating strategies, and the micro-level analysis, namely the determinants of specific translating techniques.

## II. MACRO-LEVEL ANALYSIS

The text type of this book, based on Reiss (1989, p. 108), is 'informative' because it was created based on the author's personal experiences and it reflects the author's witty outlook on philosophical issues. Therefore, the translator must ensure that the translation strategies used are to make the translation as plain and explicit as possible.

As Woodward (1977, p. 5) notes, the best essay not only introduces issues of interest to thoughtful readers but also exemplifies the effective combination of rhetorical devices and methods. Based on the pragmatic features of rhetorics in this book, the author divides relevant discussions into the exploration of creativity, conventionalised expressions, utterances and Chinese cultural elements. Given that these four aspects are representative features of the style of this book, the translator chooses them as examples to demonstrate what techniques from sociocultural perspective could be used in the translation of this type of book style.

## III. MICRO-LEVEL ANALYSIS

When translating this book, the translator has been guided by actor-network theory (ANT), in which human agency and non-human agency play equally important roles in the construction of actor-networks (Callon and Law, 1997, p. 168). The essence of ANT is to study what factors are involved in the assembly of networks to achieve a specific objective, and during this process what interactions are generated between human and non-human agency. For the specific task of this translation, the translator, as the human agent, must be sufficiently creative to handle various rhetorical devices used in the source text (ST), especially in Chinese poetry. The non-human agencies, mainly cultural norms, conventions and the relations between Chinese and English cultures, have also greatly affected translation decisions. The influence of the translator on cultural factors and vice versa constitutes the translation network and lead to the production of the final translation. Subsequently it will be illustrated the interactions between the translator, a creative translator and several cultural factors. These cultural factors are mainly integrated in Chinese conventionalised expressions, utterances and specific cultural elements such as self-deprecatory terms and category words.

### A. Translation of Creativity

The translation of creativity refers to the transfer of creative ideas from Chinese to English. As a professional essayist, Zhou is skilled in utilising diverse creative ideas to express himself and attract readers, and he sometimes directly uses Chinese poetry to make his essays more colourful. However, those creative ideas have posed great difficulties to the translator. To transfer the colours of the ST, the translator chooses the techniques of adaptation and imitation of imagism poetry.

An example that clearly shows the author's creativity is the title *Lv+You=Lv You? [Way + Fare = Wayfare?]*. In Chinese, 'Lv You' [tourism] is a synonymous compounding disyllable, which means that 'Lv' [travel] and 'You' [tour] contain similar meanings and that the connotation of 'Lv You' [tourism] is the combination of the meanings of its two syllables (Luo, 2014, p. 22). However, the author's attitudes towards 'Lv' [travel], 'You' [tour] and 'Lv You' [tourism] are completely different. He is positive about 'Lv' [travel] and 'You' [tour] because in his view, these two activities could deepen people's understanding of life. In contrast, his attitude towards 'Lv You' [tourism] is satirical because he believes that tourism has been highly commercialised and that people cannot gain pleasures from it despite spending all their money on it. The question mark at the end of the title indicates his deep doubt about whether the value of 'Lv' [travel] and 'You' [tour] is retained when those two activities are commercialised as 'Lv You' [tourism]. That is, thus, the intention of the author, namely, the assumption that Zhou intends to convey by means of a communicative clue at the semantic level (Gutt, 1991, p. 31). The identification of this assumption is dependent largely upon inference on the part of the translator (Zhang, 2001, p. 289), and the translator aims to achieve optimal relevance by helping the target readers (the TRs) discern the author's intended interpretation without gratuitous efforts (Sperber and Wilson, 1995, p. 158).

However, the contextual assumption intended by Zhou does not exist in the cognitive environment of the TRs; in other words, the translator cannot find lexical equivalents of the title in English. Here, the translator adopts the strategy of adaptation. Although some translation scholars take a negative view of adaptation, criticising it as subverting the 'ideal image' of the ST created by translation (Gorp, 2004, p. 66; Palmer, 2004, p. 262), the translator identifies it as a suitable strategy to handle the cross-code breakdown here. As a mediator, the translator uses creation, which is a mode of adaptation to reproduce the author's intention without sacrificing the original formal elements. With the translation *Way + Fare = Wayfare?*, the translator expresses that although people are on their 'way' and spend much on 'fare' when they are travelling ('wayfaring'), they still cannot enjoy their time as travellers because of their constant haste. The intention of the translator corresponds to the intention of the author. Additionally, since the translator also uses one word (wayfare) containing two morphemes ('way' and 'fare'), the format of translation is also similar to the ST. Although the meanings of "way" and "fare" are not equivalent to 'Lv' [travel] and 'You' [tour], the strategy of creation is adequately relevant to the TRs considering the similar effects produced. By doing so, the translator avoids placing the TRs in a secondary communication situation (Gutt, 1991, p. 73).

The translation of Chinese poetry also necessitates creativity. As an agent in the institutions that have reframed the original writing through translation (Summers, 2014, p. 383), the translator intervenes in the articulation of author function, a framework of textual interpretation (Summers, 2013, p. 11). The translator's participation in the construction of author function is active, since the translator's performance determines the status of the discourse of the ST (Foucault, 1977, p. 123). To ensure that the translator's intervention does not damage the ST image, an attempt is generated to ensure fidelity to the ST and enable the TRs to sense directly the effect and significance of the ST without any unnecessary and overly subjective understanding (Xie, 2014, p. 163). Therefore, the translator chooses to imitate the writing techniques employed by imagists. Compared to English, the Chinese language emphasises the separateness and distinctiveness of single images and prefers the use of static and non-progression structures in poetry (Xie, 2014, p. 162). These characteristics meet with imagist poetry style, in which images are objective and can stimulate instantaneous perception (Pound, 1913, p. 200). For example, in 'Shan Xiao Lv Ren Qu, Tian Gao Qiu Qi Bei' [Mountain at dawn, a traveller on the way; a cloudless sky, sadness in the autumn air], the images 'Shan' [mountain], 'Tian' [sky] and 'Qiu' [autumn] are static. Moreover, the combination of these images corresponds to the concept of 'image complex' in imagism because both of them give a 'sense of freedom from time limits and space limits' (Pound, 1913, p. 200). As to formalism, given that free verse logically follows from imagism (Hartman, 1980, p. 134), the translator disregards syntax and metre in translation. By imitating an imagist, the translator acts as an equal party and as the third party in the translation process (Knezevic, 2011, p. 142) contributing to the 'coexistence' of Zhou, the author and the TRs (Ricoeur, 2006 p. 4), and thus provides a positive intervention.

### B. Translation of Conventionalised Expressions

Chinese conventionalised expressions mainly include four-character collocations and idioms. The translation of Chinese four-character collocations, or *chengyu* will be firstly explored. When considering the *chengyu* 'Ju An Qi Mei' [A wife lifts the tray to a level with her eyebrows], the translator may originally consider a sociosemiotic approach to translate it. The advantage of adopting this approach is that designative meaning and pragmatic meaning can be emphasised equally. In other words, this approach is relatively comprehensive. As Taylor (1985, p. 223) argues, the designative meaning of lexemes includes the semantic features that define the range of referents in the practical linguistic world, which can be represented by lexemes, and pragmatic meaning refers to the attitudes and values of the

use context in which those lexemes habitually occur. Given that one significant subset of pragmatic meaning is associative meaning, which implies the association or image that the linguistic signs evoke in readers' minds (Ke, 1996, p. 96), the translator may want to transfer the associative meaning of this *chengyu* and use images such as 'tray' and 'eyebrow' in the translation. However, those images do not create the idea that the wife is to show great respect for her husband in the minds of the TRs, as in the minds of Chinese readers, because those two groups of readers live in different social contexts. In other words, after the translator encodes the message, the TRs will not decode it as expected and may infer the wrong meaning. Therefore, the better approach is to abandon the transferring of associative meaning and resort to free translation. By rendering this *chengyu* into 'A wife treats his husband with courtesy', the translator ensures that the TRs will not misinterpret those idiosyncratic signs. As Ke (1996, p. 99) proposes, 'the spectrum of sociosemiotic meanings connected with a sign in one language rarely has a one-to-one correspondence to that of a comparable sign in another language'; thus, the translator mainly makes decisions on what aspects of the meaning of specific signs should be retained and what aspects should be given secondary consideration. Obviously, the translator gives precedence to the most prominent aspect, namely, the designative meaning, to ensure its 'correct transference in whatsoever circumstances and, if no other alternative is available, at the expense of the other meanings of the sign' (Ke, 1996, p. 99).

Secondly the translation of Chinese idioms will be probed. The example cited here is the translation of a typical Chinese idiom: 'Diu Mian Zi' [be disgraced]. In the ST, the context of 'Diu Mian Zi' [be disgraced] is that even if his wife is in the wrong, the husband will not think that he is disgraced when he makes an apology. From the sociopsychological perspective, the husband is taking preventive measures (Goffman, 1959, p. 107) to avoid threats to his wife's face. The natural response of a husband to the need for an apology is to acknowledge his failure to satisfy his wife (Cody and McLaughlin, 1985, p. 55), but the husband in the ST does exactly the opposite and apologises because he considers his wife's wants to be appreciated (Tracy, 1990, p. 218). Thus, he uses strategic self-presentation (Jones and Pittman, 1982, p. 243) to show that he is generous in his interactions with his wife. In other words, by demonstrating that he is not afraid of being dishonoured, he saves his dignity. According to Yu (2001, p. 27), Chinese and English have obvious cross-linguistic similarities in the conceptions of 'Mian Zi' [visage]. In English, 'face' is used to imply a person's position in the 'relational hierarchy' (Chang and Holt, 1994, p. 105), as Mian Zi [visage] in Chinese corresponds to a person's dignity and prestige. Therefore, the translator uses 'face' directly in the translation and translates 'Diu Mian Zi' [be disgraced] as 'lose face'.

### C. Translation of Utterances

Since the ST belongs to the category of essays, utterances are rarely used by the author. However, those utterances used are no less important than other parts of the ST, as the sentences in quotation marks usually indicate the crucial points. Thus, the translation of utterances is also worth considering.

The utterance that is cited as an example contains only two Chinese characters: 'Shi Wo' [It's me]. Given that the speaker of this utterance produces a statement and accepts it as being or representing what is the case, this utterance falls into the domain of an assertion (Kearns, 2012, p. 120). In relevance theory, the mode of using language in this assertion is the descriptive use of language, in which this language utterance 'is intended to be taken as true of a state of affairs in some possible world' (Gutt, 1998, p. 44). This assertion, included in an illocutionary act abstractly conceived, is a complete intentional act (Kearns, 2012, p. 119). Furthermore, according to Vanderveken (2001, p. 33), if an illocutionary act is performed in an actual context of utterance, then the 'propositional content of the illocutionary act' will fit 'an actual fact in the world'. More specifically, this fit belongs to the 'words-to-world direction of fit' proposed by De Sousa Melo (2001, p. 112). In this example, by using the words 'Shi Wo' [It's me], the author admits that his existence in this world is a fact that cannot be denied.

As noted above, this utterance is an intentional act; thus, the readers of the ST naturally need to use as much information as possible to infer the intention of, or what is implicated by, the speaker or the author. In other words, apart from encoding, transfer and decoding processes, the most crucial point in communication is inference (Sperber and Wilson, 1995, p. 260). In this example, for the convenience of the readers' inference, the author is supposed to obey the 'the maxim of quantity' (Grice, 1989, p. 28) and try to be as informative as he can. However, the author uses only two words in this utterance, which violates Grice's maxim. To thoroughly understand the reason for this use, the translator resorts to the background, namely, the context of this utterance. In relevance theory, the 'context of an utterance' means 'a psychological construct' and concerns readers' assumptions about the world; more specifically, it is 'the set of premises used in interpreting utterance' (Sperber and Wilson, 1995, p. 15). That is, the context of this utterance includes not only the previous text in the book but also the translator's understanding of the world. Therefore, the comprehensive ability of the translator as an actor has a vast impact on the translation. After reviewing the previous text, it could be concluded that Zhou is doubting whether he truly exists in this world and that he deems his existence as a dream. At the end of the essay, however, the author converts to the belief that he does exist in this world, and he answers 'It's me' without hesitation when hearing his name through the telephone receiver. By contrasting his previous doubt with his later firmness, Zhou implies that although people may doubt their existence at times, their existence in this world is an undeniable fact. Zhou violates Grice's maxim for the reason that he wants readers to consider the deep meaning of this utterance by resorting to the context. When translating this utterance, the translator may find it difficult

to incorporate personal comprehension of the author's train of thought into the translation to help readers understand it; hence, the translator uses literal translation 'It's me' based on the belief that the TRs are sufficiently well educated to have their own understanding of this thought-provoking utterance.

#### D. Translation of Chinese Cultural Elements

Chinese has special cultural elements that may cause cultural barriers to translation, such as self-deprecatory terms and category words that do not exist in English. This section will explore methods to deal with these two aspects.

Self-deprecatory terms play a pivotal role in the depiction of China as 'a land of courtesy', and the author, as a well-educated man, cannot avoid using these kinds of terms when introducing his own works. He describes his famous book on Nietzsche as 'Xiao Ce Zi' [a brochure], but it is actually a very thick book. From the sociopragmatic perspective, self-deprecation is the act of ritual or purposeful disparaging of one's own achievements. In other words, Zhou who uses self-deprecatory terms aims to use their normative function (Leech, 1983, p. 48), their instrumental function (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p. 44), or both. On the one hand, Zhou lives in a society whose norms favour sociality over individuality and one that places 'self' at the bottom of the social hierarchy; on the other hand, by devaluing his possession of such a famous work, Zhou wants to achieve the desired effects of reducing others' envy and avoiding threatening others' face—thus conforming to the 'self-denigration maxim' proposed especially for the Chinese context (Gu, 1990, p. 246). However, this maxim does not apply to Western society, which encourages individualism and competition. With the aim of bringing Chinese heterogeneous cultural elements to the TRs, the translator translates 'Xiao Ce Zi' into 'a little book'. 'Book' truly reflects what the author's work is like, and the modifier 'little' implies the modesty of the author. This translation communicates the intention of using self-deprecatory expressions to the TRs.

Category words carry strong Chinese characteristics. In the example 'Ji You Xi Juan Tian Xia Zhi Shi' [nearly having the tendency to sweeping the whole country], the category words 'Zhi Shi' [the tendency to] are redundant because their meaning is the same as 'Ji' [nearly]. However, the use of these words is necessary in Chinese to achieve clarity of messages in intralingual communication. As Jackson (1974, p. 278) notes, to guarantee the accuracy of the delivered message, the information sender must repeat the message when encoding it to ensure that the information receiver obtains slightly more information than is needed, which is helpful in decoding the message. Nevertheless, the repetition in Chinese is usually unhelpful for English readers and thus needs to be omitted (Wang, 2002, p. 1); otherwise, the English translation easily becomes Chinglish (Pinkham, 1998, p. 15). Therefore, the translation is 'almost sweeping the whole country'. By deleting the repetitive parts, the translator achieves a concise effect.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

By exploring the macro-level determinants of translation strategies, and the micro-level translating techniques for creativity, conventionalised expressions, utterances and cultural elements used in this book, the translator concludes that when Chinese philosophical literature is translated, the translation strategies used by the translator (the human agent) are largely dependent on the extent of homogeneity between Chinese and English cultures, which belongs to non-human agencies. Specifically, if these two cultures are highly homogeneous in some aspect, the translator can use literal translation and can rest assured that this type of technique will generally translate the intention of the author and not cause misunderstanding. Conversely, if these two cultures are highly heterogeneous, the translator must give priority to the most important level of meaning at the cost of other aspects of meanings. However, the relations between Chinese and English cultures are not always polarised, and thus, both similarities and differences exist between these two cultures. In this occasion, the translator also uses literal translation in the belief that the TRs are well-educated to have a general understanding of how language is normally used. In this case, the translator also achieves an equivalent interpretation, as long as the translation meets the TRs' expectations of language usage. By discussing specific translating techniques used for Zhou's philosophical essays, this article creatively overcomes relevant barriers via sociocultural approaches, and to some extent fills up the gap in the transfer of this book to overseas cultures. However, the number of Zhou's works studied are limited, and the translating techniques suitable for most of Zhou's works are expected to be explored in future research.

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# The Effectiveness of Role Play Techniques in Teaching Speaking for EFL College Students

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**Abstract**—The paper investigates the impact of role-playing as a classroom technique on Iraqi EFL students' speaking skill on Iraqi EFL students at the college level. The students are 40 college language students in University of Baghdad, College of Education Ibn-Rushd randomly chosen. Then, they were divided into two groups, experimental and control groups. Thirty questions were applied to both groups as a pre-test of speaking and the students asked to answer them orally. The experimental group was taught speaking skill of the targeted role-play technique while the control group was taught in traditional method. After 20 lessons of the teaching, the post-test of speaking was conducted in which the students in both groups were asked to answer. The results showed that there is a significant improvement in speaking skill of experimental group. The two groups were significantly different to the sake of using role play technique.

**Index Terms**—role playing, college level, technique

## I. INTRODUCTION

Chaney (1998) states that speaking ability is the process of sharing and building meaning while using verbal and non-verbal symbols, in different situations. Speaking is significant in both language learning and teaching. For long time, students recall the activities and memorized the conversations but nowadays, they should study how to express themselves. They should follow social and cultural rules in any context.

Many studies have shown that many Iraqi EFL college students hesitating with some activities like listening and speaking ones in the college, they are unable to speak and use language in real life situations. This conclusion was supported by many previous related studies done on a group of Iraqi EFL college students in which their speaking skill was tested and traces of failure were proved to exist. Speaking skill has some problems, they are:

- a.) students lack of motivation to practice in the class,
- b.) students are anxious to take part in the conversation,
- c.) students do not know what to say, and
- d.) students do not like the prescribed textbook.

The nature of the stated problem urges Iraqi English teachers to adapt different techniques with the aim of improving learning the speaking skill in the classroom, but such techniques mostly were unsuccessful. One of the techniques used to teach the speaking skill, perhaps, is the role-play.

Recently, oral skills (Listening and speaking) in Iraq gained much attention in general English classes, due to the growing demands from schools, colleges and markets witnessed a dramatic change. Most of students looking for a job in big companies, schools and colleges after graduation, the profession of teaching becomes very competitive. Market seeks for graduates not just who have a certificate only but they ask for a high level of English communicative skills which can be assessed by conducting interviews or interaction in English language. So that, it is very significant to teach students some skills that they can use in the everyday interaction that they will face after graduation. As a result, listening and speaking skills instruction should be in near-to-real situations which is basic for all students.

Large number of teachers have employed role play in their classes, but very few have taught it as teaching practice. Whereas the theoretical background on role play assumes there are many merits to conduct role play in English class, only some researches have shed light on the students' sides concerning role play. To add, some studies on the practicing role play in English language classes.

The present study is only one part of an investigation project, which was conducted to study the effectiveness of role play in teaching English for different levels of students (primary, intermediate and college) in Iraq, but in this paper I only tackled one part which is college students.

## II. AIM OF THE STUDY

The present study aims at finding of the effectiveness of using role-play as a classroom technique on Iraqi EFL college students' speaking skill.

## III. DEFINITION OF THE TERM

Tompkins (2001) defines role play as “it is one of the classroom teaching techniques that encourage students to participate actively in the process of learning English. Therefore, foreign language students practice the target language in context similar to real-life situations where stress and shyness are removed” (p. 1).

When we talk about role playing as a method of teaching can be considered as a problem can solved consciously which is briefly acted out so that the student can identify with the characters (Blanter, 2009).

Keneth (2008) states that role play can be defined as the type of student’s behaves in a certain context. In the field of managing, discrepancies in the identifying role that can be seen as role conflict which does not match for a person or by others role playing as a method of teaching which is the conscious practicing and discussion of the role in a group. While in the class, the difficulty can be briefly acted out so that the student can identify with the roles.

Role play activities could be shown as the way student behaves in specific context and situation. The researcher defines it as the role playing technique as a methodology for teaching which is conscious representation and discussion of the role in a group. In the class a problem context is shortly acted out so that the students can cope with the character.

#### IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Arends (1998) assures on the practice of interacting with others as a method of doing teaching style active for teachers. It prevents instructing from being daily routine and out of date. When applying modern techniques, they are not necessarily entertaining new principles. Most of them shared a common principle of emphasizing verbal tasks that focused on meaning rather than language structure (p. 23).

Some researchers introduce and explain the benefits of excessive practicing role play techniques via showing that comprehension is established when the brain of student codes and gather data. Comparisons and decisions can be made as researchers examine the way others behave in different situations. Roles act as a short-cut way of identifying, recognizing, and labeling a set of appearances and behaviors (Van Ments, 1983). Students form expectations depend on appearance, behavior, and characteristic of a particular person. They predict what they will do in a given context. Ladousse (1987) states that can be allocated by social position in everyday situations, such as a teacher, engineer, police, clerk, president or juvenile delinquent. Role is the mean of expressing the norms of the group and social’s skill to deal with an individual or a group.

Holt and Kysilka (2006) explain that surrounding or the situation the student will face, can impact his/her way of acting. When we see yourself or other role-players as members of congregation, an audience or students in a parade, then the way we behave changes in accordance with our surroundings. For instant, the way that we used to behave with our friend is different from the way that we behave in formal situations. They acknowledged that roles can also be affected by a person’s function or purpose. For example, people in the hotel industry may be carrying out the tasks of a manager, front desk staff, bell person, or representative. People who work in an airport will be carrying out the tasks of travel agent, flight attendant, captain or passenger. Since roles are dependent on situations, function, and purpose, the instructor needs to carefully think through the enactment when he/she would like to employ role play technique in the classroom. The teacher should consider the students engagement, role assessing, duration of the technique, and concluding of the idea.

There are many terms can be interchangeable that associated with the role play teaching technique, and different ideas can be with and against when we compare role play with teaching methods. The expressions that can be interchangeably used like game, simulation, simulation game, and role play game with no agreement on preferable term (Van Ments, 1983). Ladousse (1987) states simulation as complex, inflexible and lengthy. On the other hand, role play technique is brief, simple, and flexible.

Ones (1982) clarifies that students have to be responsible of their roles and expand their outcome as much as they can in the context in which they find themselves in order for an imitation take place. The whole class can engage in role play, it can be interesting, and it may result in better teaching and learning of language.

Cornett (1999) shows that students improve fluency in language and oral interaction skills, beside the use of language of the body during face-to-face communication, when they are participated in role play techniques. Those techniques are especially fundamental for students learning a foreign language who may not often speak English at home because those students are eager to use the language and then improve their fluency and speaking with the chance to participate in role play. Role-play is simply required to play the other roles in the same way they think about how other roles may behave. As a result, role play can be clearly understood of many aspects like reactions, values, feelings, and attitudes of the person in the same.

Holt and Kysilka (2006) state that role play technique can be fun and lead to develop learning, these techniques can be used a student-student communication, they help EFL students to comprehend the importance of cooperation and to have an interest in learning.

Mitchell (1977) confirms that process of group relies on four factors: observation, reflection, interaction, and plan. Interaction is the peer-relation; observation is the feedback given by peers; reflection is the thoughts provided by group members; and the plan is the procedure to achieve the shared outcome. Once students in a suitable way employ those factors, their oral skills will be working together. Teachers try to establish an environment of a class where students have authentic activities and real-life communication that improve speaking skill. So, the students should collaborate and work in groups to achieve these objectives. Harmer (1984) explains that there are many techniques to develop



speaking skill, one of them is role-play. In role-play technique, we have many social contexts and a lot of interactional roles, while teacher produces topics to the students such as feeling and thinking of a given role. Thus, the teacher can explain to the student for instant “You are Steph; you go to the dentist and tell him what happened last week” (p. 42).

Holt & Kysilka (2006) confirms that group work enlarge the availability of time available for oral interaction and permits many students to benefit from time allocated for speaking. Teaching in groups also reduces the inhibitions of the students who fell shy who cannot speak comfortably with the whole class. Role-play can make all class be in engagement, and it can be interest and lead the whole group to be in a situation of effective learning.

Thornbury (2006) finds that dialogue is an informal speech among students, most of students know the skill to participate in dialogues as a favorable aim of leaning of language. Some language students feel that their most urgent need is to improve communicative competence, and they regularly choose “conversational” as their principle objective when answering needs analysis survey.

Language is basically speech, and speech is interaction by sounds. Speaking skill is used by a student in their interaction every day, this could be in or out school. Such skill needs many repetitions; it is mainly considered a neuromuscular not thinking process. It contains ability of sending and receiving messages. Thus, speaking can be seen as a way for showing opinions, believes, or even feelings to others (Huebner, 1960).

Gardner (1999) stresses that interaction is a jointly co-constructed technique that both listeners and speakers build their utterances upon the influence of their recipients. Brown and Yule (1983: 53) also differentiate between language functions. The first is the function of transaction, which is considered the producing of the information, while the second is the function of interaction, which can be considered as the main aim of interaction to improve social relationships. Thus language has two functions of spoken (transactional and international). The main focus of the former is to develop social links, whereas that of the latter is to deliver opinions and information. So, most of everyday interaction contains international. Ability to communicate in a language is very important. Therefore, teachers have to supply students with chances for meaningful communication behavior about relevant subjects via applying student-student communication as the major to teaching interaction in a language (Rivers, 1987).

McInnis (1998) mentions about doing communication in the language classroom which states that the using language to inspire, conciliation rather than conflict, and peace rather than war.

Hymes (1974) suggests the core of communicative competence as a replacement to linguistic competence of Chomsky. Communicative competence contains linguistic competence, but also includes a range of other sociolinguistic and conversational skills that make students to be able to speak and know how to say what to whom, when.

Savignon, (2003) conducts an important study on the improvement of interaction skills designed on a model of communicative competence including many basic characteristics. She defines communicative competence as “the ability to function in a truly communicative setting- that is, in a dynamic exchange in which linguistic competence must adjust itself to the total informational input, both linguistic and paralinguistic, of one or more interlocutors” (p. 223).

Savignon (1972) states the issue of being dynamic not static and involving the negotiation of meaning, which means communicative competence is not limited to oral language, it also involves reading and writing. Furthermore, it also depends on context which means that a fluent communicator knows the specific choices of the situation. It is distinct from performance. As a result competence is what student knows while performance is what one does.

Blatner (2009) shows that the role play technique can specify or assess how students act when they face a situation that need to be solve. Also it allows students to practice aspects and problems that have been produce during the lessons and behave like real life situation when students need to be active.

From the researcher’s own experience as an instructor in many colleges in Iraqi universities, he noticed that speaking skill in English as a foreign language cases lack the use of conversations which can be considered as the most important technique and activity for practice grammatical items, lexical and phonological.

### **Types of Role Play**

There are three types of role play, they are: fully scripted role-play, semi-scripted role-play and non-scripted role-play. In a fully scripted role-play, each word is given, and each student should understand or memorize his/her role (Harper-Whalen & Morris 2005). Such type includes explaining the model conversation in the prescribed textbook and the main aim of the conversation after all is to make each item of the language meaningful and easy to remember. Byrne (1986) indicates that role play in this type can be appropriate for low level students who do not know the situation in the semi-scripted role play.

The second one of role play includes a model conversation with some missing words and students should know how to fill in the blanks in suitable words of these contexts (Livingstone 1983). So, students can change the main conversation to some certain way and establish their own conversation. Such type of role play might be called as semi-controlled or as the teacher or prescribed textbook includes language input, but students should also specify the materials depend on a frame which supplies the situations to establish a real life context. This type can be used for students with upper-beginner to intermediate levels of proficiency, those students should be familiar with main procedures and seeks to go to higher level of tasks as semi-scripted role-play is less structured and less controlled than fully scripted role-play.

In the third type of role play where students may be given with keywords of dialogues (Dickson 1989), keywords and information, or contexts and aims in less controlled and structured tasks, in this type, students establish mini conversation based on keywords mentioned above, materials or contexts are simply as filling in gaps (Pi-Chong 1990). Identifying such type of role play as non-scripted role play, and they argue that non-scripted role play provides a great chances to employ the information of techniques in a certain situations. Davies (1990) states that students can build on their opinions and thoughts, and establish language on their level, acting out in some situations based on their understanding. Non-scripted role-play can be practical to for middle to advanced level students as non-scripted role play in a free and structured way which sometimes demands special skills like problem-solving.

## V. METHODS

### A. Participants

The subjects of the study were 40 Iraqi EFL college students in university of Baghdad, College of Education/Ibn-Rushd, third stage. Selected students divided in two groups of 20 each and were randomly distributed to an experimental and a control group. Students taught role play activities while teaching prescribed topic called "Conversation".

### B. Validity and Reliability

In order to get face and content validity as well as authenticity validity of the both tests, the tests have been exposed to the jury members<sup>(1)</sup>. Some modifications and recommendations are suggested by the jury members and they considered in the final version of the tests.

Since scoring of an oral test is considered highly subjective, the present study used some aspects to increase the reliability of the oral test: Firstly, the researcher has adopted the test sheet for students' scores. Secondly, the researcher and another teacher<sup>2</sup> scored the test. Reliability coefficient is obtained by comparing the score of two teachers (both the researcher's score and the second rater when they listened to the tape recorder). The correlation is found to be (0.969) and this is considered a high and stable coefficient.

### C. The Pilot Administration of the Test

A test cannot take its final form before it is tried out, so a pilot administration of the Posttest is carried out on March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016. The whole population of the sample of the test (40). The pilot administration of the test is conducted support the researcher to check the clarity of the items of the test; and calculate the time needed for answering the questions, which appeared to take between 40-45 minutes for the whole test. In addition this, it is used to check the reliability of the test and the practicality of the test in general.

### D. The Pre-test

The pretest was conducted on the April 1<sup>st</sup> 2016. The pretest was administered on the sample of the study for two groups. The researcher himself tested the sample of the study and he recorded the answers for scoring. The time needed for answering the question was between 10-15 minutes. The aim behind carrying out the pretest, is to compare the students' achievement scores in the pretest with that of the same students in the post test.

### E. The Post-test

At the end of the teaching period, the students of the experimental group were post tested on the May 17<sup>th</sup> 2016. The same testing procedures were followed in conducting the pretest. The students' oral performance in the posttest were scored under the same conditions as that of the pretest. The time require for answering the questions was 10-15 minutes for each students. The researcher conducted the pilot test, pretest and the posttest under the same conditions.

### F. Materials

The materials of the present study were of four sorts;

1. materials for the proficiency test,
2. materials for the pre-test,
3. materials for the treatment (appendix I), and
4. materials for the post-test.

Production of spoken language like knowing how to talk a foreign language is usually regarded as the most complicated aspect of language learning for both teachers and students. The present study is dealt with spoken language and the emphasis in the language classroom began to move from the traditional methods to new trends and focus on communicative competence as the ultimate goal of teaching. The oral test permits the researcher to measure the

<sup>(1)</sup> Jury members are:

1- Prof Fatin Khiriy Ph.D.

2- Prof Mueed Saaced Ph.D.

3- Asst Prof. Ali Anor Ph.D.

4- Asst Prof. Efad Abduljabar Ph.D.

<sup>(2)</sup> Hasen, Moahmmmed. A college teacher with more than 10 years of experience in many Iraqi Colleges.

conversation (interaction) components and the linguistics components. Throughout the oral test students are encouraged to speak and then assessed on the basis of that speech. The materials for the proficiency test consist of 35 questions including grammar, vocabulary and sentence completion. The materials for the pre-test of speaking of the study included of 30 questions to be answered by the students in both groups orally. The materials for the study's treatment consisted of teaching speaking with the students' traditional teaching materials in speaking but with the role-play techniques such as "acting out", "group work", etc. for the experimental group and without the mentioned techniques (using the existing methods of teaching speaking) for the control group. The role-play has three steps during the treatment of students pre role-play, while role-play and after role-play.

In the pre role play steps, materials were (technical data, activities, background information and rules) and language (frequently used vocabularies, idioms and some grammatical rules) are taken from the prescribed textbook, usually the teacher and in some cases the students, who have long experience in some contexts. The students were given the relevant words or phrases employ in role play techniques in order to participate effectively in such activity and have time to practice the role play without taking times to know the meaning of unknown words.

The second stage is during role-play, in this step, students read the text and acting a role as clarified in the model conversation, firstly be familiar with the situation and studied the words items and idioms needed in the situation. Secondly, the students create their own script. In such stage usually the teacher did not help students in writing their own words, all students did the writing and try to correct their mistakes without saying it loudly, and such issue due to unfamiliarity with role play technique in the classroom and with low self-confidence of their language. They were stimulated to enlarge the model conversation by adding extra questions with their, or by practicing it with a new situation (e.g. students may create a new situation, which completely differ from the one in the original model), and establish new conversation. To avoid students sitting with the same partner, the students were randomly divided into new partner every week. Students also had enough time to prepare themselves before they started, to decide about the way they would manage their role and briefly rehearse between two students for example. While the practice, they were asked for assistant from their teacher or may be from any group who had a higher level in the English language. Since the communication type is the goal. Role play interactions can be occurred among 3-5 different students. This could lead the students to participate in a variety of communications with different students in the same interaction. This assisted students to be familiar and cope with a given situations and communication steps in spontaneous way, and act out the language they need in such a context normally. At the end, students typed their conversations and they recorded only in their post role play stage.

The third stage is after role play which is the feedback stage. The students received feedback from each other and the teacher as well. During this stage, the teacher may arrange the activities of the language which may help the students as a whole, depend on the noticing of the role plays in an early stage. Students can express themselves freely and effectively about how they want to interact in certain contexts but they were unable to. After practicing on their own conversations, students began typing their own text. During typing, each student should play both roles (he/she could be a client and customer). Anyway, in the 'post role play stage', students did not need to typed themselves, but the recording of such audio had already been done in the while role play stage at the same time as they acted their role-play with 3-5 different students.

Finally, the materials for the post-test of the study consisted of the same 30 questions in the pre-test of speaking to be answered by the students in both groups. The students' performance in the pre and posttests of speaking were scored depending on five aspects: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension, the criteria were adopted from Farhadi, Jafarpoor and Birjandi's (2000) as rating scale.

#### *G. The Procedures*

The speaking class met three times a week. The teacher reads the conversation aloud and then pointing a couple of students to read it in front of the whole class. Then, the teacher pointed out to the students if they faced any difficulty words or expressions in order to analyze and explain them. Students were asked to be in their assigned groups from last class during the three hours. Only given some minutes to remember and practice their conversations. Then, they were called up randomly to practice. This step conducted to encourage students, meanwhile the teacher should grad their performance on a scale of 1 to 20. In addition, a peer observation is conducted by asking students to grade their colleagues in similar scale. Member of each pair were scrambled with each time of practicing a new conversation to avoid of feeling board. Whenever the teacher had spare time (which was rare), he asked couples perform in front of the whole classmates and also practice one of the previous conversations or they can choose a subject to talk about.

## VI. RESULTS

The data of the current study are analyzed by applying the following statistical methods: a t-value (t-test) was calculated between the post-test scores of speaking skill in the two groups of students to show the impact in the hypothesis of the study.

The mean scores of the two groups have been compared; where the mean score of the experimental group is 15.27, while the mean score of the control group is 6.36. This indicates that there is a significant difference in the total scores

of post-test between the experimental and control groups in a favor of the experimental group. This confirms that the experimental group is better than the control group (see table 1).

TABLE (1)  
THE TOTAL SCORES OF THE POST-TEST

Group	No.	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	Computed t-value	Tabulated t-value	Level of significance
Exp.	20	15.27	7.31	102	3.50	1.99	0.05
Cont.	20	6.36	5.54				

Table two shows the results of two ANOVA coefficients calculated separately between the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental and the control group of the study. This means that the pre-test and the post-test scores in the control group are close to each other when compared to those in the experimental group, which represents that treating the experimental group with role-play techniques has resulted in expanding the range of their speaking scores in the post-test.

TABLE (2)  
THE COVARIANCE MATRIX BETWEEN THE PRE-TEST AND THE POST-TEST  
SCORES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL AND THE CONTROL GROUP

Group	Covariance
Experimental	1.15
Control	2.07

It is obvious that students' accents improved with experimental group more than control groups. It may be common fact to obtain this result because role play technique asks students to practice speaking and listening more than reading and writing. Students also should practice the repetition of the same words or expressions many times to comprehend their conversation. They were asked to focus consciously on their accent and pronunciation in particular, also they focused on memorizing each line (this could be done mentally without speaking aloud). As a result, students might have paid more attention to accent or pronunciation while speaking.

## VII. DISCUSSION

The results of the present study indicate that the employed treatment affected the outcomes; thus, it can be concluded that using role-play as classroom technique to improve the performance in a test of speaking among Iraqi EFL students.

Based on the obtained results, certain justifications concerning the effectiveness of using role play techniques on Iraqi EFL students' speaking skill can be made. Accordingly, the students under experimental group seemed to succeed because of getting involved and practice in role play technique such as group work and peer. It can be inferred that if the class is framed as a community to work together supporting each other, it will have the opportunity to work for the same aims. This builds their ability to interact with and understand each other, the best basis for all learning.

Furthermore, the results of the present study confirm that role play techniques provide a kind of interesting environment for the students to flourish in. such environment leads to better attention in learning and stimulate them to participate in role-play techniques. In role-play techniques, students take a new identity and learn to use a FL for every day interaction.

Furthermore, students' vocabulary improved in experimental group more than control group, but not significantly. Students' receptive skills enhanced but not as much as productive one. The vocabulary improvement between the two groups was expected that there could be an important difference in. The reason for this result was that experimental group students interacted with different students in different dialogues and different situations. Therefore, it was normal to assume suggest that experimental group students maybe employ a large number of vocabulary items or may be just different types of lexis than control group. The necessarily limited type of the posttest role play technique could mean that both group students did well. Moreover, students in the posttests might not find the contexts very complicated or even tried overcome these contexts. In the contrary, students were very aware of making conversation clear for themselves and their partners. As a result, the difference between two groups was not a significant in terms of their vocabulary and speaking skill.

Researchers are advised to expand the scope of this study from limited students of college classes to more classes with different levels of language proficiency. Additionally, the experiment can be replicated to different geographical areas, institutes and linguistic situations. The present study can be repeated across genders (male and female) in terms of student participants and teacher participants. Also, the sample size in this research study ( $n = 40$ ) may be converted into a larger size of Iraqi (non-Iraqi) EFL students to find out whether or not the results can be the same. Finally, it will be helpful if the teacher, while performing the role-play technique in teaching speaking skill, talks about a variety of topics including human characteristics such as embarrassment, happiness, sadness, or dishonestly and describes occasions when these characteristics might come in to play.

The present study was mainly intended to enhance the teachers' practice in the classroom not by only bring changes, but also possibly offers new insights into students' use of role play in rea life situations. Role-play types were

successful in assessing and encouraging college students to interact and communicate in groups and pairs and to enhance their speaking skill in the target language. Role play technique has different aspects which can be beneficial in variety of situations. Role play can suitable for both low and high level of students especially for college students to help them to speak English and give them with background information as indirect experience. So, when college teachers try to employ similar ideas in other universities with their students who want to master the language, they can prepare the role play techniques which are most appropriate in the light of students' experience and needs.

#### APPENDIX. MATERIALS FOR TREATMENT

##### **Activity Summary**

In this activity students will:

- Prepare a text of a conflict situation in the workplace
- Role play the text

##### **Prior Knowledge**

- Basic Skills
- Conflict Management Theory

##### **Teaching Planning Notes**

- pointing assignment including previous information needed and assessment and evaluation means
- support students with many references that discuss conflict resolution
- support students with a sample of a simple script
- support students with ample space for practicing role playing (outside)
- support feedback and guidance during script writing and role playing practices
- establish a form of paper for role playing times and dates

##### **Assessment of Student Achievement**

##### **Task Tool / Type**

Script Writing Conflict – Says Who? Texts Assessment Tool (Formative)

Role-playing Conflict – Says Who? Role-Play Rubric (Summative)

##### **Activities and Assessment Materials**

- Dealing with Conflict Role playing Assignment Paper
- Text Writing Assessment Tool
- Role playing rules

##### **Introduction**

As we studied in last lectures, when dealt very well, substantive conflict which can be very healthy for managements. Also can often expand the output of a group, this due to the thoughts are tested and assessed depending on their advantages, using profess, logic and reasoning, rather than accepted as the way things have always been done. This can lead to positive change. Disagreements based on substantive conflict can be a result of differences over:

- Procedures
- Ideas/opinions
- Reasoning process

We also taught about five types of conflict management styles employed to find an answer for conflicts (avoidance, accommodation, authoritative, compromise, and collaboration).

##### **Assignment**

Part A: Script Writing

Working with a partner you will write a script depicting a conflict scenario at the workplace. This conflict can be between a boss and an employee or two co-workers of equal status. This conflict is substantive in nature and the root of the conflict is based on one individual not using one or several Essential Skills effectively.

Part B: Role-playing

Rehearse your script as much as possible so you are convincing to the audience. Your performance will be based on the script itself and on your ability to convince the audience that this could be a real situation.

Part C: Peer Assessment Tool Using the peer assessment tool, you will be identifying the situation, the individuals, what Essential Skills are instrumental in this conflict and what type of conflict management style is used to resolve the situation.

Conflict - Says Who?

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# The Complications of Learning and Understanding English Prepositions among Students at AL Imam AL Mahdi University in Sudan

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**Abstract**—The purpose of this study is to show the difficulties and analyze the various problems Sudanese students in the Arts College in the University of AL Imam AL Mahdi, face while learning and comprehending English prepositions. The focus of this study is therefore, on categorizing the types of challenges faced by these students. The research methods used were a survey followed by a report based on the results of the survey. The survey which comprised 12 items, explored the types of challenges faced by the respondents while learning the English prepositions. To portray the types of challenges faced by the students, the survey responses were analyzed and reported. In the report, the researcher described the problems and also suggested recommendations on the ways to overcome the challenges faced by the students. Thus, the findings of the study portrayed the factors which contributed to the problems in learning prepositions and also the ways to overcome these challenges. It is hoped that the findings of this survey and the suggested recommendations, will assist teachers in their classroom teaching of prepositions in the University of AL Imam AL Mahdi.

**Index Terms**—prepositions, students, problems, and challenges

## I. INTRODUCTION

English language is a global language which most people of the world wish to master, not excepting Sudanese learners. Thus, in Sudan, teaching and learning English has taken a prominent place in the world of education. Albeit such enhancement in the education arena, Sudanese learners are finding it difficult to use prepositions, one of the eight components of Parts of Speech, appropriately. Their problems lie with their inability to select the right preposition according to context and determine the place of the preposition. The main reason for this challenge is the unpredictable collocation that prepositions have with the context used. For example, the preposition “on” is often confused when it is collocated with “field”, is it “*in the field*” or “*on the field*” or “*at the field*”? In this context, it is clear why English language learners face difficulties in not only choosing the appropriate preposition but also explaining the context of the chosen preposition. Furthermore, (Taiwo, 2004) in his study demonstrated that English as Second language learners blunder in their collocation despite adequate linguistic and lexical knowledge. In order to overcome this problem, suitable strategies need to be found and used to teach language structure, in particular preposition. However, mastering the use of preposition is not an easy feat. According to (Lam, 2009), teachers used the traditional method of teaching preposition individually within context, with no further expansion. This means, prepositions are learnt context by context with no means for predictability. Such strategy of trying to remember a list of individual, unrelated uses is not conducive for learners to understand the how the prepositions are used and why they are able to express a wide range of meanings. Therefore, in this study, the researcher would reveal the challenges the Sudanese learners face while learning English prepositions and also suggest recommendations on how to overcome these issues.

## II. THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

English prepositions, are in general, monosyllabic, for example: *on, in, from, to, for, and or*. Apart from that, the use of prepositions in context varies greatly from one language to another. Recognizing such variety may be a major problem among non-native or incompetent language users. This incompetency may further result in wrong interpretation both syntactically and morphologically. This clearly indicates that learners cannot depend on their prepositional knowledge from their mother tongue. If students do make conventions of semantic correspondence between the first and second languages, it often results in prepositional mistakes (Lam, 2009). Finally, the vast number of prepositions in the English language also contributes to their trouble, which contributes the language learners’ inability to systemize English prepositions (Catalán, 1996). In the exploration of the problems faced by English Second language learners, it is found that the usage and the functions of English prepositions have been one of the prominent suffering spots for most students regardless of their competency in the English language (Collins, 1991). The focus of this paper is to find out the difficulties faced by the students while learning English prepositions. More importantly, this

study opens the doors to the understanding of the extent of difficulty that the Sudanese English Language learners face while learning English preposition.

### III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the challenges faced by English as Second language students while using English prepositions?
2. What types of problems do the English as Second language student's face while using English prepositions?

### IV. OBJECTIVE OF RESEARCH

1. To demonstrate the problems faced by students while using English prepositions.
2. To overcome the issues faced by students while using English prepositions.

### V. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study explored the challenges faced by a group of AL Imam AL Mahdi University (Sudan)'s ESL learners in the use of English prepositions. Therefore, the researcher intended through this study to assist both educators and English as Second language learners to know more about the difficulties in employing vocabulary learning strategies.

### VI. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The content of this chapter covers the central concept and significance of using prepositions in English language and reviews the previous studies related to the difficulties that students face in learning English prepositions.

Learning a second language is considered to be a complicated process with its related challenges. As claimed by (Krashen and Biber, 1988) there are two independent systems of second language performance: First, the acquired scheme which is the product of a subconscious procedure similar to the method when children learn their mother tongue. It entails meaningful conversation in the target language where natural communication takes place; here, speakers are concentrating not in their form of utterances but rather in their communication ability. Second, the learned system is the creation of formal instruction and it includes a conscious procedure which leads to the knowledge of the language such as grammar rules. Learning English preposition is closely related with the acquisition and learning process as well as the meaning and communicative aspect. This means English for Second language learners have to know the grammatical rules that govern the preposition usage. Several scholars have pointed out that the cause of difficulties in learning a foreign language is mother tongue interference. For instance (Habash, 1982) claimed that one of the hardest areas of learning is foreign language acquisition. Thus, her primary objective of her study was to explore the causes of errors in the use of English prepositions that are regularly made by Arabic -speaking students. In her study, Habash found that the cause of the difficulty in acquiring a foreign language is mother tongue interference. This challenge resulted from students putting great effort in finding and learning English language structures which were similar to their first language rather than learning the structures which are entirely different and unique to the target language. As mentioned earlier by (Lam, 2009) prepositions can be problematic to identify, mainly in spoken, because a significant number of English prepositions are monosyllabic or with very few syllables. Consequently the language learners might not be proficient enough to distinguish prepositions in quick, naturally taking place speech. Furthermore, the use of prepositions in context differs from one language to another, often creating the negative syntactic transfer.

(James, 2007) reflected Lam's claimed that English prepositions are difficult to master because, different language possesses different set of rules for the usage of preposition. These differences are bound to conflict with the rules of English prepositions which consequently, make learning of English prepositions challenging. Seeing this, (Evans and Tyler, 2005), proposed a new strategy called Cognitive Linguistics to understand and use prepositions effectively. This strategy allows learners to form a locative relationship by subconsciously thinking about each preposition with a dominant meaning in the form of mental images.

#### Previous studies

According to Collins (1991), the most recurrent words of the English Language are prepositions in and there is a minimum of one preposition in most of the English language sentences. (N'da Koffi, 2010) said that to be able to decide what instructional methods are most effective, it is significant to first understand the problems faced by learners while learning prepositions. The challenge of learning prepositions can be due to several factors. First, prepositions are polysemous. Polysemy is a semantic representative that means the coexistence of many possible meanings for a word or phrase. Secondly, virtually all of prepositions in English have a diversity of meanings depending on context. Therefore, learners often become confused when trying to decide prepositional meanings and when wanting to use them in a suitable manner. Meanwhile, (Zughoul, 1979) highlighted that the Saudi Arab- learners of English as Second Language faced unique difficulties in learning English language prepositions because of the following reasons: First, the Traditional methods of teaching like grammar translation Instruction method which encourages students to translate in their minds. Second, the interference of mother tongue with the second language when using prepositions. Moreover, (Scott and Tucker, 1974) pointed out that English prepositions hardly resemble Arabic prepositions. Their study discovered that around two-thirds of the mistakes in prepositions appeared due to native- language Arabic interference



while the unnecessary use of prepositions had its source chiefly in Arabic language. The substitution of prepositions originates from both Arabic and English forms. They concluded that Arab English as Second language learners learn the semantic sense of the English lexical prepositions before they learn all the constraints on their usage. Furthermore, (Hashim, 1996) stated that most of the researchers concentrated on the syntactic mistakes, which Arab English as Second language students made when they used prepositions. In short, the syntactic errors made by the learners are mainly due to the effect of mother tongue on their second language learning. (Nayef and Hajjaj, 1997) reported that during a study on Saudi Arab English as Second Language learners' mistakes, they found that the majority of these learners' errors their faults are in English syntax which led to their conclusion that Arab students' persistent problem is in learning English prepositions which is the most challenging aspect of syntax.

(Hamdallah and Tushyeh, 1993) carried out a contrastive analysis of selected English and Arabic prepositions with instructive implications. They discovered that prepositions pose a learning difficulty to the English as Second Language learners because there are lesser prepositions in the Arabic language and their usage differs from that of English prepositions. (Al-Marrani, 2009) carried out a comparative research of prepositions in Arabic and English. The findings revealed that there are resemblances and variations between Arabic and English prepositions. The resemblances between them simplify the process of learning the English prepositions, however, the differences make learning English prepositions difficult which result in English language learners making many mistakes in their usage of the prepositions. (Gass and Selinker, 1983) reported that English prepositions have always been a source of great trouble for English Language learners irrespective of his or her mother tongue. English Language learners frequently attempt to relate the usage of English prepositions to their first language prepositional system. In various cases, the difference in the number of prepositions and the absence of a one to one mapping between the English and the first language prepositions is the basis of the difficulty. Moreover, since prepositions usage in English can be extremely idiomatic (particularly in phrasal verbs and preposition verbs), even the smallest difference in the idiomatic usage of the English prepositions poses extreme difficulty to English language learners because even the native speakers are unable to ascertain the correct form of the prepositions. (Blom, 2006) highlighted that English language learners have problems in the usage of English prepositions. She revealed that the learners performed better in the usage of prepositions if they were to use their own prepositions or if they were given multiple choice answers to select from. The nine prepositions which are repeatedly misused are "to", "in", "at", "of", "for", "about", "on", "by" and "with". (Blom, 2006) study portrayed learners' tendency to translate from their mother tongue when they face problems choosing the appropriate prepositions in English. This tendency to resort to mother tongue results in either positive or negative interpretation depending on the resemblances of the languages.

(Hendricks, 2010) explained the difficulty in learning preposition by clarifying how the same prepositions can be used for two different situations. For example: the prepositions, on, at and in are used to express time, while the same prepositions are also used to represent the place. Therefore, learners choose a preposition by guessing and being uncertain with their choice. Furthermore, she reported that there were rules which were unhelpful old rules which are still minded such as the rule "about not ending the sentence with a preposition. The difficulty in choosing the appropriate English prepositions is further extended to differences within British and American English. For instance, in American English, they say "filling out a form" while British English it is common to say "filling in a form." As a result, Hendricks proposed that English language learners should rely on extensive reading, memorization, in order to learn how to use prepositions. (Bond, 2007) reported that mastering the uses of preposition is challenging for English as Second language learner because English prepositions have varied functions. As such, learners find it difficult to remember and understand the different uses and meanings of the preposition. Bond also showed in his study that inductive learning through memorizing prepositions and their uses has been the mode of instruction over time. Therefore, his findings show that learners lack the basic understanding of the various prepositions and how they work. In order for learners to become successful English language speakers, Bond recommended that they be immersed in a totally English speaking environment or their education be a blend of inductive and deductive teaching and learning strategies.

To summarize, the different studies on the difficulty of learning prepositions discussed, attest that preposition is a widely researched subject globally. However, Sudanese English as second language learners, in particular AL imam AL Mahdi University English language learners' challenges in learning prepositions has not been explored and studied thus far. Hence, the researcher hopes to spark the interest for further research in the learning of prepositions in Sudan through this study.

## VII. SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The respondents sampled in this study were selected from a group of second year students at the AL Imam AL Mahdi University in Sudan. The criteria for choosing the respondents were: students must have achieved 80% or more pass grade in their last exam; second year undergraduates learning English language four skills and be native speakers of Arabic language. Forty five students aged between 20 years and 22 years old were chosen.

## VIII. DATA COLLECTIONS

One instrument i.e., a questionnaire, for identifying the complications which arise when using English prepositions among AL Imam AL Mahdi University students.

IX. DATA ANALYSIS

A quantitative method was used in collecting the data: a questionnaire was administered in order to identify The Complications of using English Prepositions among AL Imam AL Mahdi University students. The number of respondents involved in this study was 40, and their identity was kept confidential.

X. RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire was administered to find out the possible complications which arise when AL Imam AL Mahdi University students use English prepositions. The respondents answered the questions listed below:

A. *The Lack of Basic Knowledge of Prepositions and Their Multiple Usage Is One of the Prominent Difficulties That You Face*

Figure 10.1 demonstrates the frequency tally of responses to the statement: The lack of basic knowledge of prepositions and their multiple usages is one of the prominent difficulties that you face. Out of the 40 participants, eighty-three percent strongly agreed that the lack of basic knowledge of prepositions and their multiple usages is one of the prominent difficulties that they face. Meanwhile, ten percent of the participants agreed with this statement. However, seven percent of the participants disagreed with this while one percent strongly disagreed with this statement.

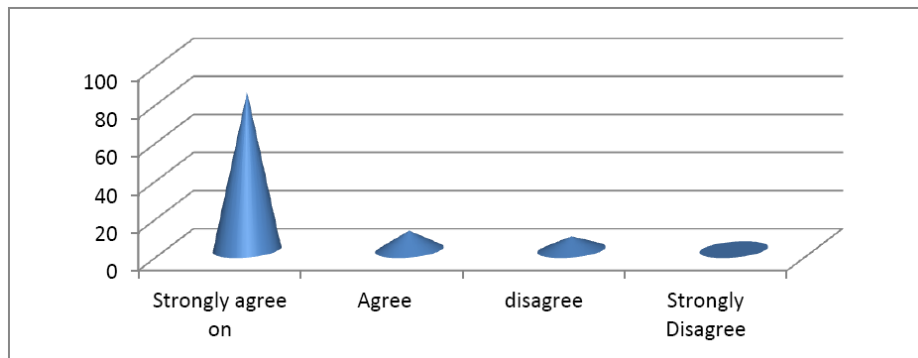


Figure 10.1

B. *The Lack of Communication with English Language Native Speakers Is One of the Problems Faced by You in Understanding Prepositions*

Figure 10.2 demonstrates the frequency tally of responses to the statement: The lack of communication with English language native speakers is one of the problems faced by you in understanding prepositions. Among the 40 participants, sixty-eight strongly agreed that lack of communication with English language native speakers is one of the causes of poor understanding of prepositions. Twenty-four percent of the participants agreed while a mere seven percent and one percent disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to statement.

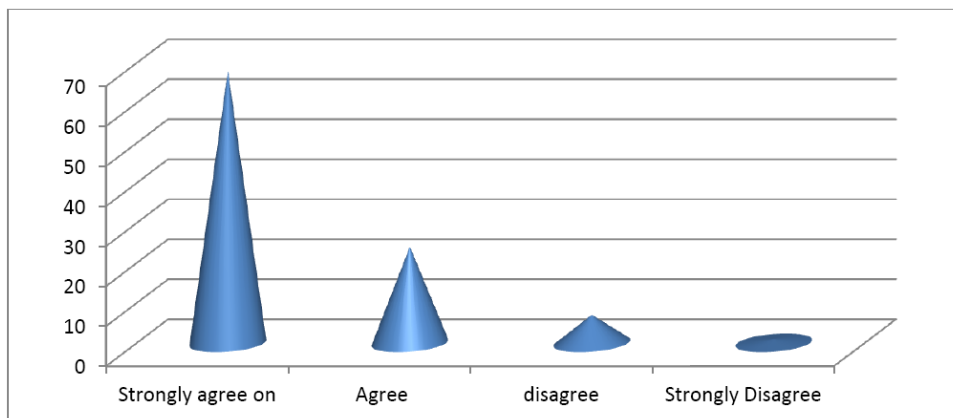


Figure 10.2

C. *There Is an Urgent Need for a Well-designed Grammar Course Book That Explains to You the Syntactic and Semantic Usage of Prepositions in Different Contexts*

Figure 10.3 demonstrates the frequency tally of responses to the statement: There is an urgent need for a well-designed grammar course book that explains to you the syntactic and semantic usage of prepositions in different contexts. From the 40 participants, ninety-one percent strongly agreed that there is an urgent need for a well-designed grammar course book on syntactic and semantic usage of prepositions in different contexts. Meanwhile, six percent of the participants agreed with this statement. However, two percent and one percent of the participants disagreed and strongly disagreed with this statement

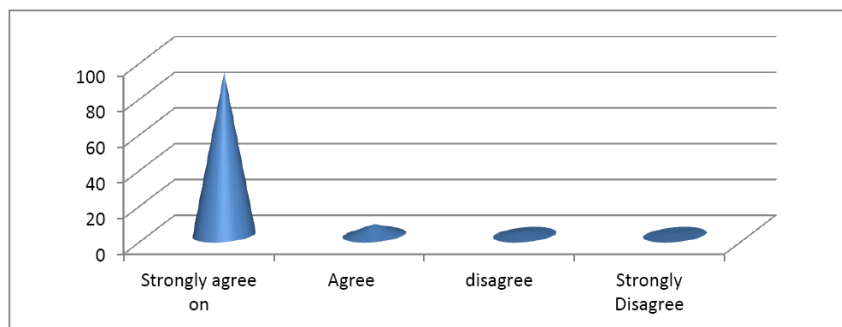


Figure 10.3

*D. The Challenge to Master the Correct Usage of Prepositions in Different Contexts Is One of the Problems in Learning Prepositions for You*

Figure 10.4 demonstrates the frequency tally of responses to the statement: The challenge to master the correct usage of prepositions in different contexts is one of the biggest problems in learning prepositions. Out of the 40 participants, twenty-three percent strongly agreed that mastering the correct usage of prepositions in different contexts is one the problems in learning prepositions. Concurrently, twenty-four percent of the participants agreed with this statement. Nonetheless, forty-three percent of the participants disagreed with this statement while ten percent strongly disagreed.

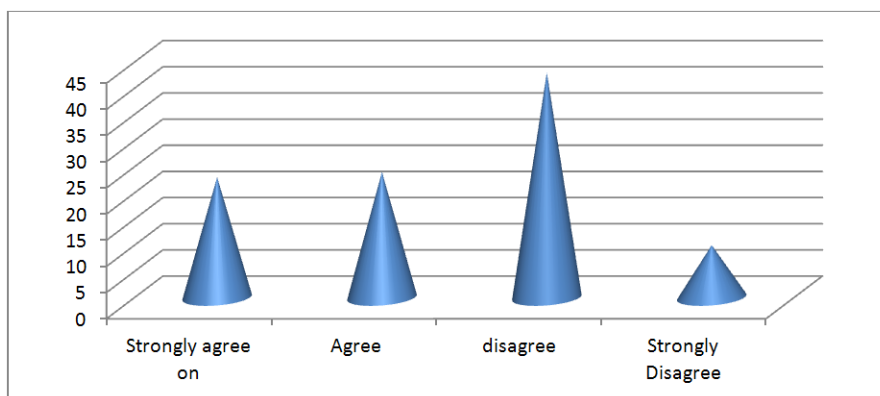


Figure 10.4

*E. Guessing the Use of Preposition in a Sentence is One of the Challenging Factors in Learning Prepositions for You*

Figure 10.5 demonstrates the frequency tally of responses to the statement: Guessing the use of preposition in a sentence for you is one of the challenging factors in learning prepositions. From the 40 participants, seventy-three percent strongly agreed that guessing an appropriate preposition in a sentence is one of the challenging factors in learning prepositions. Apart from that, twenty-four percent of the participants agreed with this statement but three percent disagreed. Notably, no participant strongly disagreed with this statement.

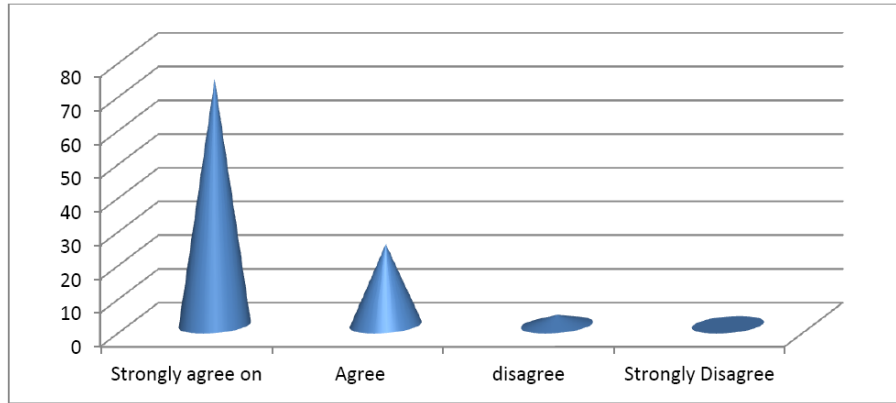


Figure 10.5

*F. The English Prepositions Are Highly Polysemous Words Which Are Difficult to Understand and Use for You*

Figure 10.6 demonstrates the frequency tally of responses to the statement: The English prepositions are highly polysemous words which are difficult to understand and use for you. Among the 40 participants, strongly agreed that the English prepositions are highly polysemous words which are difficult to understand and use. Not one of the participants agreed with this statement but there were nine percent who disagreed. Another nine percent of the participants strongly disagreed that the polysomic prepositions are difficult to understand and use effectively

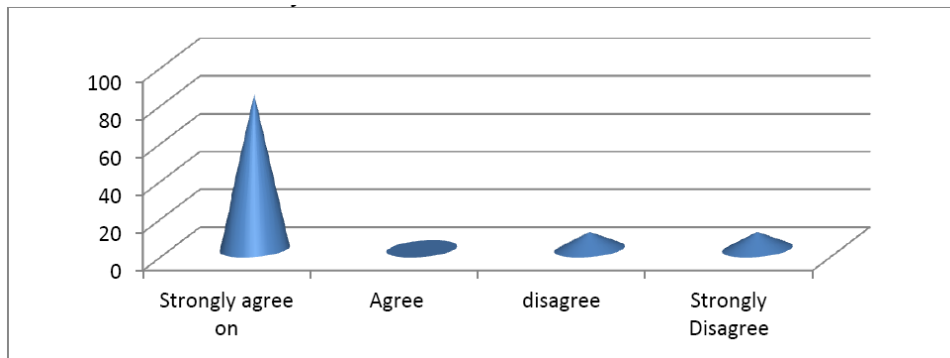


Figure 10.6

*G. Mother-tongue Influence Causes Problem in the Use of Prepositions in a Given Situation for You*

Figure 10.7 demonstrates the frequency tally of responses to the statement: Mother-tongue influence causes problem in the use of prepositions in a given situation for you. Sixty-two percent of the 40 participants strongly agreed that the influence of the mother tongue is a problem when learners are choosing appropriate preposition for a given situation. Furthermore, twenty- two percent of the participants agreed with this statement while, ten percent disagreed. It is worth noting that six percent of the participants strongly disagreed that mother tongue influence is a problem in using prepositions.

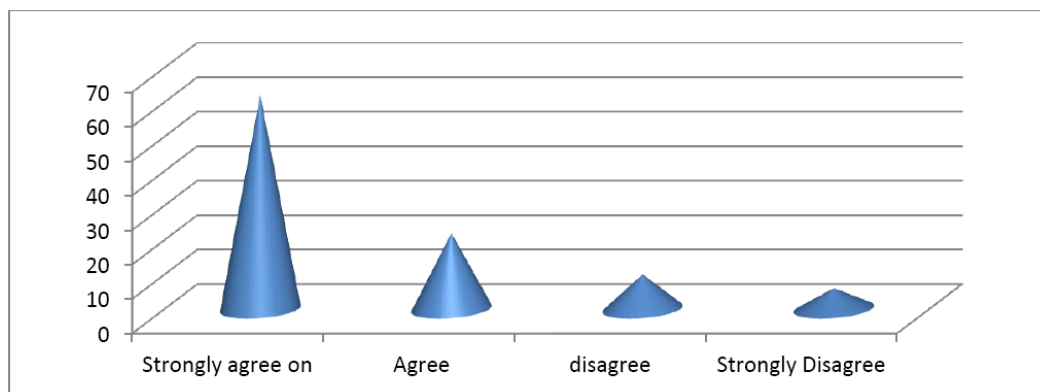


Figure 10.7

*H. Does Learning Grammar Overcome the Challenges of Using English Preposition for You?*

Figure 10.8 demonstrates the frequency tally of responses to the statement: Does learning grammar overcome the challenges of using English preposition for you? Out of the 40 participants, seventeen percent strongly agreed that learning grammar does overcome the challenges of using English preposition among the English language learners. Meanwhile eight percent agreed with this statement. However, a total of sixty-five percent of the participants strongly disagreed that learning grammar can help in overcoming the challenges of using prepositions while ten percent merely disagreed.

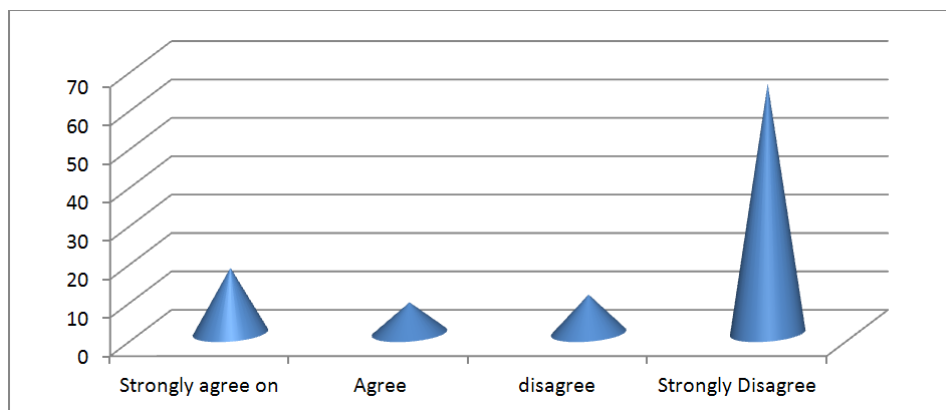


Figure 10.8

*I. The Traditional Method of Using Collocations to Teach Prepositions Create Difficulties in Understanding English Prepositions for You*

Figure 10.9 demonstrates the frequency tally of responses to the statement: The traditional method of using collocations to teach prepositions create difficulties in understanding English prepositions for you. Twelve percent of the 40 participants strongly agreed that using collocations to teach prepositions makes it difficult for English language learners to understand and use prepositions. Fifty-three percent of the participants agreed that this traditional method of teaching created difficulties in the learning of English prepositions. Nevertheless, fifteen percent of the participants disagreed that teaching collocations with prepositions causes difficulty for English language learners learning prepositions while a distinct ten per cent strongly disagreed with the statement

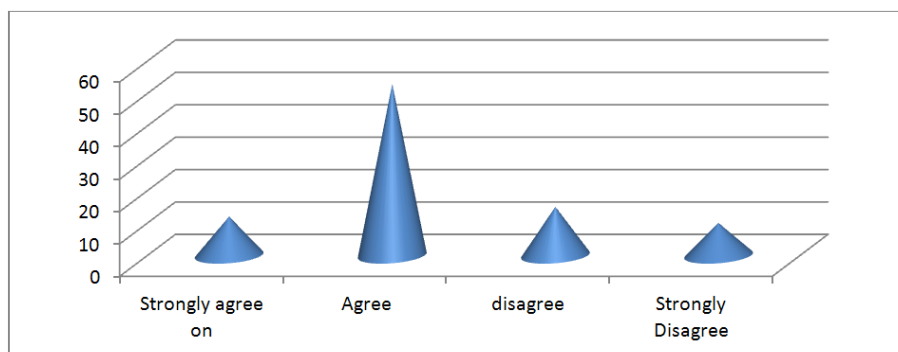


Figure 10.9

*J. Place and Time Prepositions Are the Most Challenging Prepositions for You in the Learning of English Prepositions*

Figure 10.10 demonstrates the frequency tally of responses to the statement: Place and Time Prepositions are the most challenging prepositions for you in the learning of English prepositions. Among the 40 participants, seventy eight percent strongly agreed that Place and Time Prepositions are the most challenging prepositions that learners faced while learning English prepositions. Furthermore twelve percent of the participants agreed with this statement. However, Ten percent of the participants disagreed while one percent strongly disagreed that the place and time prepositions are the most problematic prepositions to learn this statement.

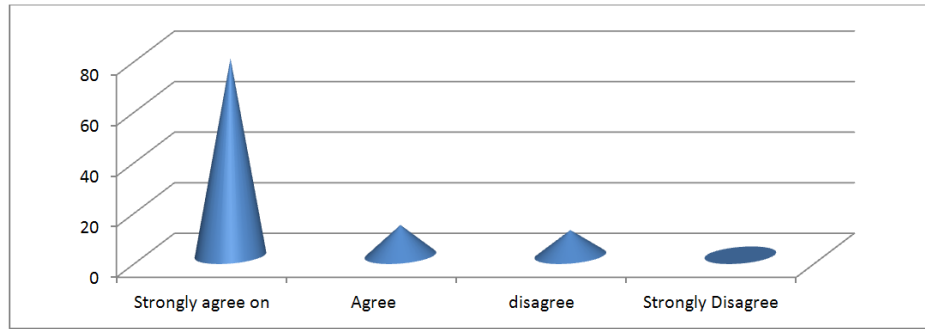


Figure 10.10

*K. Prepositions Perform Three Formal Functions in Sentences. They Can Act As an Adjective, as an Adverb and a Nominal When Used in Conjunction with the Verb Form to Be, Which Create Difficulty for the Learners*

Figure 10.11 demonstrates the frequency tally of responses to the statement: Prepositions perform three formal functions in sentences. They can act as an adjective, as an adverb and a nominal when used in conjunction with the verb form to be, which create difficulty for the learners. From the 40 participants, seventeen percent strongly agreed that the three functions of create difficulty for the learners. A further fifty-one percent of the participants agreed with this statement. Withal, thirty-two percent of the participants disagreed with this statement. Interestingly, 0 percent of the participants strongly disagreed with the three functions of the prepositions posing difficulty to learners.

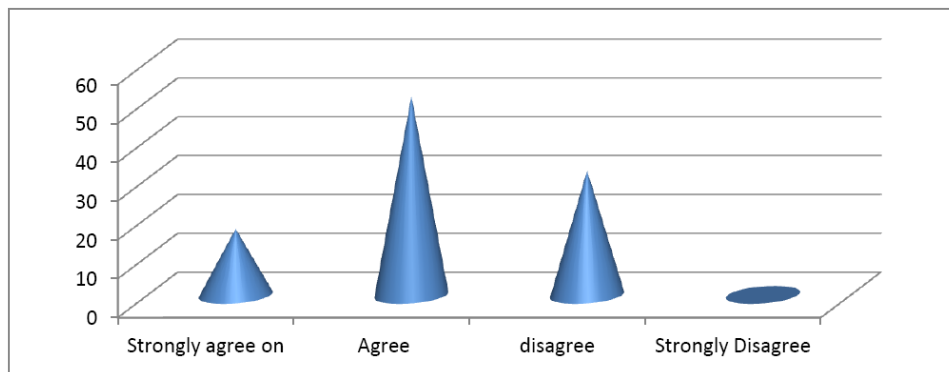


Figure 10.11

*L. The Semantic Differences in the Prepositions of Arabic and English Languages Play a Crucial Role in Making It Difficult to Learn English Prepositions for You*

Figure 10.12 demonstrates the frequency tally of responses to the statement: The semantic differences in the prepositions of Arabic and English languages play a crucial role in making it difficult to learn English prepositions for you. From the 40 participants, seventy-seven percent of the participants strongly agreed that the differences in the meanings of the prepositions in the Arabic and English languages play a very important role in making learning prepositions difficult for English language learners. Meanwhile, twelve percent of the participants agreed with this statement. However, seven percent disagreed and four percent strongly disagreed with the statement.

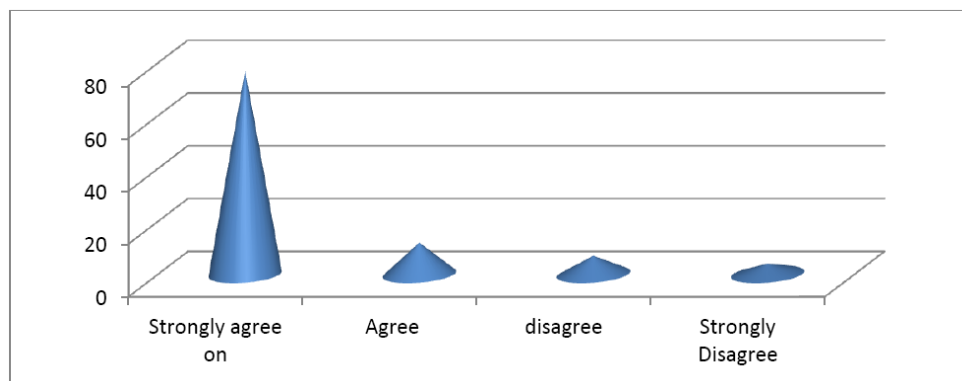


Figure 10.12

## XI. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirmed (Chodorow et al., 2007)'s study which said that preposition is one of the most problematic parts of speech in English language. The complications in learning preposition arise because of the many complex roles performed by them. According (Chodorow et al., 2007), English, prepositions appear in adjuncts, they mark the arguments of predicates, and they combine with other parts of speech to express new meanings. As a result, prepositions have various syntactic roles. In addition, the complications which arise while learners learn prepositions are due to the mono-morphemic form, which means prepositions are not derived from other words. Furthermore, prepositions are non-inflecting, meaning they do not take prefixes or suffixes. As mentioned earlier, the many functions of prepositions in English language contribute to the complications which arise while learners learn to use prepositions. (Humeid, 2013) in his study stated that apart from the varied functions of prepositions in English language, there are different prepositions with the same function which result in the failure of students in using prepositions effectively. These researches findings also show that preposition with collocations also contribute to the complications which arise in the learning of prepositions. Unlike in various other grammar components, prepositions with collocations in particular do not have specific rules to be followed by the English as Second language learners. Thus, learning prepositions with collocations is a challenge for the ESL learners. This complication necessitates the educators to consciously teach the collocations to the EL learners in the classroom. Another significant finding of this result is that the Sudanese of AL Imam AL Mahdi University EL learners are not competent users of English prepositions. Moreover, they indicated in the study that they need a grammar textbook to explain the syntactic use of prepositions clearly to them. Presumably, their difficulties in the learning of prepositions are due to not having a good textbook on the learning of English prepositions. The mother-tongue or first language interference on the Sudanese of AL Imam AL Mahdi University ELL learners in the learning of prepositions was another one of the findings of this research study. The difference between Arabic and English prepositions in number, sense and usage caused challenges in learning the prepositions. Not every English preposition has a distinct correspondent in Arabic and vice versa which creates misperception for the Arabic learners to use. Also, the imperfect familiarity of how a preposition is used makes the students create some prepositional mistakes. Therefore, in order for the Arabic ELL students to learn prepositions effectively, they should be conscious of the differences and similarities between the prepositions in the two languages. In addition, semantic differences in the prepositions of both Arabic and English language prepositions also play a crucial role in causing the difficulty in learning English prepositions. is The semantic differences combined with several influences comprising the morphological, phonological, and metaphorical usage .further contribute to the complications which arise while learning to use prepositions. Such misinterpretation or misuse is the basis of the systematicity of mistakes. Moreover, these difficulties are also due to the poor presentation of prepositions in the textbook which was pointed out by (Bennett, 1975) in his study. According (Bennett, 1975) to several textbook writers emphasized only on some types of prepositions while they disregarded other concepts which they felt was not of relevance. Concepts that some textbook writers emphasis on some characteristics of the language and disregard others according to their belief or experiences. Furthermore, the findings also, revealed that the time and place prepositions are the most problematic prepositions for the University of Jazan English as Second language learners to understand and use. This is in line with (Ahmad *et al.*, 2011) finding in his study on preposition error analysis, which asserted that errors take place because of the wrong idea of a hypothesis.

Finally, the conclusion of this research findings is that the complications which arise while learning English prepositions are caused by mother-tongue interference, mulit-functions of prepositions, inappropriate textbook on prepositions, polysemous prepositions, incompetency in the basic knowledge of prepositions and the traditional pedagogical instruction used in the teaching of prepositions as identified by (Lin, 2001). To sum up the discussion, it is important that the pedagogy used by the educators to teach the use of prepositions must be relevant to the context of the learning: is it an adverb or nominal or an adjective? If the pedagogy were suitable, then the impact of learning English prepositions will be successful.

## XII. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and findings from the study, there are significant conclusions which help to identify the difficulties faced by AL Imam AL Mahdi students English as Second language learner's face while learning English prepositions. The responses of the participants, who are studying English as a second language at the university, evidently confirm the results of the previous studies that English preposition is a great force to be contended with in an English Second Language situation. Nevertheless, as weary as it may seem, it must be learned, because the absence of good performance in English preposition will contribute to poor English language structures and misunderstanding of the language's Educators should employ teaching strategies such as Proto-type Approach, and Cognitive Strategy and Collocation Method to help English as Second Language learners overcome their problems in learning English preposition. Apart from a deliberate and focused teaching of the preposition and its associated properties in usage and meaning, a comparative analysis of the prepositions of the different languages with which English has contact with may assuage the learners' trouble.

## XIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Instructors ought to indicate the differences between English and Arabic language sentence structures, in order to overcome the language obstruction and for a more successful effect in learning English prepositions.
2. A well –designed instructional method which is particularly concerned with the requirements English as Second language learners should have in order to learn English prepositions
3. Educators ought to have an inspiration disposition to energize the learning of English prepositions.

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# The Central Characteristics of Successful ESL/EFL Teachers

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**Abstract**—Achieving optimal success in teaching English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) requires teachers to demonstrate varying essential characteristics that consist of several underlying and interacting constructs. The purpose of this article is to orient the reader and succinctly identify the key variables that lead ESL/EFL teachers to distinctive success. It clearly delineates the characteristics of successful ESL/EFL teachers embedded within five central dimensions, along with their underlying structures. It also provides common taxonomies of successful EFL teachers' attributes without burdening the reader with unnecessary detail concerning the many other validated attributes associated with ESL/EFL teachers' salient attributions of success. To this end, this discussion contributes to a theoretical understanding of the development of successful ESL/EFL teachers and to improved knowledge of the key characteristics of successful ESL/EFL teachers.

**Index Terms**—characteristics of successful ESL/EFL teachers, cognitive knowledge, content knowledge, English language proficiency, personality traits, key related variables

## I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the key figures in the English-language learning process. Teachers fuel their students' interests and efforts, or tackle the lack thereof, making their influence fundamental to students' progress. In this way, teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) can have a far-reaching, long-term, and suggestive impact on their students' EFL learning journeys.

To achieve success in teaching English—that is, to guide students to successful acquisition—EFL teachers have to be aware of and possess certain essential competencies with broad appeal across a range of domains. They also need to consider and engage with crucial factors in the language-learning and teaching literature and, above all, understand how students learn EFL. Unfortunately, the EFL field has yet to successfully frame the discourse and debate surrounding the key characteristics of successful EFL teachers. The literature still fails to articulate a values-driven, principles-based framework informed by research-based practices and data concerning the outstanding characteristics of successful EFL teachers. To address this gap, this article delineates the identifiable professional characteristics of successful EFL teachers within the ESL/EFL teaching community.

Successful ESL/EFL teachers, as Figure 1 displays, (a) display explicit awareness of the cognitive knowledge dimension of language teaching; (b) develop profound knowledge of related content, that is, disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and technological pedagogical knowledge; (c) attain a high level of English language proficiency; (d) possess certain unique personality traits; and (e) possess other related key variables.

The first section of this article explores successful ESL/EFL teachers' cognitive knowledge by revealing the mental lives/structures encompassing these teachers' beliefs as well as other aspects of the ways in which they label the cognitive knowledge of pedagogical and learning principles that guide their discursive practices. The second section discusses the content knowledge of successful ESL/EFL teachers as well as the significant need to organize this knowledge into interconnected schemata to utilize it effectively. The following two sections underscore the significance of English language proficiency and describe specific personality traits of successful EFL teachers. These attributes are both essential for the making of successful ESL/EFL teachers, as they enable such teachers to function effectively in their English classrooms. The final section examines further related key variables that characterize successful ESL/EFL teachers.

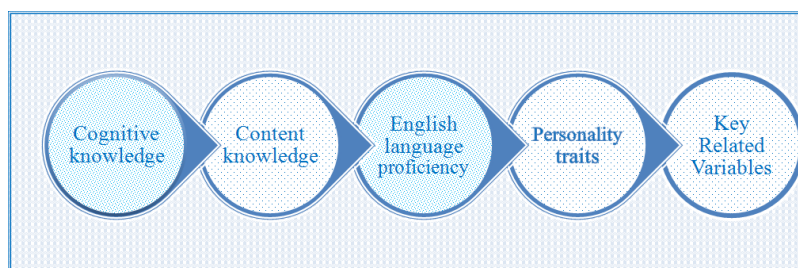


Figure 1. Key variables that promote ESL/EFL teachers' success.

## II. ESL/EFL TEACHERS' COGNITIVE AWARENESS OF THEIR SUCCESS

Teachers' cognition plays a pivotal role in their lives and is a key theme in the field of language teaching. In practice, this factor concerns the unobservable cognitive dimension of language teaching, particularly what ESL/EFL teachers know, believe, and think in relation to topics relevant to language teaching as well as the relationship of these constructs to their instructional activities (Borg, 2003). In other words, teacher cognition concerns internal frames of reference, or the inner landscapes of action that teachers bring to their classroom practices; these, in turn, illuminate the hidden dynamics of ESL/EFL teachers' instructional practices and reflect the rich tapestry of their mental lives (Kubanyiova, 2015). In successful EFL language teaching, a teacher's cognition contributes to improved instructional performance and promotes the accomplishment of professional tasks. Thus, EFL teachers' cognitive knowledge—or the hidden dimensions of language teaching—is particularly important; according to Nahrkhalaji (2014), without cognitive knowledge, EFL teaching is simply a routine habit or a process of trial and error.

This section explores successful ESL/EFL teachers' explicit awareness of their cognitive knowledge, which reveals not only their actions but also what they think and do in the arena of their English classrooms. Overall, this section articulates teachers' cognitive activity and underlying mental reorientations to demonstrate the way in which their cognition is structured and how teachers apply their cognition occurs in situ, with the ultimate goal of demonstrating how one can conceptualize ESL/EFL teachers' cognition in relation to practice and how cognition informs teaching practice.

### **Successful ESL/EFL Teachers' Cognitive Awareness of Teaching and Learning**

Successful ESL/EFL teachers' cognitive awareness lies in their recognition and practice of concerted pedagogical behaviors (classroom actions, routines, interactions, and behaviors). These behaviors represent several key constructs of cognition that form two major factors: (a) knowledge of cognition and (b) regulation of cognition, which involves regulating the teaching and learning processes precisely. In general, various networks of knowledge, thoughts, beliefs, principles, and emotions shape the cognitive knowledge that successful EFL teachers bring to their learning-to-teach experiences.

In practice, successful ESL/EFL teachers (a) hone their existing knowledge constantly; (b) construct their own conceptions and theories of language teaching and articulate personal teaching theories; (c) familiarize themselves with new trends; and (d) reflect on the conceptualization of the teaching, beliefs, and practices in which they engage. Accordingly, successful EFL teachers demonstrate greater explicit awareness of their own cognitive knowledge, sociocultural perspectives, and assumptions regarding teaching, learning, learners, and other aspects of the profession. This awareness enables them to determine the way in which they approach teaching and thereby helps them develop their own professional knowledge and the skills necessary to be successful, which allows them to determine the ways in which they approach teaching. Successful ESL/EFL teachers also possess greater cognitive awareness of the instructional strategies and activities in their repertoire, what these entail, and when, how, and why to use them, together with ways in which to evaluate their effectiveness. This awareness enables self-regulation of teaching activities. At the same time, successful ESL/EFL teachers are conscious of any deficiencies in their skillset and recognize constraints in their professional world. As Scarino (2013) argued, language teachers' cognitions are conceptual, and the social resources and pedagogical concerns they bring to EFL instructional practice are inextricably linked. Thus, the categories of EFL teachers' cognitions meld "together in complex and indeed inextricable ways to produce multifaceted, holistic accounts of, and actions in, language teaching" (Johnston & Goettsch, 2000, p. 440).

## III. CONTENT KNOWLEDGE OF SUCCESSFUL EFL TEACHERS

Successful ESL/EFL teachers also demonstrate significant ability in three central dimensions of content knowledge: disciplinary knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and technological pedagogical knowledge. This section highlights the distinctive characteristics of each key body of knowledge.

### **Disciplinary Knowledge**

To understand the underpinnings of their own teaching philosophy and to ensure success, successful ESL/EFL teachers continually review new sources about issues related to language acquisition. By remaining current in their field, these teachers can implement the most recent teaching methods supported by current research and thus become even more successful. This accrued knowledge is called disciplinary knowledge.

As Richards (2011) explained, disciplinary knowledge is a circumscribed body of knowledge that encompasses a much broader range of content. In this context, successful ESL/EFL teachers retain germane disciplinary knowledge that draws from various language-related milieus, including syntax, phonology, discourse analysis, applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, second-language acquisition, language learning theories, the history of language-teaching methods, principles of language learning and teaching, and culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogies, all of which enhance language learning. Successful teachers also possess a comprehensive knowledge of theories regarding the main factors and concepts of second-language learning, such as age, attitude, anxiety, motivation, language aptitude, self-efficacy, ego boundaries, affective and personality factors, and social influences.

### **Pedagogical Knowledge**

That said, profound disciplinary knowledge alone is not sufficient for successful ESL/EFL teaching. Successful EFL teachers also draw on strong pedagogical knowledge, or procedural knowledge, to make their instruction relevant and accessible to students. This type of knowledge falls under various categories, all of which constitute key teaching factors. Generally, however, effective pedagogical knowledge involves (a) an understanding of social, cognitive, and developmental theories of language teaching and learning, and how they apply to students in the EFL classroom; (b) knowledge of teaching processes and learning practices, or methods of teaching and learning; (c) a thorough understanding of the ways in which EFL students construct knowledge and acquire language-related skills; and (d) skills and experience in classroom management, lesson plan development and implementation, and student evaluation.

### **Key Teaching Factors**

**Methods and Approaches in EFL Teaching.** Successful EFL teachers have a firm grasp on methods of and approaches to teaching the elements of language. Such pedagogical content knowledge includes knowledge of existing language-teaching methods (particularly modern methods), types of language testing, testing techniques, and the strategies used to teach language elements, including culture, grammar, vocabulary, and the four macro skills, that is, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Successful ESL/EFL teachers also possess vast experience in curriculum planning, task and material design, evaluation, adaptation, and implementation. As Al-Mahrooqi, Denman, and Al-Siyabi (2015) argued, understanding these categories of pedagogical content knowledge enhances EFL teachers' success.

Because of their strong pedagogical content knowledge, successful EFL teachers are knowledgeable about the key factors of effective language teaching, including clear directions, time management, reflective teaching, awareness of students' needs, the roles of teachers and learners, and classroom interaction and management, as well as other alternative factors. This knowledge enables them to combine some of the best aspects of more "traditional" teaching with recent innovative procedures that involve task-based and learner-centered interactive methods as well as language-teaching innovations such as participatory language teaching, sheltered language instruction, and authentic assessments. Therefore, rather than simply studying teaching techniques that involve applying quick fixes to issues that may arise, successful EFL teachers develop a much broader base of pedagogical knowledge (Loughran, 2006).

**Instructional techniques.** In particular, successful ESL/EFL teachers are familiar with a large repertoire of teaching techniques and can adapt and employ a myriad of judicious techniques in the classroom. These instructional techniques include classroom activities and procedures that employ specific strategies to achieve objectives, such as opening the lesson, introducing and explaining tasks, setting up learning arrangements, checking students' understanding, guiding student practice, and transitioning from one task to another (Richards, 2011).

To enhance their success in the ESL/EFL classroom and help learners acquire the desired mastery of English, successful ESL/EFL teachers implement appropriate teaching techniques and activities that vary in type and modality, and they move from more controlled to less structured activities. They select proven instructional techniques, apply sound principles of language-learning and teaching theory in designing and delivering instructional practices, and teach language concepts through a variety of modalities. Furthermore, these teachers employ a variety of instructional methods to accommodate learners' diverse abilities and learning styles, organize their instruction to provide all students the opportunity to learn, and monitor students' progress and potential. As Yazdanpanah (2015) explained, these instructional techniques are "integrated in nature rather than discrete, not allowing us to draw clear-cut borderlines between them by separating them into distinct categories" (p. 20).

**Lesson plans.** The ability to design and execute an effective lesson plan is also essential to effective teaching. Successful EFL teachers excel at clarifying the educational goals of each lesson and designing classroom activities and rich language-learning tasks that contribute to the realization of lesson objectives. In particular, these classroom activities address specific aspects of student learning and skills, measured in terms of students' abilities—that is, what students are able to do through instruction. In these ways, successful EFL teachers tailor their lesson plans to the needs and abilities of their students.

Moreover, successful ESL/EFL teachers ensure that activities proceed as planned, and they identify and secure the materials and equipment required beforehand. They plan for multiple elements involved in lesson planning and lesson enactment, such as structuring, pacing, and sequencing the lesson to ensure that adequate time is allotted to address each part of the lesson. At the same time, they monitor students' work, gauge its difficulty to ensure that the students are able to perform the activities, and ensure that decisions about grouping arrangements are appropriate. Finally, they use assessment before, during, and after lessons, and they delineate the critical components of differentiated instruction clearly. Above all, as language lessons are "dynamic in nature, to some extent unpredictable, and characterized by constant change" (Richards & Lockhart, 2007), successful EFL teachers make continual interactive decisions that are appropriate to the specific dynamics of the lesson they are teaching.

### **English Classroom Management**

A further distinctive characteristic of successful ESL/EFL teachers is their ability to effectively manage their classrooms—particularly the English learning that takes place in EFL classrooms. Successful EFL teachers are aware of the importance of classroom management, in that it maintains discipline, maximizes the available class time, and promotes comfort, order, and appropriate student behaviors. Accordingly, they develop routines, exercise proactive discipline, and maintain momentum and interest based on the age of their students, the physical environment, and the

purpose of the instruction. To this end, they use independent work, small-group and interest-group conversations, and student-led drills appropriately to contribute to the smooth functioning of a class. Successful ESL/EFL teachers know that students who are actively involved in a class that is set at their linguistic level and incorporates their interests and backgrounds will be so busy learning that discipline will, in large measure, not be an issue.

According to Yazdanmehr and Akbari (2015), successful EFL teachers employ various management skills in the EFL classroom, including establishing rules and routines, monitoring student behavior, using preventive management strategies, and clarifying expectations so they are less opaque to students. Gatbonton (2008) noted two additional management skills: procedure checks, which involve ensuring that the lesson flows smoothly from beginning to end, and progress reviews, which ensure that students are on task and demonstrating progress. Overall, the ability to manage and organize an ESL/EFL classroom improves the probability of success in implementing teaching plans and addressing the ultimate goal: high students' performance and achievement.

#### **English Classroom Atmosphere**

Successful EFL teachers also recognize that classroom-management skills are especially important in the EFL context because EFL classrooms are extremely complex. EFL teachers need to make moment-by-moment decisions to translate a plan into action while maintaining a convivial and constructive atmosphere that facilitates language learning. In particular, students in ESL/EFL classrooms learn through their second language rather than their primary language, and thus approach all aspects of reading, writing, listening, and speaking in a language that is not their native tongue. Accordingly, students need to know that their EFL teacher supports them in this challenge and is doing his or her best to help them learn effectively while increasing their proficiency level. At the same time, EFL teachers need to demonstrate that each member of the class deserves attention, whatever his or her level of achievement, and that all students are equal in the teacher's eyes, by providing equal opportunities to participate and receive adequate feedback. In other words, EFL teachers need to establish supportive learning communities that encourage a low affective filter.

As EFL students learn best when they study in a caring, welcoming, and nonintimidating learning environment, successful EFL teachers create a friendly atmosphere in which students are free to express themselves without fear of being embarrassed in front of their peers when they err, and without fear of their teachers' contempt or criticism. Successful teachers are aware that learners need a safe and orderly learning environment that is also exciting and engaging and allows them to take risks. In such an atmosphere, students become self-motivated; they participate actively in the learning process and feel encouraged to delve into the nuances of orchestrating meaningful classroom discussions.

#### **Technological Pedagogical Knowledge**

The third body of knowledge that successful ESL/EFL teachers demonstrate is technological pedagogical knowledge: knowing how to teach ESL/EFL with technology in a way that exploits all available tools and teaching resources effectively based on the fundamental understanding that constructive use of current technologies supports ESL/EFL instruction. On this note, Koçoğlu (2009) and Chai, Chin, Koh, and Tan (2013) found that successful ESL/EFL teachers are knowledgeable about various digital technologies, aware of the effective uses of technology as pedagogical tools, and capable of incorporating varied technological applications into their EFL classrooms. Thus, successful ESL/EFL teachers possess sufficient technological pedagogical knowledge and skills as well as the ability to integrate technology effectively into the process of ESL/EFL teaching and effectively and meaningfully merge technology with instructional practices and technology-enhanced classroom activities.

**Technological knowledge.** In particular, successful ESL/EFL teachers know which technological tools to use, how to use them appropriately, why they are important, and how English learners access and process digital information. They have a deep understanding of the affordances and constraints of technological advances and various digital technologies, and they remain abreast of the rapid advances in technology. Successful ESL/EFL teachers use this technology-related knowledge to inform effective teaching approaches, by matching technology to specific instructional goals and pedagogy, and incorporate technology effectively into the ESL/EFL classroom. Furthermore, they develop the skills necessary to look beyond the most common uses of technology and reconfigure it for customized pedagogical language teaching and learning. Accordingly, a technological knowledge base is key to successful ESL/EFL teaching (Kurt, Mishra, & Koçoğlu, 2013).

**Technological skills.** Successful EFL teachers also master various technological skills that enable them to use technology to enhance their approach to teaching and learning as well as to create and implement techno-pedagogical teaching materials and activities in a real ESL/EFL classroom setting. These teachers are able to navigate technology efficiently, know how to solve technological problems, remain aware of technological developments, work with different technologies, and recognize that some tasks will soon require a high level of technological skill. Furthermore, they have an adequate understanding of and confidence in the use of various technologies, when and how to use them effectively for instructional purposes, ways to assess their use, and most importantly, ways to guide students in using high-quality technological tools to learn. Successful ESL/EFL teachers acquire these skills through continual experience with using the tools and programs available today. This experience enables them to determine whether specific technologies are suitable for students with different levels of proficiency, provide targeted support in a necessary skill, increase EFL learners' engagement and excitement, and facilitate the development of EFL skills in particular and language acquisition in general.

**Technological integration.** By using this knowledge base, successful ESL/EFL teachers integrate current technological resources and applications into the EFL classroom effectively, not only at the surface level but also throughout the process of teaching and learning in ways that produce maximum language-learning outcomes. They also incorporate technology at each stage of instruction: at planning, lesson delivery, practice and review, and assessment. According to DelliCarpini (2012), integrating—or interweaving—technology into teaching and EFL lesson and unit planning is critical to ensure equitable access to and participation in the types of 21st-century language skills required in our increasingly technological society.

#### IV. LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY OF SUCCESSFUL ESL/EFL TEACHERS

Although strong cognitive awareness and content knowledge are important attributes of successful EFL teachers, according to Butler (2004) and Çetinavcı and Yavuz (2011), high English language proficiency is, unsurprisingly, the most essential characteristic of a successful ESL/EFL teacher. Smadi (2013) also found an association between higher levels of English language proficiency and higher quality of instruction. Accordingly, given its primary role in EFL teaching, language proficiency is a key trait that, once achieved, leads to increased efficacy in the English-teaching process.

Unsurprisingly, successful EFL teachers demonstrate a high level of competence in and understanding of the English language system. This competence entails a declarative knowledge of English that comprises multiple constructs, including rule-governed structures, knowledge of and the ability to use English, and sociolinguistic and strategic aspects of proficiency, as well as a mastery of discourse. Successful EFL teachers also display fluency in speaking, writing, listening to, and reading English as well as expressive abilities in terms of understanding verbal and nonverbal expressions, such that they generally employ language clearly and efficiently. Finally, successful EFL teachers demonstrate the four aspects of language competence suggested by Canale and Swain (1980), as shown in Figure 2: (a) linguistics competence (explicit knowledge of language elements, such as phonology, morphology, syntax, and grammar); (b) sociocultural competence (the social and cultural rules underlying language); (c) strategic competence (the strategies used to overcome language difficulties or enhance communication); and (d) discourse competence (the forms of discourse and conventional use of communication structures).

In the EFL classroom, teachers who demonstrate high English language proficiency or reach a threshold proficiency level in English are able to provide the rich input that students need for successful language acquisition. On this note, successful EFL teachers (a) provide input at an appropriate level of difficulty, (b) maintain use of the target language in the classroom, (c) give correct feedback on learners' language, (d) personalize lessons according to students' backgrounds, (e) use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary to accomplish tasks, and (f) provide good language models. Accordingly, proficient ESL/EFL teachers are able to teach more efficiently in a variety of teaching contexts, and at all levels, as well as execute more effective lesson planning (Llurda, 2006).

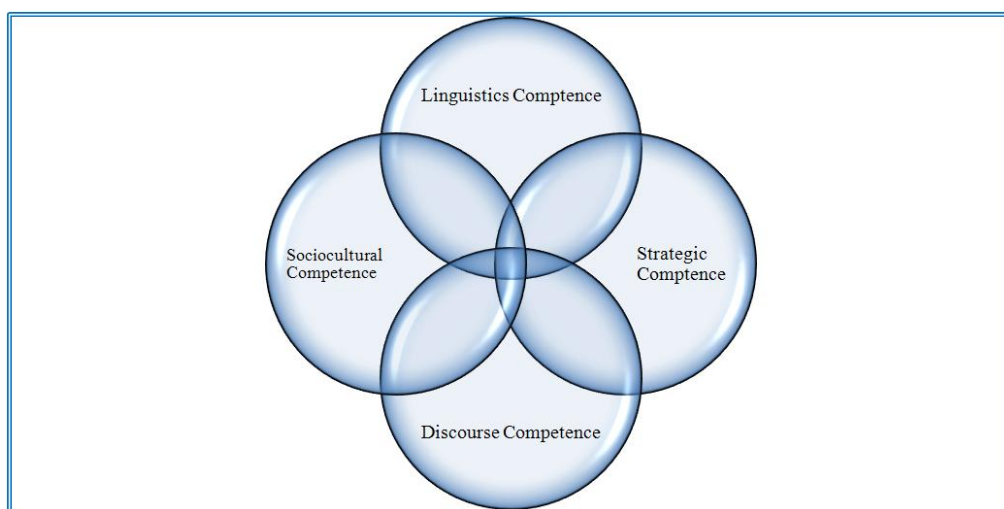


Figure 2. Four major aspects of language competence.

#### V. PERSONAL TRAITS OF SUCCESSFUL ESL/EFL TEACHERS

Finally, successful EFL teachers demonstrate a wealth of personality traits (or “soft” attributes) with broad appeal, the most important of which are flexibility and adaptability, enthusiasm, fairness, high expectations, a good sense of humor, patience, responsibility, agreeableness, a caring attitude, friendliness, honesty, and respectfulness. These traits are related to various interpersonal dimensions of an EFL teacher's personality that are key to success in EFL teaching. In discussing five significant interpersonal dimensions that promote the mission and vision of successful EFL teaching

and learning, this section (a) introduces the behaviors of a successful ESL/EFL teacher, (b) articulates the common principles of these behaviors (together with various correlated and more specific primary factors), and (c) sheds light on the instructional effects of these traits. Although the attributes discussed here do not encompass every major characteristic of successful EFL instructors, they are the most salient.

### **Flexibility and Adaptability**

To teach ESL/EFL successfully, ESL/EFL teachers must first possess two crucial characteristics: flexibility and adaptability. In the EFL classroom, teachers need to adapt their instruction to their students, who, in turn, adapt to the different modes of instruction they receive. ESL/EFL teachers also need to be flexible, as both language learning and language teaching are dynamic processes in which numerous factors interplay and are susceptible to change. Moreover, no method or even combination of practices offers a panacea for EFL teaching. Instead, successful ESL/EFL teachers can accommodate various learning styles, educational backgrounds, and potentially frustrating language barriers by maintaining a flexible teaching philosophy and adapting their techniques to their students' level, culture, and goals to thereby respond to learners' specific abilities and needs.

In practice, successful EFL teachers embrace (or at least recognize) new developments in the teaching field and learn and strive constantly to evolve their understanding in response to changes in areas such as student characteristics, curricula, and teaching circumstances. Furthermore, successful EFL teachers demonstrate the willingness and ability to experiment with different teaching methods, use a variety of classroom activities, seek new ideas, and develop effective rules to manage classroom behaviors in particular settings. Successful ESL/EFL teachers also reflect on their personal experiences and adjust their methods based on emerging situations. To determine what works best, these teachers test different techniques and approaches as well as access rich, organized, and integrated knowledge from different domains flexibly, which are practices that produce greater success in student language-learning experiences.

Clearly, flexibility and adaptability are significant traits in successful EFL teaching. Accordingly, Shishavan and Sadeghi (2009) contended that successful EFL teachers also change and develop throughout their teaching career. Therefore, practitioners should view ESL/EFL teachers' success as fluid rather than fixed.

### **Agreeableness**

In addition to flexibility and adaptability, successful EFL teachers display agreeableness. English teachers' success is perceived to exist as a consequence of their agreeable traits. ESL/EFL teachers with high levels of agreeableness tend to be cooperative, caring, good-natured, courteous, and trusting. These teachers are prosocial and adopt a communal orientation toward others. Thus, they demonstrate genuine concern and empathy toward their students.

Such interpersonal traits enhance ESL/EFL teachers' commitment and responsibility toward their students, influence their management of student learning, and enable them to create a conducive and welcoming learning environment that promotes enthusiasm and motivation. Correspondingly, their students often develop greater curiosity about the language being taught. This curiosity fosters students' desire to learn English and maintains an effective learning environment. Thus, as Badawood (2015) argued, an EFL teacher's agreeableness enhances the complexities of ESL/ EFL teaching and learning and prompts better instruction, positive learning experiences, and productive language learning.

### **Patience and Passion**

An EFL teacher's level of flexibility and agreeableness often reflects two equally vital personal traits: patience, or pedagogical composure, and passion. These traits inform certain classroom behaviors among successful EFL teachers. First, successful ESL/EFL teachers are unhurried, calm, and difficult to unnerve; they react competently and without emotion, and exhibit a great deal of patience while explaining subject matter, thereby giving students sufficient time to internalize the particular point being studied. Second, successful EFL teachers enjoy their work wholeheartedly, are committed to their students, demonstrate an enthusiasm for teaching English, and make continual efforts to discover new and creative ways to immerse their students in language learning. In doing so, ESL/EFL teachers encourage their students to develop a passion for English and become better learners. Finally, successful EFL teachers display passion for the various cultures their students represent and celebrate this diversity. These classroom behaviors require strong degrees of both patience and passion (Korkmaz & Yavuz, 2011).

Armed with these traits, successful English teachers tend to maintain classroom dynamics that include excitement and enjoyment. They relish their job, have a strong desire to educate, and regard their work as important. Successful ESL/EFL teachers also recognize that students find it difficult to be excited and passionate about learning if their instructors are not. Thus, teachers draw upon and apply their internal resources to bring personal excitement and passion into the classroom and connect their own personal experiences and passions with their teaching. This motivates students to take responsibility for their own learning, maximizes their participation and contributions in the classroom, and encourages them to seize all opportunities to take active roles in class activities. In this process, successful EFL teachers act as guides, facilitators, and resources—not as authoritative figures.

Overall, successful ESL/EFL teachers realize that bringing their personal strengths, interests, and passions into their teaching inspires both their students and themselves. According to Ghasemi and Hashemi (2011), such characteristics carry great significance for students because doing so arouses students' interest in learning English and helps them build self-confidence and motivation. Thus, as Ghasemi and Hashemi argued, the most effective and successful EFL teachers are passionate about their chosen profession.

### **Tolerance**

Patience and passion also require a certain level of tolerance, which is another essential personal quality of successful ESL/EFL teachers. As Chen and Lin (2009) asserted, tolerance concerns the degree to which EFL teachers achieve their desired effect on students while ensuring a comfortable and stimulating language-learning environment. Given the nature of foreign-language learning, EFL learners need to believe their mistakes will be tolerated and teachers will understand that progress may be slow, as moving from one stage of language learning to another takes time. Accordingly, successful ESL/EFL teachers create stress-free environments and are not easily discouraged when students do not apply what they have been taught accurately. These teachers support students with different learning speeds patiently and respond to students' questions and requests to slow the pace of lessons. In other words, successful EFL teachers acknowledge their students are learning a new language and are not yet fully competent in it; therefore, they are more tolerant and accepting of students' linguistic errors, and judicious in correcting mistakes.

In the classroom, successful ESL/EFL teachers tolerate student errors and go the extra mile to help those who are hesitant to express themselves for fear of looking foolish as well as those eager to express themselves but are unmindful of their errors. These teachers help students to achieve their potential by encouraging them to use what they have learned, recognizing and appreciating their efforts, and making them feel safe and confident when attempting new tasks. Moreover, successful EFL teachers make students feel valued and comfortable when using the language in the classroom, especially in the early stages of EFL learning, thereby maximizing student involvement.

#### **A Caring Attitude**

A positive, caring attitude is the fifth and final dimension of a teacher's personality that is key to success in EFL teaching and exemplifies the characteristics of successful EFL teachers. According to Çelik, Aarikan, and Caner (2013), a caring attitude is a leading quality of successful and effective EFL teachers because a teacher's attitude influences his or her students' success. Thus, Çubukçu (2010) stated that successful EFL teachers embrace a caring attitude toward EFL learners and their experiences. As teaching is a caring exercise, successful ESL/EFL teachers are confident that their students can learn another language and express this confidence in their students' language abilities. Students become extremely positive toward learning when teachers are fully cognizant of and believe in their students' abilities.

Furthermore, successful ESL/EFL teachers are distinctly conscious of their covert attitudes toward their students' efforts to learn English as well as the ways in which these attitudes might influence their students' learning experiences and engagement. By consciously maintaining a caring attitude, teachers can affect their students' attitudes about EFL learning positively, improve their students' self-perceptions, and optimize a range of desirable language learning outcomes. In particular, because such instructional behavior maintains students' attention, encourages active participation and engagement in the language learning process, and positively influences both the quantity and quality of students' language-learning experiences, an EFL teacher's positive attitude is effective in promoting students' productive language learning (Lee, 2010).

The ESL/EFL classroom can be a daunting place for students. To ensure successful language learning, EFL teachers should focus on developing the five interpersonal dimensions of their teaching persona discussed here: flexibility and adaptability, agreeableness, patience and passion, tolerance, and a caring attitude. By embracing these traits, ESL/EFL teachers can create a positive and encouraging language-learning environment in which students with various skillsets and backgrounds can learn and thrive.

## **VI. RELATED KEY VARIABLES**

As shown in Figure 3, the secrets to success in ESL/EFL teaching also lie within four general areas: (a) being involved and current in the field, (b) using effective instructional techniques, (c) undertaking individual initiatives, and (d) addressing various affective factors related to teaching.

First and foremost, there is a loose connection between success and remaining informed about recent issues in the ESL/EFL profession while being actively involved in related activities. In this case, success requires engagement in both formal and informal opportunities and experiences. Formal experiences include studying overseas; collaborating with university-based researchers; closely examining and analyzing one's own classroom practices; participating in mentorship programs under the leadership of experienced senior development professionals; attending professional meetings as well as local, regional, or international conferences that help teachers to disseminate updated information about trends in the field and enhance teachers' self-efficacy; and attending workshops on key factors in effective teaching, such as classroom management, alternative approaches, the roles of teachers and learners, and ways to combine the best aspects of "traditional" teaching with innovative procedures such as task-based, learner-centered, and interactive methods as well as participatory language teaching, sheltered language instruction, and authentic assessments. ESL/EFL teachers can also take advantage of the various growth opportunities available through online seminars, distance education, audio and video conferencing, digital conferences, asynchronous and synchronous communications, threaded discussions with colleagues and experts, and online EFL professional development programs. Exposure to such technological advances equips ESL/EFL teachers with the skills and technological and pedagogical content knowledge needed to exploit computer-based teaching resources and thereby use online and offline computer application tools more effectively in the classroom.

Informal or self-directed learning experiences may include a wide range of professional practices such as volunteering with professional organizations, reading and responding to professional publications, submitting book

reviews, and engaging in method-neutral techniques such as dialog journals, long-distance collaboration, and study groups with fellow teachers to exchange instructional information regarding course planning, test development, and materials exploitation. Such experiences also promote competence in the type of classroom language ESL/EFL teachers should use to explain and instruct, conduct classroom activities, provide correct feedback on learners' language, and elicit ideas and contributions from students. As several contributors noted in their stories, language proficiency is a key trait that, once owned, increases the efficacy of teaching English.

Second, teaching and learning in the ESL/EFL classroom should not focus on teacher-centered knowledge transmission, with which teachers dominate classroom interactions and students receive little opportunity for input. Adherence to such models counteracts any attempt to shift the English-teaching paradigm to one that is student centered. Instead of exercising complete control of the classroom, a successful EFL teacher facilitates, takes a communicative approach, and employs less restrictive teaching methods, becoming a manager of language-learning situations rather than a material presenter and content demonstrator.

Third, best-practice initiatives are influential dimensions of ESL/EFL teachers' success. In fact, the ability for a teacher to construct and sustain successful professional practice over time through a wide range of self-initiated instructional practices and classroom behaviors is grounded in different aspects of what he or she knows, does, and learns from doing as well as day-to-day experiences such as group-based activities and participation in online professional communities. Particularly effective individual initiatives include presenting at conferences, observing fellow EFL teachers, pairing up with more experienced ESL/EFL teachers, and engaging in ongoing development practices such as self-regulation, belief monitoring, sustained motivation, critical incident analysis, and online language teaching enrollment. ESL/EFL teachers should also continually collaborate within the work context, reflect on and analyze their own practices, develop new insights into pedagogy, and explore new understandings of content resources and advanced uses of technology. Such self-initiatives contribute to the overall professional strength and success of ESL/EFL teachers and encourage the mastery of various domains of EFL language learning and teaching.

Finally, carefully considering related affective factors in the classroom—that is, various dimensions of instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement—is important. In particular, ESL/EFL teachers achieve success by focusing on key factors involved in promoting learners' autonomy, creating a caring classroom climate, providing learners with ample practice opportunities, and providing informative feedback. Four additional factors of success include providing adequate instruction, organizing and managing the classroom, structuring instructional material effectively, creating conditions that facilitate learning, and assimilating and accommodating new understandings.

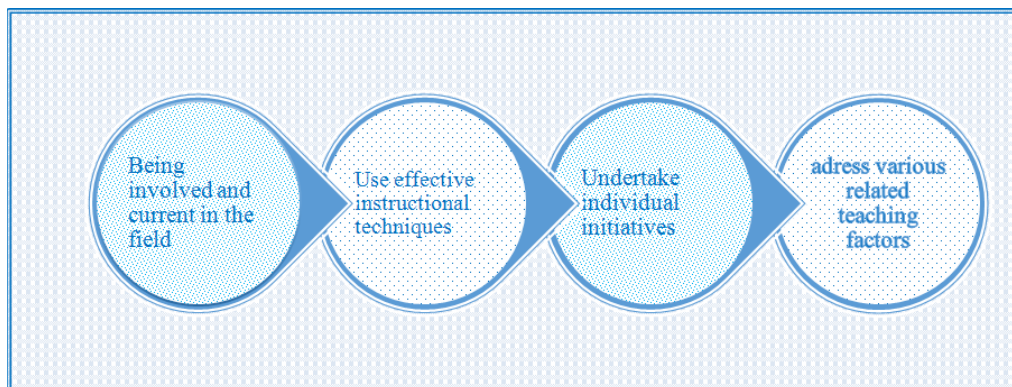


Figure 3. Related key variables leading to successful ESL/EFL teachers.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This comprehensive account provides a glimpse of numerous characteristics of successful effective ESL/EFL teachers from various angles embedded within five central dimensions, along with their underlying structures. In particular, this in-depth description and discussion of the multidimensional attributes or characteristics of successful ESL/EFL teachers illustrates that to achieve success in teaching English, ESL/EFL teachers have to be aware of and possess certain essential competencies with broad appeal across a range of domains. The identified characteristics deemed necessary for effective ESL/EFL teachers to lessen the problems and difficulties hindering ESL/EFL learners' long-lasting learning process and those needed for successful and better language teaching and learning overall are classified into categories. These categories of characteristics, under five headings, include the cognitive knowledge dimension of language teaching, sound disciplinary knowledge of related content, profound knowledge of pedagogy and technological pedagogical knowledge, high English language proficiency, and a set of attractive personal characteristics or some essential inner qualities of a teacher as well as other related key variables. ESL/EFL teachers should have a balanced combination of these five main characteristics.



The identified central characteristics of successful ESL/EFL teachers can be maintained and enhanced through individual initiatives and efforts, adequate teacher training programs for ESL/EFL teachers, and the provision of ongoing support and professional development opportunities. These characteristics are within the grasp of most teachers and should not be overlooked. Some of them do not involve teaching techniques that require training but rather awareness, and some are gained through experience. Experience, however, requires teachers to continually engage in self-reflection and modify their classroom techniques to better serve the needs of their ESL/EFL learners. ESL/EFL teacher-preparation programs should be oriented more toward L2 acquisition theories, teaching methods, command of language skills, language improvement, and testing than toward linguistics and English literature to prepare knowledgeable and competent English teachers linguistically and pedagogically as well as facilitate their professional growth throughout their mammoth teaching journeys. In particular, fewer literature courses should be offered, and the number of methods courses for English teaching should be increased. There should also be a greater emphasis on developing the communicative competence of prospective English teachers during their college careers and linking them to schools where they can gain more experience and learn from in-service teachers.

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# Chinese EFL Teacher Trainees' Perceptions of Writing after the Practicum

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**Abstract**—In teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), teacher trainees' knowledge about writing is little known in the literature. The study aimed to understand trainees' perceptions of writing and how the practicum shapes their thinking in the Chinese context. A self-developed questionnaire with 5-point Likert scales targeting natures, functions, and development of writing, and the basis of good writing was employed to collect data online. 204 EFL trainees answered the questionnaire in January 2017 just after completing their practicum. While most respondents held views conforming to present research consensus, some had difficulty recognizing multiple natures of writing. Participants paid more attention to the functions of writing concerned with the self and self-expression, and much less to those focusing on the addressees. They generally accept the facilitators to the development of writing, but highlighted coherence and cohesion, semantics, and length of a text as features of good writing. Specific English studies relating to writing and pre-service programs in general were found significantly weakly but not systematically related to participants' perceptions. The length of practicum, school level, school location, and school type did not make a difference in participants' perceptions of writing. However, the class size and frequency of teaching writing were associated with their understanding of writing. The findings suggest that the practicum is too short to contribute significantly to trainees' learning about writing. They concurrently raise questions and call for further research regarding trainees' relative inattention to the social and communicative nature of writing, and linguistic features of good writing.

**Index Terms**—EFL writing, perceptions of writing, Chinese EFL teacher trainees, practicum

## I. INTRODUCTION

It is well known that the practicum has a crucial impact on teacher trainees' growth through their teaching practice and their future careers. In the field of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), research has shown that trainees experience a wide range of improvement in teacher beliefs (Yuan & Lee, 2014), teacher knowledge (Merç, 2015), competence of teaching behaviors (Liyange & Bartlett, 2010), and consciousness and ability of reflection (Rass, 2014). However, the effect of the practicum on domain-specific areas of EFL is left out in the literature.

The practice of EFL learning and instruction in the basic education in China has long put emphasis on reading and writing skills. The trainees, especially those who finish their practicum, will start their teaching career normally in one year. Are they well prepared? Do they comprehensively understand these skills? However, the literature is missing out on Chinese EFL teacher trainees' knowledge about these skills. Thus, this study employed the case of writing skills as an exploratory investigation to understand how the practicum shapes trainees' thinking. Specifically, it aimed at examining Chinese EFL trainees' perceptions of writing especially in an exam-focused culture of language learning and instruction. The research questions guiding this study were:

- Do trainees recognize the multifaceted concepts of writing?
- Are trainees aware of possible functions of writing?
- What do trainees think help writing to develop?
- What do trainees view as contributors to good writing?
- Does personal background impact trainees' perceptions?
- Does the practicum influence their understanding of writing?

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A plethora of research has clarified writing from the perspectives of linguistics, cognition, and socialculture. In *A Study of Writing*, the most extensively cited book on writing for a long time, Gelb (1963) defined writing as "a system of human intercommunication by means of conventional visible marks" (p. 12). This notion implies a wide involvement of linguistic, social and cultural elements in the act of writing with its communicative purposes. Coulmas (1996) viewed writing as text-focused or product-oriented, regarding writing as the final and permanent version of written composition or discourse. It is believed that the successful composition is an interaction between the writer, the written text, and the reader (Osterholm, 1986, p. 119). Thus, writing is also a mental process, in which the writer puts thoughts into text for communication.

Hyland (2015) counted written texts as linguistic product: “Texts have a logical structure, they are orderly arrangements of words, clauses, and sentences, and following by grammatical rules writers can encode a full semantic representation of their intended meaning” (p. 4). Therefore, to be able to write effective texts, writers need to acquire knowledge of orthography, morphology (exactness, concreteness, conciseness, appropriateness, etc.), and syntax (length, variety, tense, structure, etc.).

Generally, writers are viewed as the departure point in composing texts. A wide range of research has put its interest in the writers’ cognitive processes of composing written tasks. Emig’s *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders* in 1971 was considered as a benchmark of the cognitive view of the writing process. Afterward, Flower and Hayes’ (1981) model of the writing process was influential. Their model introduced an interactive flowchart constituting the task environment, the writer’s long-term memory, and the writing processes. This model suggests that writers have goals in mind and plan for the specific tasks and audience as well, translate their ideas into texts, then evaluate and revise their writing. The whole writing process is managed by a monitor.

Later, Hayes (1996) reconstructed the model of writing. The new model consists of two major parts: the task environment and the individual. For the former, the social environment regarding the readers of and collaborators in the writing was added; also, technology in writing was added to the physical environment. Obviously, Hayes’s model gave the focus on the individual part. It presented an interaction among four aspects: motivation and affect, working memory, cognitive processes, and long-term memory. The Hayes model noted that writing is a social construct and incorporated the audience and collaborators in the social environment, which is seminal for learning and teaching writing.

Indeed, a vast volume of research has tracked this predominant model of writing processes, targeting stage-oriented composing strategies with similar formulation and presentation. For example, Tankó (2005) addressed the complex activity of writing as a recursive process with three major stages: pre-writing, writing and reviewing (p. 26).

Writing, beyond an individual and interactional act, is also a social and cultural construction, “expressing a culturally recognized purpose, reflecting a particular kind of relationship and acknowledging an engagement in a given community” (Hyland, 2002, p. 48). It is “socially and culturally shaped and individually and socially purposeful” (Sperling, 1996, p. 55). Thus, the act of writing is not only limited to linguistic knowledge (grammar, vocabulary, etc.), neither discourse knowledge, such as genre and structure, rather, is a sociocultural practice in specific contexts for particular communicative purposes.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Instrument

In order to address the research questions, a questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire was literature-based and self-developed, including 26 items with 5-point Likert scales targeting the concepts of writing, functions of writing, development of writing, and basic components for good writing. Demographic information was also included. Given English is a foreign language in China, the questionnaire was translated into Chinese so that the participants may better understand the content and respond more effectively.

#### B. Participants

Convenience and snowball sampling were used. In total, 204 Chinese EFL trainees participated in this survey, 5.9% of them are male, and 94.1% are female. All of the participants entered the initial EFL teacher training courses in 2013 with a four-year program for Bachelor Degree of Arts. They are 20 to 25 years old ( $M = 22$ ,  $SD = .89$ ). The more detailed personal background is shown in Table 1 below. The participants answered the questionnaire just after finishing their teaching practice. The general information of the practicum is displayed in Table 2.

TABLE 1  
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Components	Contents
Gender	Male 5.9%, female 94.1%
Age	20-25; $M = 22$ , $SD = .89$
Degree	BA programs
Years of learning English before going to university	3-17; Mode = 6, $M = 7.81$ , $SD = 2.54$
English proficiency level	Intermediate (63.7%), Upper-intermediate (32.4%), Advanced (3.9%), Proficient (no)
Entering the EFL teacher training program	Sep. 2013

TABLE 2  
GENERAL INFOAMTION OF PARTICIPANTS' PRACTICUM

Components	Contents
Weeks of the practicum	2-40; Mode = 8, M = 11.69, SD = 5.45
School location	In a provincial capital: 12.7%; in a city: 29.4%; in a county or town: 50.5%; in a village: 7.4%
School type	Public 84.3%, Private 15.7%
School level	Primary 21.6%, Junior 48%, Senior 30.4%
Class size	< 30, 6.4%; between 31 and 45, 29.9%; between 46 and 60, 50%; > 61, 13.7%
English lessons taught altogether	1-340; Mode = 20, M = 44.71, SD = 69.87
Time for teaching writing (%)	1-98; Mode = 20, M = 23.56, SD = 17.05

C. Procedures

The questionnaire was administered online. The platform is easily accessible. The data collection started in early and ended by the end of January 2017. Then, all data was downloaded, recoded, and transformed into SPSS 24. Various analyses were conducted, and relevant results are reported in the following section.

IV. RESULTS

A. Concepts of Writing

One hundred years ago, writing was seen as text linguistic product; then from the 1960s to 1980s, shifted to as cognitive activities (cf. Flower & Hayes, 1981) with the development of cognitive psychology; and then since 1980s and 1990s, writing has been seen as social communication and sense-making, and even broadened to cultural understanding (cf. Bhatia, 2014; Chapman, 1999; Grabe & Kaplan, 2014; Hyland, 2003; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; McComiskey, 2000; Miller, 1984; Prior, 2006; Swales, 1990). Are trainees aware of these linguistic, cognitive, and social-cultural natures of writing? Do they recognize them? Participants' recognition of the individual nature of writing is shown in Figure 1.

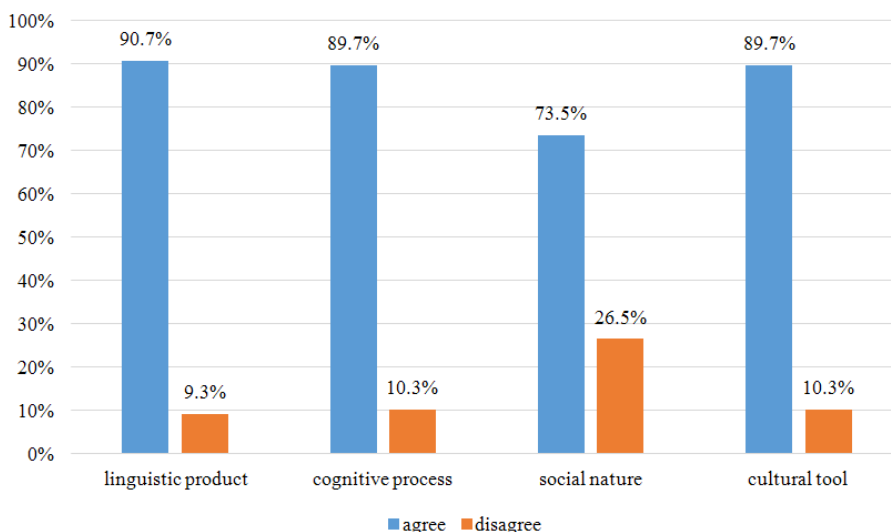


Figure 1. Frequencies of participants' recognition of the individual nature of writing

From the figure, we can find that 90.7% of the respondents recognized writing as linguistic product, 89.7% of them agreed respectively with its cognitive and cultural natures. While most respondents held views conforming to present research consensus, some unexpected results were also found. Trainees generally considered writing as a linguistic, cognitive and cultural tool, however, 26.5% doubted its social nature.

More importantly, do trainees really recognize writing as a multifaceted nature? So, based on figure 1, the 5-point Likert scales were recoded into 2-point scales, transforming 'strongly disagree, disagree, and uncertain' into "disagree", and transforming 'agree and strongly agree' into "agree". Then, it is found, for each participant, that how many natures of writing they recognized (see Table 3).

TABLE 3  
FREQUENCIES OF TRAINEES' RECOGNITION OF THE MULTIFACETED NATURES OF WRITING

Facets of writing	Recognition (%)
4	65.7
3	22.1
2	6.4
1	2.0
0	3.9

Most respondents (65.7%) recognized all of the four natures of writing, namely, they view writing as a multifaceted concept. Slightly more than one-fifth of them were aware of three natures of writing. However, it seems that a minority of respondents were in trouble with identifying the multifaceted concepts of writing: 6.4% of them accepted two natures, 2% of them accepted only one nature, and 3.9% of them were not keen on any of these natures of writing. Thus, it merits further efforts to examining trainees' inattention to some of the natures of writing.

### B. Functions of Writing

From the literature we know that writing as an activity can serve different purposes with its multiple functions (e.g., Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2013; Clark, 1990; Whiteman, 2013). These functions include: writing is a tool for thinking, communication, creation, proving students' knowledge at exams, addressing specific audiences, and of importance in one's career. Are trainees aware of these functions? Which is the popular pattern of writing functions in their choice? Trainees' acceptance of the individual multiple functions of writing is shown in Figure 2.

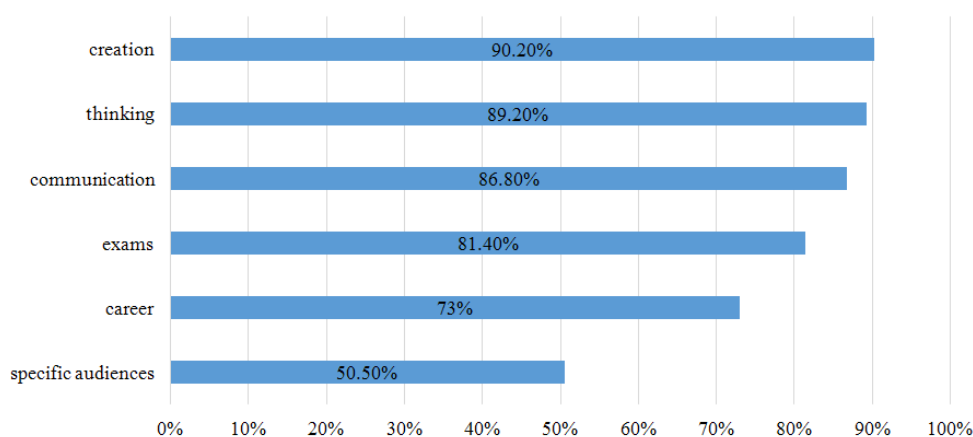


Figure 2. Frequency of trainees' acceptance of possible multiple functions of writing

The frequencies of acceptance of possible multiple functions of writing show that the participants tended to view writing as a tool for creation, thinking, communication, and exams, but they pay less attention to its function in one's career. Surprisingly, only half of the participants accepted the function of writing for addressing specific audiences.

Paired-Samples T-tests found that there are statistically significant differences among creation, thinking, communication, and exams, career, specific audiences. The mean for 'writing is creation' ( $M= 4.35$ ,  $SD= .883$ ) is significantly higher ( $t= 2.293$ ,  $df= 203$ ,  $p< .05$ ) than that for 'writing is a tool for thinking' ( $M= 4.24$ ,  $SD= .822$ ), higher ( $t= 3.684$ ,  $df= 203$ ,  $p< .05$ ) than 'writing is a tool for communication' ( $M= 4.16$ ,  $SD= .874$ ), higher ( $t= 6.232$ ,  $df= 203$ ,  $p< .05$ ) than 'writing is for proving students' knowledge at exams' ( $M= 3.97$ ,  $SD= .904$ ), higher ( $t= 7.618$ ,  $df= 203$ ,  $p< .05$ ) than 'writing is of importance in one's career' ( $M= 3.88$ ,  $SD= .934$ ), and higher ( $t= 11.715$ ,  $df= 203$ ,  $p< .05$ ) than 'writing is for addressing specific audiences' ( $M= 3.41$ ,  $SD= 1.039$ ); the mean for 'writing is a tool for thinking' is significantly higher ( $t= 4.335$ ,  $df= 203$ ,  $p< .05$ ) than that for 'writing is for proving students' knowledge at exams', higher ( $t= 5.851$ ,  $df= 203$ ,  $p< .05$ ) than 'writing is of importance in one's career', and higher ( $t= 10.128$ ,  $df= 203$ ,  $p< .05$ ) than 'writing is for addressing specific audiences'; the mean for 'writing is a tool for communication' is significantly higher ( $t= 2.715$ ,  $df= 203$ ,  $p< .05$ ) than that for 'writing is for proving students' knowledge at exams', higher ( $t= 4.522$ ,  $df= 203$ ,  $p< .05$ ) than 'writing is of importance in one's career', and higher ( $t= 9.117$ ,  $df= 203$ ,  $p< .05$ ) than 'writing is for addressing specific audiences'; the mean for 'writing is of importance in one's career' is significantly higher ( $t= 5.524$ ,  $df= 203$ ,  $p< .05$ ) than that for 'writing is for addressing specific audiences'; the mean for 'writing is for proving students' knowledge at exams' is significantly higher ( $t= 7.802$ ,  $df= 203$ ,  $p< .05$ ) than that for 'writing is for addressing specific audiences'.

It is clear that the mean for 'writing is for addressing specific audiences' is significantly lower than all the others ( $p < .05$ ). It can be drawn that the respondents paid more attention to the functions of writing concerned with the self and self-expression, and much less to those focusing on the addressees.

Besides, trainees' acceptance of possible multiple functions of writing is presented in Table 4. We can find that only slightly over one-third of the participants accepted all of the six functions of writing. It seems that a small number of

participants were in trouble with recognizing the possible multiple functions of writing, e.g. 4.4% of them were aware of none of these functions, 0.5% accepted only one function, and 2.9% accepted two functions, etc. Thus, it deserves further efforts to examine the diversion of their popular patterns of the multiple functions of writing.

TABLE 4  
TRAINEES' ACCEPTANCE OF POSSIBLE MULTI-FUNCTIONS OF WRITING

Numbers of functions	Recognition (%)
6	34.8
5	34.8
4	14.2
3	8.3
2	2.9
1	0.5
0	4.4

Then, what is the relationship between the functions of writing and its concepts? It is expected that trainees' concepts of writing influence their acceptance of the functions of writing. The correlation coefficients are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5  
CORRELATION MATRIX RELATING CONCEPTS AND FUNCTIONS OF WRITING

	Linguistic product	Cognitive process	Social nature	Cultural tool
tool for thinking	.67**	.58**	.50**	.55**
communication	.57**	.57**	.56**	.55**
creation	.64**	.56**	.45**	.59**
exams	.53**	.41**	.40**	.47**
career	.44**	.46**	.44**	.49**
specific audiences	.30**	.31**	.32**	.34**

\*\*  $p < .01$

A high positive correlation (r value varying between .45 and .67). was found between participants' concepts of writing and writing as a tool for thinking, communication, and creation. A moderate positive correlation (r value varying between .40 and .53) was found between participants' concepts of writing and its exam and career functions. However, by contrast, a weaker positive correlation (r value varying between .30 and .34) was found between participants' concepts of writing and its function for addressing specific audiences.

C. Development of Writing

Based on research findings and instructional practice, there is a consensus that writing could be developed by intensive input from other language skills (e.g., Berninger, 2000; Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000; Scott & Windsor, 2000; Silverman, Coker, Proctor, Harring, Piantedosi, & Hartranft, 2015). Do trainees agree with this? What do they think help writing to develop? The Frequency of participants' agreement with the contributors to writing development is shown in Figure 3. As to facilitating the development of writing, most (95%) credited reading with transfer effects, but 13.7% doubted the efficiency of writing instruction, 10.8% that of writing activities, and 16.2% that of the transfer effects of speaking activities.

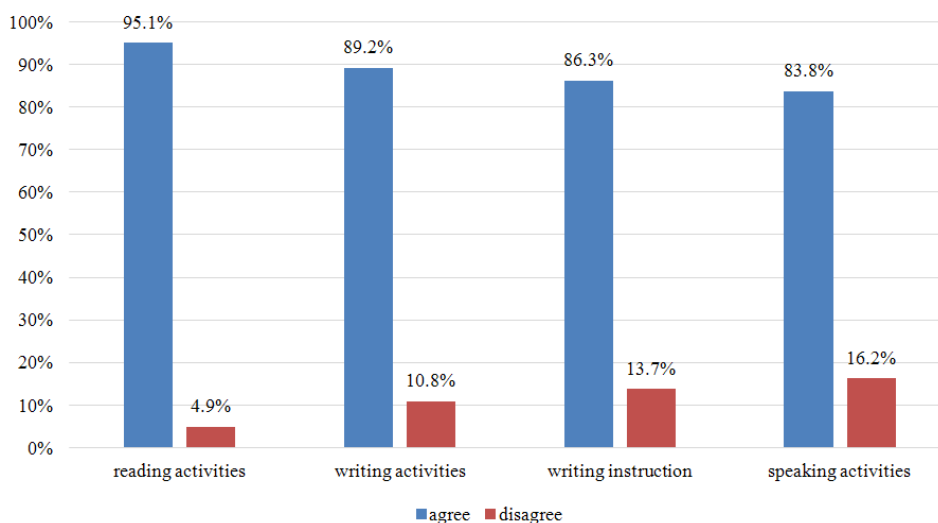


Figure 3. Frequency of participants' agreement with the contributors to writing development

A Paired Samples T-test found that the mean for reading activities (M = 4.45, SD = .78) is significantly higher (t= 6.147, df= 203, p< .05) than that for writing activities ( M = 4.21, SD = .84), higher (t= 6.980, df= 203, p< .05) than

writing instruction ( $M = 4.13$ ,  $SD = .82$ ), and higher ( $t = 7.111$ ,  $df = 203$ ,  $p < .05$ ) than speaking activities ( $M = 4.09$ ,  $SD = .81$ ); and the mean for writing activities ( $M = 4.21$ ,  $SD = .84$ ) is higher ( $t = 2.507$ ,  $df = 203$ ,  $p < .05$ ) than speaking activities ( $M = 4.09$ ,  $SD = .81$ ).

#### D. Basis of Good Writing

Research has shown that content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and so on, are basic components for good writing (Tankó, 2005). Do trainees know what good writing is? The basic elements of writing are grouped into three levels: conceptual contributors (content, the structure of a text, the structure of a paragraph, the length of a text), linguistic contributors (style of language, grammar, vocabulary, semantics, cohesive devices), and coding contributors (spelling, punctuation, handwriting).

A regression analysis with the 'enter' method was run, it is found that each of the items (contributors) at different level contributes almost equally to the features of good text, i.e., each explained 7-9% of variance; Using the 'stepwise' method, it is found that 'the structure of a text, semantics, cohesive devices and the length of a text' ( $\Sigma r^2\beta = .930$ ) explained together 93% of the variance. therefore, it is safe to say that the participants view coherence and cohesion, semantics, and length to be the greater contributors to the features of good writing.

#### E. Effect of Personal Background on Trainees' Perceptions

In this section, the effects of participants' personal background on their perceptions of writing are analyzed; the demographic elements include gender, English studies from pre-service programs useful for learning about writing, and preparedness of pre-service programs for teaching writing.

##### Effect of Gender

An Independent Samples T-test analysis found that the means for the male participants on all variables regarding perceptions of writing did not differ significantly ( $p > .05$ ) from those of the female participants.

##### English Studies from Pre-service Programs Useful for Learning about Writing

In the pre-service EFL teacher education programs, there are various English studies which aim to help teacher trainees with learning and teaching writing. These English studies mainly include Literature, Phonology, Morphology, Lexicology, Syntax, Sociolinguistics, Semantics, Pragmatics, Text Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, etc. To what extent do trainees think these English studies have been useful for their learning and teaching writing? Do these studies influence their perceptions of writing?

A Pearson correlation analysis found that these English studies normally relate strongly to each other (see Table 6). Then, the original scales were recoded, transforming 'not useful at all, not useful,' into 'not useful', transforming 'somewhat useful, useful, and very useful' into 'useful', and keeping the original option 'probably I didn't study this'; the frequencies of participants' perceived usefulness of these studies for learning and teaching writing are shown in Figure 4. The frequencies show that respondents considered Literature and Syntax to be the most useful English studies from pre-service programs for learning about writing, that of Phonology to be less useful, compared to those of Pragmatics, Semantics, Lexicology, Morphology, Applied Linguistics, Sociolinguistics, and Text Linguistics. It is worth noting that some participants reported that they didn't study these English studies, which may be of interest for stakeholders in the pre-service teacher training programs.

TABLE 6  
CORRELATIONS AMONG VARIABLES OF ENGLISH STUDIES FROM PRE-SERVICE PROGRAMS

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Literature	1	.56**	.53**	.57**	.47**	.54**	.59**	.55**	.42**	.41**
2. Phonology		1	.51**	.50**	.40**	.47**	.53**	.49**	.36**	.43**
3. Morphology			1	.77**	.60**	.42**	.47**	.54**	.44**	.51**
4. Lexicology				1	.72**	.42**	.54**	.56**	.49**	.50**
5. Syntax					1	.40**	.53**	.51**	.52**	.46**
6. Sociolinguistics						1	.67**	.64**	.59**	.62**
7. Semantics							1	.82**	.67**	.59**
8. Pragmatics								1	.74**	.66**
9. Text Linguistics									1	.75**
10. Applied Linguistics										1

\*\*  $p < .01$



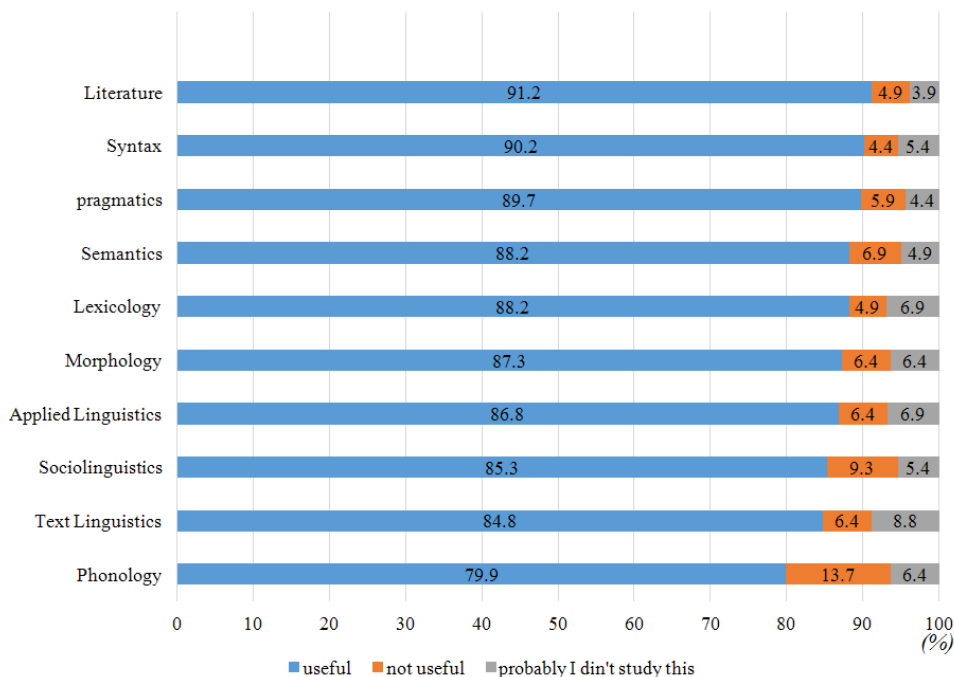


Figure 4. Frequency of participants' perceived usefulness of English studies for learning about writing

In addition, the correlation analysis found that participants' perceived usefulness of English studies from pre-service programs relate weakly positively but not systematically to their ideas of concepts of writing ( $r$  value varying between .15 and .26,  $p < .05$ ); also, it relates weakly but not systematically to functions of writing ( $r$  value varying between .14 and .29,  $p < .05$ ); it relates weakly but not systematically to development of writing ( $r$  value varying between .14 and .29,  $p < .05$ ); and it relates significantly weakly but not systematically to basis of good writing ( $r$  value varying between .14 and .32,  $p < .05$ ).

**Preparedness of Pre-service Programs for Learning about Writing**

The frequency of responses shows that 71.6% (56.4% perceive its contribution to a great extent, 15.2% endorsed completely) of the participants recognized the contribution of pre-service programs to their learning about writing. However, only a weak positive relationship was found between the contribution of pre-service programs and the participants' concepts of writing ( $r$  value varying between .14 and .18,  $p < .05$ ).

Meanwhile, a weak and no systematic correlation was found between the contribution of pre-service programs and variables of functions of writing (it relates weakly to writing is a tool for thinking,  $r = .17$ ; and a tool for communication,  $r = .16$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Similarly, it significantly but weakly relates to most variables of construct 'development of writing': speaking facilitates writing,  $r = .16$ ; writing activities facilitate writing,  $r = .17$ ; learning to write when taught to,  $r = .17$ ;  $p < .05$ . Also, it relates weakly to some variables of construct 'basis of good writing' (vocabulary, content, cohesive devices, the structure of a text, punctuation, spelling, and handwriting,  $r$  value varying between .15 and .24;  $p < .05$ ).

As for the other 28.4% of respondents, 2% doubt the effectiveness of pre-service programs, and 26.5% are uncertain about its role.

**F. Effect of the Practicum on Trainees' Perceptions of Writing**

Weeks (the length) of the practicum, school location, school type, school level, class size taught, and lessons of teaching writing are basic components of the practicum. In this section, the relationships between these components of the practicum and the variables of the constructs of concepts, functions, development of writing, and the basis of good writing are presented.

**Effect of the Length of the Practicum**

For a long time in China, the length of teacher trainees' practicum is around eight weeks or less. Therefore, based on the distribution of participants' reported weeks of practicum ( $M = 11.69$ ,  $SD = 5.46$ ,  $Mode = 8$ ), the length of their practicum was classified into three groups: Group 1, less than eight weeks; Group 2, eight to 12 weeks; and Group 3, more than 12 weeks. An analysis of variance found that the means for each group did not differ significantly from one another ( $p > .05$ ) on the variables of constructs of 'concepts of writing', 'functions of writing', 'development of writing', and 'basis of good writing'.

**Effect of School Location**

Due to the imbalanced development of education and uneven distribution of educational resources in China, schools in different regions probably have different educational perspectives and quality levels. Accordingly, trainees' conceptions of writing are supposed to be shaped differently due to their exposure to different school context in the practicum. In this study, 12.7% of participants taught in a provincial capital, 29.4% in other cities, 50.5% in a county or

town, and 7.4% in a village during their practicum. However, a one-way ANOVA found that there was no statistically significant difference among the means for participants in provincial capital cities, other cities, counties or towns, and rural schools ( $p > .05$ ).

#### **Effect of School Type**

In this study, 84.3% of participants taught in public schools, and 15.7% in private schools in the practicum. Then, do school types have an effect on their perceptions of writing? An Independent Samples T-test found that there was no statistically significant difference between the means of participants who taught in public schools and those who taught in private schools ( $p > .05$ ).

#### **Effect of School Level**

It is believed that trainees confront with different challenges in their practice teaching because they need to meet various learning needs of students with different writing proficiency levels. Therefore, it is assumed that trainees who taught at different school levels took different shapes of perceptions of writing.

In the current study, 21.6% of the participants taught in primary schools (grades 1-6), 48% taught in junior middle schools (grades 7-9), and 30.4% taught in senior middle schools (grades 10-12) in the practicum. An analysis of variance found that there was no statistically significant difference between the means for the participants taught at different school levels on variables of constructs of 'concepts of writing', 'functions of writing', 'development of writing', and 'basis of good writing' ( $p > .05$ ).

#### **Effect of Class Size**

Then, it is possible that the class size influences trainees' thinking of writing because different teaching approaches are appropriate for a different quantity of student cohorts. In this study, participants generally had more than 30 students in their class. The class size was divided into four groups: Group 1: less than 30 students, 6.4 %; Group 2: between 31 and 45 students, 29.9%; Group 3: between 46 and 60 students, 50%; and Group 4: more than 61 students, 13.7%. Analyses of variance found that there were significant differences between the means of class size groups on some variables of concepts of writing, development of writing, and the basis of good writing. The means are presented in Table 7, 8, and 9.

TABLE 7  
MEANS FOR GROUPS OF CLASS SIZE (NUMBER OF STUDENTS) ON CONCEPTS OF WRITING

Concepts of writing	< 30 (Mean)	31-45 (Mean)	46-60 (Mean)	>61 (Mean)
Writing is a linguistic activity			4.00	4.54
Writing is a cultural activity			4.00	4.54

On the construct of concepts of writing, a one-way ANOVA found that there is a significant difference between Group 3 and Group 4 [ $F(3, 200) = 3.060, p < .05$ ] on the variable 'Writing is a linguistic activity'; the Tukey test found that the mean for Group 4 (4.54,  $SD=.881$ ) is significantly higher than that for Group 3 (4.00,  $SD=.890$ ). Also, there is a significant difference between Group 3 and Group 4 [ $F(3, 200) = 3.979, p < .05$ ] on the variable 'Writing is a cultural activity'; the Tukey test found that the mean for Group 4 (4.54,  $SD=.693$ ) is significantly higher than that for Group 3 (4.00,  $SD=.867$ ).

TABLE 8  
MEANS FOR GROUPS OF CLASS SIZE (NUMBER OF STUDENTS) ON DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING

Development of writing	< 30 (Mean)	31-45 (Mean)	46-60 (Mean)	>61 (Mean)
Students learn to write when they are taught to			4.03	4.54

On the construct of development of writing, a one-way ANOVA found that there is a significant difference between Group 3 and Group 4 [ $F(3, 200) = 2.969, p < .05$ ] on the variable 'Students learn to write when they are taught to'; the Tukey test found that the mean for Group 4 (4.54,  $SD=.744$ ) is significantly higher than that for Group 3 (4.03,  $SD=.884$ ).

TABLE 9  
MEANS FOR GROUPS OF CLASS SIZE (NUMBER OF STUDENTS) ON BASIS OF GOOD WRITING

Basis of good writing	< 30 (Mean)	31-45 (Mean)	46-60 (Mean)	>61 (Mean)
Length of a text			3.28	3.86
Punctuation			3.49	4.04

On the construct of basis of good writing, a one-way ANOVA found that there is a significant difference between Group 3 and Group 4 [ $F(3, 200) = 3.181, p < .05$ ] on the variable 'length of a text'; the Tukey test found that the mean for Group 4 (3.86,  $SD=1.145$ ) is significantly higher than that for Group 3 (3.28,  $SD=1.018$ ). And there is a significant difference between Group 3 and Group 4 [ $F(3, 200) = 3.434, p < .05$ ] on the variable 'punctuation'; the Tukey test found that the mean for Group 4 (4.04,  $SD=.881$ ) is significantly higher than that for Group 3 (3.49,  $SD=.920$ ).

#### **Effect of Lessons of Teaching Writing in the Practicum**

Trainees may learn about writing in their writing instruction, and their perceptions of writing might be affected by the frequency and intensity of their practice of writing instruction. In this study, participants were asked about the number

of English lessons they taught altogether during the practicum ( $M = 44.71$ ,  $SD = 69.87$ ;  $Mode = 20$ ), and the percentage of their teaching time devoted to teaching writing ( $M = 23.56\%$ ,  $SD = 17.05\%$ ;  $Mode=20$ ); then, the approximate number of lessons of writing instruction altogether ( $M=8.19$ ,  $SD=14.37$ ;  $Mode=6$ ) emerged from the ‘number of English lessons altogether’ multiplies by the ‘percentage of teaching time devoted to teaching writing’. Then, the number of writing lessons was classified into three groups: Group 1: less than two lessons of writing instruction altogether, 29.9%; Group 2: two to six lessons altogether, 40.2%; Group 3: more than six lessons, 29.9%.

Analyses of variance found that there were significant differences between Group 1 and 3 on some variables of the concept of the basis of good writing. The means are presented in Table 10. A one-way ANOVA found that there is a significant difference between Group 1 and Group 3 [ $F(2, 201) = 4.232$ ,  $p < .05$ ] on the variable ‘length of a text’; the Tukey test found that the mean for Group 3 (3.69,  $SD=1.009$ ) is significantly higher than that for Group 1 (3.16,  $SD=.986$ ). And there is a significant difference between Group 1 and Group 3 [ $F(2, 201) = 4.655$ ,  $p < .05$ ] on the variable ‘punctuation’; the Tukey test found that the mean for Group 3 (3.85,  $SD=.928$ ) is significantly higher than that for Group 1 (3.38,  $SD=.840$ ).

TABLE 10  
MEANS FOR GROUPS OF LESSONS OF TEACHING WRITING IN THE PRACTICUM ON BASIS OF GOOD WRITING

Basis of good writing	< 2 lessons (Mean)	2 to 6 lessons (Mean)	> 6 lessons (Mean)
Length of a text	3.16		3.69
Punctuation	3.38		3.85

### V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The current study aimed to examine Chinese EFL teacher trainees’ perceptions of writing, especially in an exam-focused culture of language learning and instruction. In this section, discussion of the results and corresponding conclusions are made.

As to the multifaceted concepts of writing, participants generally viewed writing as a linguistic, cognitive and cultural tool, however, over one-fourth of them doubted its social nature. Besides, a few respondents have difficulty identifying and recognizing the multiple natures of writing. It reflects much or less the demerits of exam-focused language learning. Thus, further efforts to investigating trainees’ inattention to some of the natures of writing are needed.

With respect to possible functions of writing, participants reported a diversity of popular patterns of writing functions, but they emphasized those related to the self and self-expression and looked over those targeting the addressees. Results of correlation analysis reveal that respondents’ concepts of writing strongly relate to their perceived functions of writing. Participants’ perceptions of both concepts and functions of writing indicate that they tend to be self-focused and product-oriented, but audience-neglected.

With regard to the development of writing, participants were aware of the relationship between each language skill. They accept the facilitation of other language skills and writing instruction to the development of writing. Yet, they put the transfer effects of reading in a dominant position, which shows that there is a paucity of authentic language environment in a Chinese context where English is taught and learned as a foreign language.

In terms of features of good writing, participants highlighted the contribution of coherence and cohesion, semantics, and length of the text, but relatively ignored mechanics features of writing, such as punctuation, spelling, handwriting, etc.

Therefore, taking the abovementioned into consideration, a conclusion can be drawn that participants admit more traditional paradigms of writing, i.e., in the exam-focused culture and practice of language learning and instruction, they prefer to perceive writing as a linguistic product and cognitive activity. However, the communicative nature of writing cannot and should not be left out in any circumstance. This would be some implications for stakeholders in the EFL teacher training programs.

When looking at genders’ perceptions of writing, both male and female participants tended to understand writing in similar ways. In the light of English studies from pre-service training programs useful for learning about writing, frequencies of those agreeing with the usefulness were around 70% (from phonology, 52.9% to syntax, 79.4%). Here, significantly weak but not systematic correlations were found between these English studies and participants’ perceptions of writing. It is worth noting that few respondents informed that they did not learn these studies, which brings about an issue for prospective teacher trainers.

Results show that most participants endorsed the contribution of pre-service programs to their learning about writing. However, only weak effect of pre-service programs on participants’ concepts of writing was found; weak effect was found on variables of writing functions concerned with the self; no effect on the role of reading in facilitating writing was found; pre-service programs had wider effects on basis of good writing, but with relatively weak effect. It seems that the effect of pre-service education programs needs further attention.

In general, the length of participants’ practicum, school level, school location, and school type did not make a difference in their perceptions of writing. It might be the practicum is too short to shape their thinking. However, the class size was related to participants’ perceptions of writing: compared to those who had average number of students

(between 46 and 60) in their class, participants who had the maximum students in their class were more inclined to recognize the linguistic and cultural facets of writing, to agree with the effect of writing instruction on developing writing, and to acknowledge the text structure and punctuation as features of good writing. Also, the frequency of teaching writing influences participants' perceptions of writing on some variables of the basis of good writing: those who experienced more writing instruction tended to recognize the structure of a text and punctuation as features of good writing.

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# The Influence of Implementing Communicative Approach in the Language Teaching Process on Students' Academic Achievement

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**Abstract**—This research is aimed at determining the effect of implementing communicative approach in language teaching on the students' learning outcomes. The research was conducted in Blitar, East Java, Indonesia. The research employed descriptive correlation design and 40 elementary school teachers were selected as samples by random sampling technique. Data collection technique used questionnaires and documentation, and the analysis technique employed descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment correlation. The results indicated that implementing communicative approach in the language teaching did not significantly influence the students' learning outcomes in the national examination. If it was seen from the items of activities which had been performed in the learning process through communicative approach, there were some items that have significant influence towards students' learning outcomes in social science.

**Index Terms**—communicative approach, language teaching and learning, students' academic achievement, national examination

## I. INTRODUCTION

Education is the primary means to educate the nation. Along with the rapid development of science and technology, it also increases the function of education in the life of the nation. Education is not only a destination, but it is the main asset for the success of the national development. Therefore, in order to fulfill its function, the quality of education needs to be constantly improved.

The core activities that improve the quality of education essentially enhances students' achievement. The main goal of improving the quality of education is to improve the quality of students' learning outcomes. Students' learning outcomes are the reflection of knowledge, skills and attitudes obtained by students in following the teaching and learning process. Hence, they are showed by the students' achievements. Thus, the efforts to improve the quality of education is essential to increase the students' achievements.

Students' achievements are influenced by both internal and external factors. One of the factors that is very influential on the students' achievements is the quality of teaching performed by teachers. The quality of teaching performed by a good teacher can bring improvement of a good climate in the teaching and learning process. Through the good climate of teaching and learning process, a good learning performance will be obtained. In addition, there is a positive effect of the teachers' work motivation on the school improvement (Wiyono, 2017, p. 11).

Teaching language is one of the very important areas of teaching in schools. In addition, it has special characteristics which requires a specific approach in its implementation. To produce good students' achievements, the language teaching should be performed by the right approach. Learning activities refer to the technique, method or strategy selected to achieve the goal of teaching.

Moreover, teaching language is presented in three components, namely linguistic, comprehension and utilization. Linguistic component includes pronunciation, spelling, punctuation, structure, vocabulary, paragraphs, and discourse. The teaching of literature is integrated in the language teaching. Whereas pronunciation refers to accurate and clear pronunciation; and proper intonation in an appropriated language situation. Spelling and punctuation are taught to familiarize students to read and write with high degree of accuracy. While vocabulary, structure, paragraphs and discourse are emphasized on the comprehension activities and used to the right context and directed at the development of ideas.

Comprehension and utilization component refer to the implementation of language teaching. Comprehension includes listening and reading skills. This learning process includes developing the ability to absorb ideas, opinions,

experience, messages, and feelings that are spoken or written. While the utilization refers to the teaching, the aim is to make students can communicate, both spoken and written. The teaching objectives can be achieved through the teaching of writing and speaking, which includes the development of ability of exploring ideas, opinions, experience, messages, and feelings.

Language teaching techniques emphasize on the function of language as a communication tool. Teaching methods are selected according to the purpose of language and the circumstances of the students. To avoid saturation, it is suggested to use a variety of methods. The learning process performed inside or outside classroom uses various tasks, for instance individuals, pairs, groups or involving the entire students in the class. The evaluation system of language teaching is emphasized on the evaluation process and learning outcomes. The objectives of the evaluation include knowledge, skills and the attitude of speaking. The implication is executed by evaluating the activities and progress of learning in the form of assessments, provision of advice, additions, and improvement during and after teaching activities. The implications of teaching Indonesian that can meet the needs in terms of materials, methods or evaluation system, needs to be performed through a good teaching approach. One approach applied is called communicative approach.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Communicative approach is an approach that emphasizes on the use of language as a communication tool. In this approach, language is seen as something dealing with what to do (function) or meaning which can be expressed through the language. In other words, communicative approach refers to the nature of language that has a function of communication not only knowledge but also structure and vocabulary.

In the implementation of communicative language teaching approach, there are four competencies including grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. It is in accordance with Abate (2014) who suggested that there were four elements of communicative competence, i.e grammatical, discourse, pragmatic, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence is linguistic competence, which includes a mastery of language cues, an ability to recognize and use of the characteristics of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and phonology, school of words and sentence formation. Sociolinguistic competence is interdisciplinary competence. People can use language properly, fairly and suitable for the social context of language usage. Discourse competence is related to the interpretation of discourse or language structures that is larger than topic sentences, paragraphs, chapters, books or appreciation of literary works. While the strategic competence is the ability to use language along with several strategies to avoid insufficiency of language knowledge of the speaker.

There are eight basic principles of the communicative approach, namely: (1) teaching of language was emphasized on language as a means of communication, (2) diversification was acknowledged and accepted as a part of language development, (3) students' competency was relative, (4) language variation was recognized as a model that was run continuously, (5) culture was recognized as an instrument that formed communicative competence, (6) there was no single method defined, (7) the use of language was recognized as an ideal service, which had textual and international functions, and (8) students loved the language that was used for various purposes (Abade, 2014, p.129). Teachers need to understand the principles well in application of the communicative approach at the classroom situation. The usage level of the communicative approach is depended on the degree of application of these principles in classroom situation.

Communicative approach emphasizes on communication in the learning process rather than mastery of linguistic forms. Teacher's role is to facilitate students in the communication process. While the students do a lot of practice. In addition to that, accuracy and fluency are used simultaneously. Jin (2008) showed that students developed communication while practicing the language competence. Thus, the communicative approach in language teaching is aimed at establishing communication competencies, not merely shaping linguistic competence. Students were guided not only to be able to use the language in various contexts of communication but also to know about the language (Sehe, Tolla, Kamaruddin, Hamsa, 2016, p. 914).

Communicative language teaching approach is to develop students' communication competencies which include the ability of interpreting linguistic forms which is explicitly or implicitly stated. Sekiziyivu and Mugimu (2016) said that communicative approach assumed two purposes, namely learning the language to learn it and to use it. Goal achievement is eventually to improve students' learning outcomes in Indonesian, but so far, it has not been studied carefully how different teaching Indonesian by implementing communicative approach to the improvement of students' achievements is.

The fact in the field is considered that language teaching has not been conducted well. The study results of Asmari (2015) in Saudi Arabia revealed that teachers were confronted by various challenges related to teachers, students, education system, and communicative language teaching. Some problems were lack of communicative language training, accessing communicative language teaching, low-proficiency, lack of motivation among students, evaluation system to assess communicative competence of students. In addition, the communicative approach has not been performed utterly in Indonesian. The research results from Nurchasanah (1995, p. 48) suggested that learning Indonesian was still grammatical oriented. Some teachers claim that they use communicative approach, but their materials and techniques have not shown it.

When it is examined further, based on the Law No. 2 on National Education System, Indonesian language teaching in elementary schools does not solely make the literate output, but it should be provided with foundation to establish

various abilities that determines the next success. The purposes of teaching Indonesian at schools are to: (1) install basic knowledge of Indonesian language, (2) encourage the possession, love, and pride to be Indonesian, and (3) establish students' language skills. Therefore, This research was conducted based on this idea.

The purpose of this research is to find out the influence of Indonesian language teaching by implementing communicative approach towards students' achievements. As the target, this research was conducted in elementary schools since it is considered that elementary school is the first fragment of nine-year study launched by the government. When Indonesian subject is controlled well at the elementary school level, it will support the Indonesian language to be better on further education levels.

This research focuses on the main issues that Indonesian language teaching through communicative approach is limited to some aspects, they are: (1) the determination of educational objectives, (2) the determination of teaching materials, (3) the use of teaching methods, (4) the use of learning resources or teaching media, the use of teaching and learning strategies, and (5) the evaluation of Indonesian language teaching through communicative approach. While the students' achievement is limited to academic achievement of subjects that are examined nationally, namely Mathematics, Natural Science, Indonesian Language and Social Science, as indicated by the value of learning outcomes achieved by the students in the subjects.

### III. RESEARCH METHOD

The purpose of this research is to examine the influence of implementing communicative approach in teaching on the students' learning outcomes in Indonesian subject. This research employed descriptive correlational design. Forty teachers of elementary schools in Blitar, East Java, Indonesia, were selected as samples of the research.

The technique of data collection employed questionnaires and documentation. These research instruments were developed based on research variables construct and validated by expert. Before it was applied, tests were executed to see the reliability and validity of the instruments. Based on the results of the analysis of experimental data, it could be underlined that the instruments showed good validity with each item coefficient  $> 0.3$ , and the estimation of reliability was also good, with reliability coefficient of Alpha Cronbach  $> 0.7$ .

The communicative approach in Indonesian language teaching was observed from principles in teaching and learning activities. The implementation of the principles included making real communication as the focus of learning, providing opportunities for learners to do various experiment related to mastered competencies, and connecting various language skills. Learning activities focused on two aspects, namely fluency and accuracy. Furthermore, in the process of learning, there were a lot of teaching methods that concerned with interaction, such as role playing, discussion, simulation, or dialogue practice. Academic achievement of students was seen from five components, they are the grades of national examination results for Mathematics, Natural Science, Indonesian Language, and Social Science, as well as the average grade.

The Data were analyzed using two analytical techniques, namely descriptive statistics and correlation analysis of Pearson Product Moment. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the process of learning and implementing communicative approach that performed by the teachers. Statistical correlation was also used to examine the relationship between the implementation of communicative approach performed by the teachers and the students' achievements. Then, the classification of the grades determined by using the formula of descriptive analysis, uses the range divided by the number of classes. Based on this formula, the grades classification of implementing communicative approach in learning process is defined as presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
THE GRADES CLASSIFICATION OF IMPLEMENTING COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH IN TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

No	Score Interval	Criteria
1	36 – 65	Very less
2	66 – 94	Less
3	95 – 123	Adequate
4	124 – 152	Good
5	153 – 180	Very good

### IV. RESULTS

The purpose of this research is to test the effectiveness of implementing communicative approach in Indonesian language teaching to improve students' achievements in Indonesian, Mathematics, Natural Science and Social Science. The description of the research results about the level of implementing communicative approach in learning Indonesian is presented in Table 2.



TABLE 2  
IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH IN TEACHING PROCESS OF INDONESIAN LANGUAGE

Score Interval	F	%	Criteria
95 – 123	5	12,5 %	Adequate
124 – 152	33	82,5 %	Good
153 – 180	2	5 %	Very good

Based on Table 2, it shows that most of the teachers have been implementing communicative approach to the teaching and learning process. These results were collaborated by mean values obtained in this research, that is 133.4. This average is categorized as good. Thus, we can conclude that teachers based on the average, have been implementing communicative approach in learning Indonesian.

Furthermore, the influence of implementing communicative approach in learning Indonesian towards students' achievements is analyzed by using Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis. Generally, the result of correlation analysis is presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3  
CORRELATION ANALYSIS RESULTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH IN TEACHING AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Variable	Grade	Mathematics	Natural Science	Indonesian	Social Science	Average
r		0,076	0,124	0,157	0,159	0,062
p		p > 0,05	p > 0,05	p > 0,05	p > 0,05	p > 0,05

Table 3 above demonstrates that there is no evidence of a significant positive relationship between the implementation of communicative approach in Indonesian language teaching process and the students' achievement. The highest correlation value among four subjects was Social Science. These results were supported by the results of each analysis item of the instrument. There were significant positive correlation coefficient between the indicator items of implementation of communicative approach and the students' achievements, especially the grades of Social Science. Sample results of the correlation analysis are presented in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4  
CORRELATION ANALYSIS RESULTS OF THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH ITEMS IN TEACHING AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

No	Statements of Item Instrument	R	p
1	Tolerate the mistakes made in the learning process	0,359*	p < 0,05
2	Practice the language without context to the students	0,335*	p < 0,05
3	No need of meaningful communication in the learning process	0,389*	p < 0,05
4	Using the method of experience review in the learning process	0,451*	p < 0,05

On Table 4, it can be seen that there are some items of activities as part of the implementation of communicative approach that have significant positive relationship with students' achievements, particularly for Social Science. From those four items, there was a reference to the principle activities that emphasized on fluency, and there was a reference to the principle that emphasized on accuracy.

V. DISCUSSION

Based on the results of data analysis, it can be concluded that teaching and learning proses using communicative approach do not significantly influence students' academic achievements, particularly the national examination results. However, when it is observed from the components of communicative approach, there are some things showing significant positive correlation. When it is seen from the correlation value, the highest correlation coefficient is the result of Social Science, then Indonesian Language, followed by Natural Science, and the last was Mathematics tests.

The results of this study then indicated that there was no relationship between the implementation of communicative approach upon the students' achievements comprehensively. Academic achievements were taken from the results of the national exams. When it is explored further, the national examination is mainly concerned with cognitive aspects and the type of questions used is only multiple choice, whereas communicative approach emphasizes the use of language in practice in our daily life. It is suspected as a cause of the absence of significant positive relationship between the implementation of communicative approach towards the students' achievements. Furthermore, it was related to the research results conducted by Wiyono and Sutopo (2015) which showed that psychological values and English language of the students could not become a strong prediction towards the index performance of graduated students.

There were some other studies done by previous researchers that support the result of this study. Firstly, the research done by Ahmad et al (2014) who found out that communicative approach had a strong positive influence on the students' speaking ability. There are significant differences on the students' speaking ability who has been taught by communicative approach combined with other methods on all components, for instance content, fluency, delivery, and language accuracy. However, the results merely emphasize the influence of communicative approach to the students' speaking ability but it does not give any effects on the cognitive abilities. It was also in line with the study results by

Chen, Jiang and Mu (2015) that indicated that introversion/extroversion was not a key factor contributing to the success of spoken English learning. Therefore, the teaching and learning strategy using communicative approach is the effective method to improve students' speaking ability.

Secondly, the results were also in line with the research conducted by Agbatogun (2014) who asserted that there was a strong influence of communicative approach to students' communicative abilities. It was shown that students' communicative abilities were significantly improved after being taught using communicative approach than traditional approach. Correspondingly, it was supported by the results of Elmaksoud's research (2013) which showed that there was an increased ability of students taught using communicative approach in several sub skills.

Thirdly, the results of this study were also supported by the study of Caganaga (2014) which mentioned that there were differences in students' abilities in English who were taught using communicative approach and traditional approach, particularly in the areas of speech. Students' perception on learning is also very good. The level of students mastery of the language increases based on the approach and applied learning program.

Next, Chang's research (2011) also admitted that teachers had a positive attitude towards the principles of language learning using communicative approach. Teachers believe that learning a language using communicative approach is effective and meaningful. Furthermore, it was also in accordance with the research conducted by Jing and Minghe (2015) which found that the application of communicative approach had a positive influence on the ability of students' oral communication competence and improvement of students' communication competence.

Then, Mesgarshahr & Abdollah (2014) found out that the level of students' willingness of communication who were taught using communicative approach was higher than students taught by traditional approach. As a result, learning by communicative strategies can facilitate and encourage students' motivation to communicate well in the classroom.

The results of Kasumi's research (2015) showed that the students' language learning outcomes were developed especially in listening and speaking than the traditional approach, while writing was relatively low. It was also supported by Ahmed and Rao's (2013) study who found out that there were significant differences in learning outcomes of students who were taught using communicative approach and students taught by traditional approach, particularly in the areas of idioms, general and contextual speaking, while in the comprehensive materials, vocabulary, and essay did not show significant difference.

In the same way, Jafari and Rad (2016) in their research initiated that phonological and grammatical awareness had significant role in reading performance of English as a foreign language. In other words, there is significant correlation between phonological and grammatical awareness, sentence and word reading. This result was also supported with the study results of Harkio and Pietila (2016) which indicated that vocabulary breadth and depth were the strong predictors of reading comprehension skills in lower levels of proficiency.

Finally, the results of this research were also supported by Basta (2011) who found out that collaborative learning helped students to acquire life skills, academic skills, and social skills. Related to the communicative approach, collaborative learning emphasizes the students' interaction in the learning process. It was in line with Shahneaz, et al. (2013) who argued that communication skills could be improved through club or language groups, debates, or other interaction techniques which could motivate students in learning environment that could enhance students' communication.

To summarise, it can be concluded that communicative approach can improve the communication skills of the students. Students' communication competence can be developed by providing a lot of opportunities for students to practice communication in the learning process. If it is observed using the components of language learning, not all components can optimally be increased. Sub competencies which are effectively improved are oral communication and social competence, like speaking and listening, while writing competence is not significantly increased, such as reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing. Therefore, language learning by implementing communicative approach does not contribute a lot to the score of national examination which tends to emphasize on the use of knowledge, not the practice.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the use of communicative approach in Indonesian language teaching did not have a significant effect on students' academic performance in national examination. The national examination emphasizes on measuring students' knowledge aspects. Therefore, the communicative approach in Indonesian language teaching does not have a strong influence on the language knowledge.

When the research findings were seen from items of the communicative approach characteristics, there were some items that showed significant positive correlations, particularly with the national examination results of Indonesian Language and Social Science. This study proves that the use of communicative approach in language teaching has significant positive effect on the students' ability of language practices. Moreover, it also has significant positive effect on the social skills of the students.

Furthermore, teachers can use the communicative approach in language teaching to improve students' competence in communication practices. In addition, through the use of communicative approach, teachers can improve students' social skills. Whereas, it is essential to use other relevant teaching strategies to increase the mastery of language knowledge of students. To obtain a more comprehensive conclusion, further research needs to be done with the

experimental method. Finally, the effect of the communicative approach components in language teaching on each subject need to be studied comprehensively.

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# The CEFR Stratification of English Productive Vocabulary of Chinese University Undergraduates Based on DIY Learner English Corpus

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**Abstract**—This paper analyzes the productive vocabulary (PV) of non-English majors in a highly prestigious university in China through a DIY learner corpus of English compositions and the Productive Vocabulary Level Test. Based on the total PV and the average PV, this paper compares the corpus with the CEFR-aligned English Vocabulary Profile (EVP) of Cambridge University. The results show that some of the outstanding students can attain Level B2 of EVP while most students' PV is comparable to Level B1. The results of this study shed light on strengthening vocabulary teaching in College English teaching in China.

**Index Terms**—learner corpus, productive vocabulary, CEFR, English vocabulary profile

## I. OVERVIEW

### A. Introduction to Productive Vocabulary

Productive vocabulary (PV), or active vocabulary, is an important indicator of language learning that gauges the amount and the level of learner vocabulary in actual use (Melka, 1997, p.84). In recent years, the English competence of learners in China has generally improved steadily, and their verbal and written communicative competence has progressed significantly. However, many college students still take an examination-oriented approach to English learning, preparing for examinations by means of rote memorization of words. Although many people can pass the examination smoothly, such examinations cannot accurately indicate the learners' level of productive vocabulary. As a result, the phenomenon of Dumb English remains.

There are a number of approaches to the evaluation of productive vocabulary, the most famous of which being the Productive Vocabulary Level Test designed by Laufer & Nation (1999). The tool is roughly similar to a cloze test, offering the first letter of the word and requiring the learner to fill up the gap with needed words. Tom Cobb adapts its test tools to the online edition, as shown in the following figure:

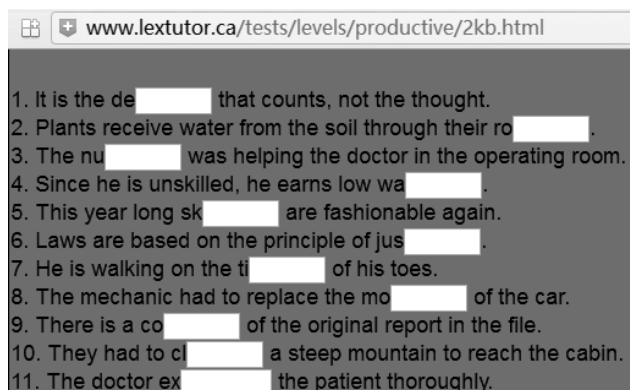


Figure 1. Screenshot of Productive Vocabulary Level Test (PVLVT), a tool for VP measurement

Although the evaluation tool has a wide range of international impact, it does not fully reflect the learners' oral and written language output in the practical application of the situation. In order to supplement PVLVT and measure the actual practical English competence of learners, this paper establishes a DIY corpus of English compositions by non-English majors in a highly prestigious university (hereinafter referred to as "X University"), and makes a quantitative PV study of college students. The individual PV data was also obtained through the Productive Vocabulary Level Test (PVLVT). Results of the study are compared against the benchmark of English Vocabulary Profile (EVP) to determine the CEFR level of PV of these learners. It is expected that this study can reflect the actual PV competence of high-level English learners in one of the top universities in China.

### 1. English Vocabulary Profile and CEFR

The project English Profile was initiated in 2007 by University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, Cambridge University Press, British Council, Cambridge University, University of Bedfordshire, and English UK. It was also supported by the Council of Europe. At present the project is still underway. While the English Vocabulary Profile (EVP) has been completed, English Functions Profile and English Grammar Profile are still being researched. EVP is based on Cambridge Learner Corpus, which brings together hundreds of thousands of candidates from all over the world who participate in Cambridge English Exams. The EVP team elicits the vocabulary, concepts and phrases of learners at each level of English competence from the corpus composed of more than 45 million words (Good, 2010, p.114).

The stratification of levels ranging from A1 to C2 corresponds to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001), which divides language learners' language proficiency levels into three categories of A, B and C and six levels ranging from C2 (Mastery), C1 (Effective Operational Proficiency), B2 (Vantage), B1 (Threshold), A2 (Waystage) to A1 (Breakthrough). Among them, C2 and C1 are collectively referred to as the phase of proficient users; B2 and B1 are collectively referred to as the stage of independent users; A2 and A1 are collectively referred to as the stage of basic users. This standard has been widely implemented around the world, CEFR alignment issues are being extensively discussed and scrutinized. EVP offers a tool for analysis that is aligned with Cambridge English examinations, contributes to the development of glossary of learners for learning and research.

### B. Construction and Analysis of Learners' Productive Vocabulary Corpus

Over the past two decades, the vigorous development of corpus linguistics has brought new tools and research paradigms for the research of learner vocabulary. In order to apply the empirical paradigm to understanding the vocabulary competence of learners, scholars have built a series of monolingual learner corpora. In the context of China, results show that Chinese EFL learners' productive vocabulary is characterized by very limited in quantity, poor in collocation (Deng, 2005, p.9), over-reliance on high-frequency vocabulary (Deng, 2007, p.17), and a highly colloquial style of written language. With the improvement of English proficiency, the colloquial tendency in the written language of Chinese college EFL learners has not been satisfactorily balanced (Wen, Ding & Wang, 2003). Tan (2006) discussed the breadth and depth of PV knowledge of Chinese learners and established a development model for the PV of EFL learners. Zheng (2015) studied the diachronic development of free PV of English major freshmen. Lou & Ma (2012) compared the PV of Chinese and American Advanced English Learners' Academic Writings through a corpus-driven approach to determine the vocabulary level by the embedded BNC word frequency list in Range BNC. So far none of the researches have aligned the PV level of learners with the CEFR level. Therefore this paper seeks to determine the CEFR level of PV of EFL learners in X University by comparing the corpus data against the EVP.

#### 1. Principles for the construction of learners' productive vocabulary corpus

To this end, this study takes the opportunity of giving learners assignments of English writing to collect the English compositions from undergraduate students of X University. These electronically submitted compositions then went through screening and tagging into Learners' Corpus of Productive Vocabulary (LCPV). The author has taken full account of the representativeness, balance of subject matter and capacity of the corpus, with the indicators described as follows:

##### 1) Subject matter:

In order to diversify the subject as much as possible, the author required students to submit English writing assignments on 6 different subjects, each with about 400 words, with subject matters ranging from sociology, humanity, environmental protection, science and technology to psychology, covering some of the regular themes of college English textbooks so as to fully mobilize students to use their own mastery of the various fields of English vocabulary acquired in classroom learning. In this way, it is expected that this PV analysis can more accurately reflect the true vocabulary competence of EFL students of X University.

##### 2) Source of corpus data:

This corpus is strictly limited to the third-grade undergraduate students of X University. The source of the corpus is limited to X University because X University is one of the top-notch universities in China. Undergraduates of this university are known for their good English competence, and the vocabulary profile of such students is also impressive. It is expected that results of this study will play a practical role in the future improvement of college English teaching. Originality of all written materials is strictly implemented to resolutely avoid plagiarism. The online submission system is equipped with a duplication-checking function, so if the student's English composition is similar to any composition in the system library, a system alarm is automatically prompted, thus ensuring the quality of the corpus. In addition, citations and quotes were manually deleted to ensure the cleanliness of data.

##### 3) Capacity:

Corpus must reach a certain scale to have practical significance, but if the corpus is not carefully designed and then the corpus is not representative. In that case, even millions of words cannot reach the desired effect of accuracy. Therefore, this study is based on the principle of convenience sampling, eliciting 6 essays from a class of 63 students in a span of two semesters. Several essays that were absent or delayed were excluded from the corpus, and one essay whose length was clearly inappropriate for the corpus was also excluded. The final word count of the corpus is 135,499 words. This data capacity is representative enough for a DIY specialized learner corpus.

C. *Corpus Analysis*

This study uses the corpus software Range developed by Paul Nation (2003) of Victoria University as an analytical tool. The reason why the author didn't use Antconc or Wordsmith is the need of noise reduction. Even a lemmatized wordlist provided by Antconc is loaded with proper names as well as a number of spelling errors. Based on the somewhat controversial premise that some words in the learners' productive vocabulary could be misspelled out of sheer carelessness or lack of proficiency, the author performed error correction of misspelled words prior to importing data into corpus tools, thereby improving the accuracy and reliability of corpus data. Since proper names such as names of persons or places in China are usually excluded from the PV, it is hardly possible to eliminate all these words manually. Even if these words are replaced by pronouns, this practice will disproportionately affect the word frequency results. By contrast, the benefit of using Range is that we can tokenize words efficiently and compare all words against frequency lists so that unfamiliar words such as proper names or misspelled words are excluded from the lists.

The reference list chosen for this study is based on BNC-COCA list by Mark Davies and revised for Range by Paul Nation.

TABLE 1:  
RESULTS OF WORD STATISTICS OF LCPV USING RANGE29B

WORD LIST	TOKENS/%	TYPES/%	FAMILIES
1	108980/80.43	2487/29.21	955
2	12433/9.18	1769/20.78	798
3	6540/4.83	1411/16.57	777
4	2047/1.51	599/7.04	443
5	795/0.59	332/3.90	276
6	505/0.37	197/2.31	171
7	299/0.22	146/1.72	131
8	162/0.12	97/1.14	91
9	119/0.09	69/0.81	61
10	125/0.09	57/0.67	51
11	62/0.05	36/0.42	34
12	40/0.03	26/0.31	24
13	39/0.03	19/0.22	18
14	19/0.01	14/0.16	14
15	31/0.02	14/0.16	13
16	24/0.02	12/0.14	12
17	11/0.01	6/0.07	6
18	17/0.01	6/0.07	6
19	14/0.01	5/0.06	5
20	9/0.01	2/0.02	2
21	9/0.01	2/0.02	2
22	4/0.00	3/0.04	3
23	4/0.00	3/0.04	3
24	5/0.00	2/0.02	2
25	8/0.01	3/0.04	3
Not in the lists	3198/2.36	1195/14.04	?????
<b>Total</b>	<b>135499</b>	<b>8512</b>	<b>3901</b>

Analysis shows that the total number of words identified by the number of word families used by these 63 students amounts to 3,901. Then one question arises: the number of types is higher than expected before the experiment, so why do X University students have such a huge PV? A careful observation shows that the frequency of occurrence of these words varies drastically, with words in Level 1, 2 and 3 taking up the overwhelming majority. Whereas the actual use of words spanned all the 25 levels, the upper or uppermost levels contain few words that are statistically insignificant, as they do not represent the actual PV of learners. Therefore the author decides that only data from Level 1 to Level 8 are counted effective, because starting from Level 9, the ratio of word families in the corpus fell below 1%, which the author deems insignificant enough to be excluded. Therefore the total PV thus identified is 3,642 words.

It has to be noted that the author seeks to analyze PV by two indexes at the same time, that is, total productive vocabulary (TPV) and average productive vocabulary (APV). The former refers to the total number of types extracted from learner corpus; the latter refers to the average number of types used by individual learners. Obviously, the former is equivalent to the latter's aggregate value, so theoretically speaking, the greater number of students, the greater total PV. Therefore, the data in this corpus shows that 63 students have a total productive vocabulary of 3,642.

In the past two decades, Chinese scholars have carried out many studies on the relationship between the size of vocabulary and language competence, such as Gui (1985), Yu (1991), Zhou & Wen (2000), Deng (2001), Shao (2002) and so on. The vocabulary size of college students ranges from 1800~2200 (Huang, 2004), 2006 (Wang, 2001), 2404 (Deng, 2001) to 2574 (Shao, 2002). It has to be noted that findings of the investigations are all about the size of receptive vocabulary (RV), but PV is very different. Researchers agree that RV is greater than the PV, and that indicators of students in South China Agricultural University show that the percentage of PV in RV was 51% (Zhong, Adisa & Chonlada, 2005, p.134). Since the number of RV is much higher than that of PV, then why is the total PV of

non-English majors in X University roughly comparable to the number of RV of college students in the above studies? The author hypothesizes that the causes of this gap may lie in the following three aspects:

1) The excellent student body of X University. As one of the top universities in China, X University has the ability to recruit the best students from all over China, and their English competence on average is also among the best in the country. Therefore it is no wonder that their PV is higher than the national average.

2) The popularity of electronic dictionaries. With the advancement of computer technology, access to electronic dictionaries and search engines becomes so easy that learners can find whatever they want to express during the process of writing. This is also a variable that is difficult to control in this study. If the essay is written in the examination context, it may more accurately reflect the true level of their PV.

3) The overall improvement of foreign language learning environment. Globalization has also brought tremendous opportunities for development in China, so that more people can open their eyes to see the world, study abroad, enjoy overseas travel opportunities. Students gain greater access to authentic English materials on the Internet, with a huge amount of US dramas, English news and listening materials. Such an ideal environment for foreign language learning was beyond one's imagination in the past. So naturally the PV of college students in the past decade has grown exponentially.

It should be noted that the PV calculation here is based on the compositions of 63 students in the class as a whole for corpus analysis, so the size of PV is the aggregate of all. The advantage of this algorithm is that we can see the overall trend, and it can also compensate for the deviation from the limited number of individual essays and data sparsity. However, it cannot fully reflect the differences between individuals.

While it is possible to calculate the individual PV of each learner in the corpus by using corpus tools, the relative sparsity of data makes invalidates such statistics. As an expedient, the author calculated the individual PV by asking the same group of students to take a PVL T test. The tests were administered in a simulated examination environment in a language laboratory where students have access to the Internet. As this test is pretty simple, results were soon obtained and analyzed in comparison with the TPV obtained through corpus analysis. These results manifest a great individual difference among the population. The individual PV of all students is shown in the following figure:

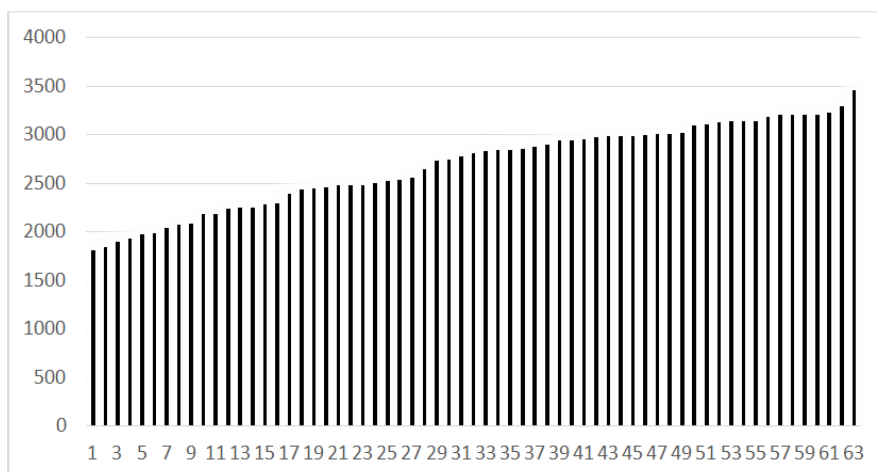


Figure 2. The individual PV of students acquired through PVL T

As shown in Figure 3, the PVs of all individual students were arranged in a histogram in a cascading manner. The chart shows a certain individual difference among the PVs of non-English majors in X University, ranging from around 1,900 to around 3,400, but the PVs of most students are between 2,500 and 3,000 (mean score, or APV is 2,685 while the median score is 2,830). This value does not differ significantly from the PV data from corpus analysis. In fact, the number of positive vocabularies is likely to increase significantly if different productive vocabulary measurements are used.

Comparing the APV data from PVL T and the TPV data obtained from LCPV with the EVP glossary to determine the CEFR levels of PV, we can arrive at the correspondence of the PVs of non-English majors in X University to the CEFR levels. As mentioned above, the EVP project was based on the Cambridge English Proficiency Test papers to determine their alignment with the CEFR. According to Capel (2010, p.5), the vocabulary of A1 to B2 is as follows:

A1 grade 601

New Words

B1 new words 1,429

B2 new words 1,711

Based on the above values, we can calculate that learners at CEFR B1 Level have a PV of 2,955, while the B2 Level vocabulary is 4,666. According to this standard, the TPV of non-English majors in X University is 3,642, and the APV is 2,685. Taking into account the pros and cons of the two methods, and the individual differences between learners, the



author speculates that the PV of some of the outstanding students reaches the B1 level of CEFR and even close to the CEFR B2 Level, while most ordinary learners' PV level is around CEFR B1 Level.

## II. UNIQUE WORD ANALYSIS

In order to further understand the specific differences between the PV of non-English majors in X University and the corresponding level of CEFR, the author extracts the unique words from both LCPV and the glossary of EVP using the method proposed by Feng (2010). The program Concordance 3.2 was used to extract two lists of unique words which were then compared and analyzed.

First of all, the TPV was roughly proportionate in number to the B2 level of CEFR and was thus compared against each other. It is found that a total of 3,542 words belong both to B2 Level of EVP and the TPV; the number of unique words in B2 vocabulary is 1,592, while that of the unique words of the TPV is 1,174. This difference is worthy of attention. After observation, the causes of the differences are mainly reflected in the following three aspects:

### 1) Genre and scope of knowledge.

As the EVP project is based on Cambridge English Examination corpus, with its huge data spanning multiple years, a variety of genres, and involving a wide range of knowledge. Thus the basic vocabulary coverage is more comprehensive, with such words as "zoo", "zoology", "vet" and other words involved, which are absent in the compositions of non-English majors of X University. Therefore, this does not mean that they do not grasp these words, but in the composition does not involve these genres.

### 2) The influence of Chinese and English.

Unique word analysis shows that some of the more common English vocabulary did not appear in the writings by Chinese students, such as "access", "accessible" and so on. Given the lexical gaps between two languages, this is understandable, but the language competence of students has yet to be strengthened.

### 3) The washback effect of language proficiency tests.

Some college students demonstrate a strong vocabulary competence, with their individual PV amounting up to 3,400, and some has even attained the C1 or even C2 Level of CEFR. After communicating with some of these students, the author learned that they have begun to prepare for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and other language proficiency tests, and thus consciously or unconsciously they used the vocabulary that they acquired during this stage of learning.

## III. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

### A. Summary

This study is an attempt to align college students' PV with its corresponding CEFR level according to EVP. The preliminary results show that the average PV of the second grade non-English majors of X University is close to B1 Level of CEFR, and their TPV is close to the B2 Level of CEFR. Considering the limited samples and the deviation of the experimental method, it can be argued that there is a clear gap between the PV of the vast majority of students and the C Level of CEFR. This shows that even in one of the top universities in China, students still have to improve their English competence, and vocabulary learning should still play a key role in college English teaching.

### B. Innovation

The innovation of this research is to use the DIY learner corpus to measure the productive vocabulary, and two indicators of TPV and APV were analyzed. This method effectively complements Laufer & Nation (1999)'s Productive Vocabulary Level Test. Results show that the vocabulary level basically corresponds to the CEFR level by students' self-evaluation.

### C. Limitations and Perspectives

The study also has some limitations, including those in the amount of data, the range of topics, and the interference of access to the dictionary or reference materials. These are to be further addressed in the follow-up study.

The follow-up study can follow the following approaches:

First, build a student English portfolio by the CEFR level so that students can perform self-assessment, which is then incorporated into an electronic portfolio (e-portfolio) to establish the alignment between self-assessment and PV of CEFR.

Second, the learner corpus will be consistently expanded with new students enrolled in each new academic year so that the data acquired will be more precise, reflecting a wider range of topics and individuals.

In conclusion, this study is a useful attempt to measure the productive vocabulary of college students. Results show that the PV of non-English majors of X University is generally higher than previous assessments, but most still revolve around B1 Level of CEFR. Clearly there is still great room for improvement. This needs to be addressed in the future college English teaching.

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# The Improvement of Fiction Prose Study as a Teaching Material Based on Makassar Local Wisdom Integrated with Mobile Learning at FKIP Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar

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**Abstract**—The purpose of this research was to produce the prototype of fiction prose study as the valid, effective, and practical teaching material based on Makassar local wisdom integrated with mobile learning. It applied research and development (R&D) by using Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluation (ADDIE) method. The samples of this research were from the students of Indonesian Language and Literature Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) of Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar. Technique of data collection included test, questionnaires, observations, interviews, and documentation. The data were analyzed by qualitative descriptive and descriptive statistics. The finding of this research was the fiction prose study as a valid teaching material based on Makassar local wisdom integrated with mobile learning reviewed from its contents, presentation, graphic, language, and technology source. It was proven from the result of preliminary field test which indicated the teaching material as in high validation category. Similarly, the results of main field test and operational field test showed the same category as well. In conclusion, the teaching material was effective to improve students' understanding related to the values of Makassar local wisdom along with their learning result. It was also a practical material referred to its implementation and management in learning process.

**Index Terms**—teaching material, mobile learning, and local wisdom

## I. INTRODUCTION

The essential of research and development in teaching material based on local wisdom referred to Indonesia's curriculum focusing on the educational development using local wisdom (Susanto, 2014). The fiction prose study is one of subjects in literatures department. It is regarded that literature is an appropriate tool in teaching culture. Literature can be used as a teaching tool, manual book, instructional book, or teaching material (Teeuw, 1984). A literary work is an attempt to record the contents of an author's soul (Sumardjo and Saini, 1994). Specifically, Pradopo (2011) suggested that literary work is a work of art which requires creativity and imagination. Besides, literature presents life which is mostly composed by social reality, although it is seemed to imitate nature and subjective world of men existence (Wellek and Warren, 1993). Related to the term of literature, Semi (1993) described it as a form or result of creative art with men and their existence as the objects and language as the medium. Also, Sumardjo and Saini (1994) explained that literature are personal expressions of experience, thought, feeling, ideas, spirit, and belief in the form of concrete description which evoke its own beauty through a language.

Pursuing this further, literature is an imaginative work. One of them is prose which defined as a series of a specific story based on author's imagination which becomes a complete story (Aminuddin, 2011). Even as an imaginative work, it does not come from empty space with no meaning. Literature comes from social life which brings message and philosophy of the society where it comes (Abrams, 1981). The forms of literary works which become focus of this research are novel and short story. Abrams (1981) explained that novel is an extended short story, and after being extended it is called as a romance. While Waluyo (1994) illustrated novel as a new art symbol adapted from facts and author's experiences. Additionally, the story line of a novel is something realistic and reasonable (Stanton, 2012).

In the same way, short story is a story which can be completed in one sitting, around one to two hours, something that is impossible for a novel (Jassin, 2008). In line with the statement above, short story is a narration (not an

argumentative analysis) or a fiction (unreal but may be found at any time and place) which relatively short (Sumarjo and Saini, 1994: 37).

There are three accessible ways in culture learning, that is through teaching material, method, and authentic assessment (Mulyana in Rukanah, 2017). National Center for Competency Based Training in Prastowo (2013) stated that teaching material is every item that helps lecturers or instructors in teaching and learning process. Equally important, teaching material is every tool used to help students in teaching and learning process (Kemendiknas, 2010). Similarly, Dick, Carey & Carey (2009) added that “teaching material is a systematic set of material or substance as a complete representation of competence by the students to achieve in learning process”. Juneau (Fitraningum, 2015) also stated that teaching material is a source used in teaching process based on printed or non-printed curriculum and published materials made by lecturers. On the other side, Opara and Oguzor (2011) asserted that teaching material is the learning source in the form of audio visual (software/hardware) used as a communication’s alternative in teaching and learning process.

Teaching material’s validity in development research includes content and construct validity as well. Akker (1999) clarified that validity refers to the level of intervention design based on the *state-of-the-art* knowledge and how various components of the intervention are linked to each (construct validity). He added that the practicality indicator refers to some level that users (other experts) consider the intervention as more applicable and preferable in normal condition. Moreover, the effectiveness of teaching material concerns about the level of experience and the results of regular intervention as aimed.

The developing teaching material based on mobile learning uses *EPUB* application which can be accessed through *android* mobile phone with the assistance of *Ideal Group Leader*. Ally (2009) defined that mobile learning delivers electronic material on a computing mobile device to be more accessible. Equally, Traxler (2007) has written, “...therefore, mobile learning is not only about ‘mobile device’ or ‘learning’ matter as previously understood, but it is a part of a concept of new dynamism in society.” The research about mobile learning and its reflection must stimulate multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary thinking and educational methods (El-Hussein, 2010). The expectation of learning effectiveness by implementing technology is aligned with the statement uttered by Vocoula and Sharples (2009) that in this era of advanced technology, mobile learning (M-learning) is a potential opportunity to improve the quality of learning.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was a research and development (R&D) design. It adapted Molenda’s (2008) design or known as ADDIE which includes five stages, that is analyzing, designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating. By observing its field test, this research was classified as pre-experimental design with pre-test and post-test. Though the data collection indicated that it applied mixed method design as well.

The research was conducted at Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar located in Jalan Sultan Alauddin No. 259, Makassar City, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. It was held on fourth semester (odd semester) of 2016-2017 Academic Year. Also, the samples of this research were 142 students in fourth semester of Indonesian Language Education and Literatures study program. Specifically, six samples were placed in preliminary field test, twelve samples in main field test and twenty four samples in operational field test. One hundred samples who were taught by specific materials divided into three classes. The instruments of this research and development included: (a) questionnaire sheets of content/material validity assessment; (b) learning result test; (c) observation sheets of learning implementation and material management; (d) questionnaire of lecturers’ and students’ response; (e) interviews; and (f) documentation. The analysis of quantitative data used descriptive statistical technique which covered final score, criteria average, aspect average, and total average. For the qualitative data, it was analyzed by using qualitative descriptive technique.

## III. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

### a. Description of Material Validity

#### 1. Description of teaching material validity

TABLE 1  
VALIDATION RESULTS OF TEACHING MATERIAL (FIRST AND SECOND PROTOTYPE)

Aspect	First Test Average Score	Description	Second Test Average Score	Description
Material Compatibility of Standard Competence (SK) and Basic Competence (KD)	3.00	Fair	4.00	Valid
Material Accuracy	3,25	Fair	4,25	High Validity
Material Renewal	3.00	Fair	4.50	High Validity
Engaging Curiosity	2.50	Poor	4.50	High Validity
<b>Total Average Score</b>	<b>2,85</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>4,32</b>	<b>High Validity</b>

Table 1 above showed the validation results of teaching material of first and second prototype. Total average score of the first prototype’s validation was 2,85 (fair) and the second prototype’s validation was 4,32 (high validity).

2. Description of material presentation validity

TABLE 2  
VALIDATION RESULTS OF SYSTEMATIC MATERIAL PRESENTATION (FIRST AND SECOND PROTOTYPE)

Aspect	First Test Average Score	Description	Second Test Average Score	Description
Presentation Technique	2,00	Poor	4,25	High Validity
Presentation Supplement	2,25	Poor	4,00	Valid
Material Presentation	2,88	Fair	4,00	Valid
Coherence and Cohesion of Conceptual Thinking	2,25	Poor	4,00	Valid
<b>Total Average Score</b>	<b>2,35</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>4,07</b>	<b>Valid</b>

Table 2 above showed the validation results of presentation systematic elements in the first and second prototype. The total average score of the first prototype’s validation was 2,35 (poor) and the second prototype’s validation was 4,07 (valid).

3. Description of teaching material’s graphic validity

TABLE 3  
VALIDATION RESULTS OF TEACHING MATERIAL’S GRAPHIC (FIRST AND SECOND PROTOTYPE)

Aspect	First Test Average Score	Description	Second Test Average Score	Description
Size of Printed Material (optional)	4,00	Valid	4,00	Valid
Cover Design	2,50	Poor	4,75	High Validity
Content/Material Design	2,50	Poor	4,25	High Validity
<b>Total Average Score</b>	<b>3,00</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>4,33</b>	<b>High Validity</b>

Table 3 above showed the validation results from the experts relating the graphic structures of the first and second prototype. The total average score of graphic structure in the first prototype’s validation was 3,00 or categorized as fair and the second prototype’s validation was 4,33 which in high validity category.

4. Description of language validity in teaching material

TABLE 4  
VALIDATION RESULTS OF LANGUAGE USED IN TEACHING MATERIAL (FIRST AND SECOND PROTOTYPE)

Aspect	First Test Average Score	Description	Second Test Average Score	Description
Directness	3,13	Fair	4,13	Valid
Communicativeness	3,25	Fair	4,50	High Validity
Dialogic interaction	2,88	Fair	3,88	Valid
Compatible with students’ development	3,25	Fair	4,25	High Validity
Compatible with grammar	3,00	Fair	4,00	Valid
The use of terms, symbols, and icons	2,88	Fair	4,38	High Validity
<b>Total Average Score</b>	<b>3,06</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>4,19</b>	<b>Valid</b>

Table 4 above showed the validation results of language used in teaching material in the first and second prototype. The total average score in first prototype’s validation was 3,06 (fair) and the second prototype’s validation was 4,19 or in valid category.

5. Description of technology/media validity in teaching material

TABLE 5  
VALIDATION RESULTS OF TECHNOLOGY/MEDIA USED IN TEACHING MATERIAL (FIRST AND SECOND PROTOTYPE)

Aspect	First Test Average Score	Description	Second Test Average Score	Description
Visual Communication Design	3,00	Fair	4,25	High Validity
Software Utilization	3,00	Fair	4,13	Valid
<b>Total Average Score</b>	<b>3,00</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>4,19</b>	<b>Valid</b>

Table 5 above showed the validation results of technology/media used in teaching material in the first and second prototype. The total average score in first prototype’s validation was 3,00 (fair) and the second prototype’s validation was 4,19 (valid).

6. Description of syllabus and lesson plan validity

TABLE 6  
VALIDATION RESULTS OF THE SYLLABUS

Aspect	Validator’s Average Score		Total Aspect	Description
	I	II		
Content Review	4,25	4,25	4,25	High Validity
Language	4,00	4,25	4,13	Valid
Time Allocation	4,00	4,00	4,00	Valid
Source Reliability	4,50	4,25	4,38	High Validity
Soft Skill	4,00	4,00	4,00	Valid
<b>Total Average Score</b>	<b>4,12</b>	<b>4,25</b>	<b>4,15</b>	<b>Valid</b>

Table 6 above showed the validation results of the syllabus used. The total average score of the syllabus was 4,15 or in valid category.

TABLE 7  
VALIDATION RESULTS OF THE LESSON PLAN

Aspect	Validator's Average Score		Total Aspect Score	Description
	I	II		
Objectives Formulation	5,00	4,50	4,75	High Validity
Content Review	4,00	4,00	4,00	Valid
Language	4,00	4,00	4,00	Valid
Clarity of Learning Steps	4.50	4,25	4,38	High Validity
Assessment/Evaluation	4,00	4,00	4,00	Valid
<b>Total Average Score</b>	4,30	4.15	4,23	<b>High Validity</b>

Table 7 above showed the validation results of the lesson plan. The he total average score of the lesson plan was 4,23 or in high validity category.

#### 7. Description of material validity based on field tests result

After the material and its supporting tools were validated by the experts, the next steps would be preliminary field test, main field test, and operational field test.

TABLE 8  
SAMPLES' RESPONSES IN FIELD TESTS

Field Test Group	Σ Sample	Total Average Score	Description
Preliminary Field Test	6	3,75	Good
Main Field Test	12	4,38	Very Good
Operational Field Test	24	4,88	Very Good

Table 8 above showed the results of samples' responses in preliminary field test was in good category with total average score of 3,75, while the main field test was in very good category with total average score of 4,38. The results of samples' response of operational field was in very good category with total average score of 4,88.

Other responses for supporting the validity were obtained from model lecturer. Here is the following table below involving model lecturers' responses:

TABLE 9  
MODEL LECTURERS' RESPONSES IN FIELD TESTS

Model Lecturer	Σ Lecturer	Total Average Score	Description
Preliminary Field Test	1	4,25	Very Good
Main Field Test	1	4,25	Very Good
Operational Field Test	1	4,50	Very Good

Table 9 above showed the results of model lecturers' responses in the preliminary field test as in very good category with total average score of 4,25. A similar result in the main field test with total average score of 4,25 or in very good category and in the operational field test with total average score of 4,50 which also categorized as very good.

#### b. Description of Material Effectiveness

In the preliminary field test, there were no students who answered the questions perfectly. The lowest score was 23 with only 14 correct answers (sample number 66), while the highest score was 85 with 51 correct answers (sample number 35). By large, only 22 students (22%) passed the test. The results proved that the students' basic ability in the pre-test were pretty poor. Nevertheless, after the treatment given, the test result of *sample number 23* had a significant increase by obtaining 68 scores with 41 correct answers. The result cannot make the student pass the test yet, but at least it gave an increase of 27%. Related to that, the lowest score in post-test was from sample number 66 with total score 38 and 23 correct answers. The highest score was from sample number 35 with total score of 100 and 60 correct answers. In other words, there were 76 students or 76% who passed the test after learning the developing teaching material with an average increase of 54%.

Moreover, the test results of students' knowledge and understanding about Makassar's local wisdom showed that they were able to find the right values of local wisdom in a piece of literary work with 91% complete percentage. On the other hand, 9% students failed to meet the completeness criteria because they could not understand and relate the values with real life.

#### c. Description of Learning Implementation and Management

##### 1. Description in teaching material implementation

The total students in Class Implementation I were 34 students. The results of teaching material implementation are presented on the following table:

TABLE 10  
LEARNING IMPLEMENTATION OF CLASS IMPLEMENTATION 1, 2, AND 3

No.	Aspect	Average Score of Class 1	Description	Average Score of Class 2	Description	Average Score of Class 3	Description
1	Lecturer's style in outlining learning objectives	4,50	Very Good	4,50	Very Good	5,00	Very Good
2	Guiding students	4,00	Good	4,50	Very Good	4,50	Very Good
3	Skill in directing the groups	4,00	Good	4,00	Good	4,50	Very Good
4	Mastering the material concept	4,50	Very Good	4,50	Very Good	4,50	Very Good
5	Giving motivation to students to learn	4,50	Very Good	4,50	Very Good	5,00	Very Good
6	Lecturer's ability in monitoring groups' activities	4,00	Good	4,50	Very Good	4,50	Very Good
7	Satisfaction related to method used by lecturer	4,00	Good/Satisfied	4,00	Good/Satisfied	4,00	Good/Satisfied
8	Giving examples	4,50	Very Good	4,50	Very Good	4,50	Very Good
9	Using learning media	4,50	Very Good	4,50	Very Good	5,00	Very Good
10	Variation of learning method	4,00	Good	4,50	Very Good	4,50	Very Good
<b>Total Average Score</b>		<b>4,25</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>4,40</b>	<b>Very Good</b>	<b>4,60</b>	<b>Very Good</b>

Table 10 showed the observation result of the learning program in Class Implementation 1, 2, and 3. The total average score for learning program in Class Implementation 1 was 4,25 , in Class Implementation 2 was 4,40 , and in Class Implementation 3 was 4,60.

2. Description in teaching material management

TABLE 11  
MANAGEMENT OF TEACHING MATERIAL IN CLASS IMPLEMENTATION 1, 2, AND 3

No.	Aspect	Average Score of Class 1	Description	Average Score of Class 2	Description	Average Score of Class 3	Description
1	Convenience	4,00	Practical	4,50	Very practical	4,50	Very practical
2	Interconnection between material and learning activity	4,00	Practical	4,50	Very practical	4,50	Very practical
3	Teaching material as the main source of learning	4,50	Very practical	5,00	Very practical	5,00	Very practical
4	Teaching material as the source of tasks and exercises	4,50	Very practical	5,00	Very practical	5,00	Very practical
5	Teaching material as the source of values concept	4,00	Practical	4,00	Practical	4,50	Very practical
<b>Total Average Score</b>		<b>4,20</b>	<b>Very Practical</b>	<b>4,60</b>	<b>Very Practical</b>	<b>4,70</b>	<b>Very Practical</b>

Table 11 above showed the observation result of the teaching material management in learning process on Class Implementation 1, 2, and 3. The total average score for teaching material management in Class Implementation 1 was 4, 20, Class Implementation 2 was 4, 60, and Class Implementation 3 was 4,70. In sum, the three classes were categorized as very practical.

IV. DISCUSSION CONCLUSION

Through this research and development, the problems had been resolved. By seeing the results of preliminary field test, main field test, and operational field test, the students had given positive responses to the teaching material. The sample students regarded the developing teaching material as the latest material. It was also interesting, easy-comprehended, and free-downloaded with positive effect on learning. It was proven by comparing 100 students' learning result before and after applying material with the percentage of 54%. There were only 22% students who passed the pre-test and then turned into 76% students in the post-test. Furthermore, the material was able to invest the values of Makassar local wisdom to the students for its implementation in learning process.

In this research and development, standardized teaching material by the experts had been produced with valid material, presentation systematical, graphic structure, language pattern, and technology/media source. It is clear that the field tests result of the teaching material showed a significant validity.

The results of this research and development was similar with the research findings by Batari (2014), Rukayah (2013), and Warpala, Subagia, and Suastra (2010) in the production of valid, practical, and effective teaching material through series of systematic process. Teaching material of prose fiction study was supporting by Makassar local wisdom such as honesty (known as *malampusuk* in Makassar and *lempu* in Buginese), appropriateness (known as *assiratang* in Makassar and *asitinajang* in Buginese), persistence (known as *tantang ri kontutojeng* in Makassar and *getteng* in Buginese), work hard (known as *reso* in Makassar), intellectualism (known as *caradek* in Makassar and *acca* in Buginese), and pride (known as *siri* in Makassar) (Rahim, 1985). The other values such as faith, piety,

courage, and discipline were the students' interpretation in real culture of Makassar local wisdom. As stated by Warpala, Subagia, and Suastra (2010), the research was intended to assert those values and became an effort of introducing and preventing *luhung* (noble values) from the globalization's attack.

In its relation with moral education, it is true as Abidin (2012) stated that values or moral are quite effective in teaching culture. The development of teaching material based on local wisdom referred to Indonesia's curriculum focusing on the educational development using local wisdom (Susanto, 2014). This breakthrough aimed to raise people's awareness in developing education based on local culture and its potentials. By this research and development, the researcher concluded that the education of cultural values becomes more effective through literature. Because it is a social dimension framed with beautiful language and strong cultural background (Moody, 1971). As we know, the main function of man of letters is to make people realize the meaning of daily life and to reflect things around to be more conceptual and real from the existing (Wellek & Warren, 1990).

One purpose of this material development was to deepen students' understanding and their ability in criticizing and reviewing literature using various approaches or complex methods. There were several advantages of this fiction prose study as a teaching material based on *m-learning* such as: (a) accessible; (b) applicable; (c) dynamic; and (d) effective in improving students' learning results. These were similar with the statement from El-Hussein (2010).

Based on previous descriptions of teaching material validity, effectiveness, and practicality, it can be concluded that:

1. The teaching material is appropriate because its validity had been proven through experts and field tests. The average score of the material was 4,32 (high validity), 4,07 for its material presentation (valid), 4,33 for graphic aspect (high validity), 4,19 for language aspect (valid), and 4,19 for the total average score of technology/media (valid). While the average score obtained in the preliminary field test was 3,75 (valid), 4,38 in main field test (high validity), and 4,38 in the operational field test (high validity).

2. The teaching material was effective in improving students' learning result and their understanding of Makassar local wisdom. The test result showed that there was a significant increase where in the pre-test only 22% students who passed and turned into 76% in the post-test. Furthermore, the result test showed that there were 91% students able to find values of local wisdom and connect it with real life condition.

3. The assessment of material implementation proved its high validity by seeing the average scores of learning program evaluation in Class Implementation 1 with the score of 4,25, Class Implementation 2 with the score of 4,40, and Class Implementation 3 with the score of 4,60. Next, the teaching material management which was fully implemented and proven as very practical with the following total averages scores: Class Implementation 1 with the score of 4,20, Class Implementation 2 with the score of 4,60, and Class Implementation 3 with the score of 4,50.

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# Application of Discourse Interaction Data Analysis System in Teaching Evaluation for TCSOL

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**Abstract**—With the development of the Chinese language teaching all over the world, there is an increasing demand for TCSOL. However, there is no pure data-driven and highly automated teaching evaluation mode so far. Hence the paper learn and improve Flanders' Interaction Analysis System, in order to establish a set of Discourse Interaction Data Analysis System (DIDAS) and selects a typical Lesson of volunteer Chinese teachers in the Confucius Institute to make confirmatory analysis, and finally proves that the system is workable for the teaching evaluation of TCSOL and is suitable for promoting their self-teaching evaluation, so as to achieve the purpose of enhancing teaching quality.

**Index Terms**—discourse interaction, TCSOL, teaching evaluation

## I. INTRODUCTION

This paper tries to use the self-developed Discourse Interaction Data Analysis System (DIDAS) based on Microsoft Office Excel<sup>1</sup> to study on the winning entry of the 1st International Volunteer Chinese Teachers Overseas Teaching Competition which was sponsored by Confucius Institute Headquarters (Hanban), and then to establish a quantitative evaluation mode of the teaching quality of TCSOL. Through numerous analyses of discourse interaction of TCSOL, we may know the general parameters of the excellent teachers, so that we can establish and improve the norms of discourse interaction and then establish a clear and effective classroom interaction self-checking system for TCSOL. In this way, we can improve the level of international Chinese language teachers' classroom teaching.

### A. Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation of this paper is Flanders' Interaction Analysis System (Flanders, 1970), which aims at establishing a statistic model for discourse interaction. The specific method applied is cutting class time into segments of 3 seconds and coding the discourse acts, then recording the classroom speech acts by their codes. Through statistical processing of the recorded codes, not only can we record and analyze the teaching acts of the teachers in teaching scenarios, manifest the structure, behavior pattern and style of classroom teaching, and providing the teachers with information for the improvements of their teaching, but also can we have a reference index for the evaluation of teaching quality. The advantages of Flanders' Interaction Analysis System is that it counts, analyzes and proceeds the discourse interaction between teachers and students in a quantified way, analyzes and reflects the teaching process with quantized data. Combined with qualitative descriptions about teaching by classroom observation, a comprehensive cognition and analyzation can be attained.

### B. Research Methods

In terms of the scale of the database, given that each segment has 3 seconds, there should be 1,000 records in a class of 50 minutes. If more class time is involved, there shall be several thousands of records, and Excel can totally meet the need. In terms of computing demands, the research requires the programming of “pairing of records, duplicate record data detection, classifies counting, matrix transfer and data visualization” in order to realize data linkage. Using the function composition of Excel to replace programming makes a lower demand for the operators of the computer operating skills. Based on the above, Excel has been chosen as the method of this research. Analyzing the discourse interaction through Excel programming greatly improves the efficiency, for it avoids the possible mistakes that hand computation and matrix transfer may cause, and the system can be modified or expanded according to actual needs, which provides much convenience.

### C. Choice of Sample Class

The sample class chosen in this paper is called “How many minutes does it take to walk to the hospital?”, the language level of the target audience of this class is all primary. This class is an outstanding winner of the 1st International Volunteer Chinese Teachers Overseas Teaching Competition held by the Confucius Institute Headquarters

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<sup>1</sup> The self-developed DIDAS based on MS Excel can be downloaded for free from <https://pan.baidu.com/s/1nvOzcMI>.

(Hanban) during October 2011 and February 2012. The statistics show that the volunteer teachers of Confucius Institute are often confronted with students with low basics<sup>2</sup>, and most of the classes are comprehensive ones<sup>3</sup>, which mean the sample class here has universality in the present situation of TCSOL. And also, this is a class that beat 493 competitors and got the highest evaluation, thus the conclusion of discourse interaction analysis from it has certain referential and inspirational value.

*D. Quantifying Chart and Specified Standards*

As for the connotation and denotation of Flanders’ Interaction Analysis System coding, there has been numerous of different points in the educational circles. The pre-research of this paper found that the differences between the points are not as great as to change the statistical meaning of Flanders’ Interaction Analysis System, which means that as long as the connotation and denotation of the coding are made clear in the research process, the system shall reflect the discourse interaction objectively based on the certain given the connotation and denotation. It is just like a jigsaw of a map of the world, may it be the single units are in the shape of squares or right triangles, we can have a compact and complete map of the world as long as we do it in the proper way. Considering the realities of TCSOL class rooms, the specific coding system is as follows:

CHART 1:  
DISCOURSE INTERACTION ANALYSIS CATEGORIES DEFINED

Code	Content	Description	Category	
1	Acceptance	Accept or declare the student’s attitude or emotions in an unthreatening way	Teacher’s language	Indirect influence
2	Inspirations and compliments	Compliment or encourage the actions of the students		
3	Accepting ideas	Admitting the student’s idea, and applying it to solve problems		
4	Asking questions	Based on the teacher’s ideas, ask questions to students and expect answer from them		
5	Lecturing	Provide opinions according to contents or process; express the teacher’s ideas; come up with the teacher’s explanation; or cite opinions of authorities ( instead of student’s )		
6	Giving orders	Order or command the student to do certain things, which has the function of expecting the student to obey; the practice orders given to the student when doing exercises; leading to read aloud, which aims to let the student follow; questions that are asked only in order to urge, without expecting the answer from the student; orders given during the process of dictation.	Student’s language	Direct influence
7	Criticizing	Declarative sentence which means to change the actions of the student from unacceptable form to acceptable form; scolding the student; explaining the reason why the teacher should take such actions; extreme self-reference; error correcting; repeating in order to emphasize when the student gives a wrong answer; expressing disapproval by rhetorical question		
8	Student’s response	(Response of code 4) the sentences that the student speak to respond the teacher. The teacher assigns the student to answer questions, or to invite the student to speak; or setting up a conversational scene. The student is limited from expressing his idea freely ; the student gives his answer on the blackboard according to the instructions of the teacher ; conversation exercise in Chinese in class activities	Student’s language	
9	Initiative speaking by the student	The student’s answer goes beyond the expected answer of the question, and expresses his own opinion; giving his opinions and ideas freely, such as questions that cause one to think, or open frameworks; proving questions to discuss initiatively, and express the student’s own opinions freely; discuss and communicate opinions; confirm to the teacher about question that the student finds uncertain		
10	No efficient language	Pause, a short time of silence or disorder which causes the observer fail to comprehend the communication between the teacher and the student; the student thinking about questions; the teacher repeating the student’s language without purpose; students walking around during class activities; non-efficient communication done between students in their native language ; non-efficient languages spoken by the teacher, only to connect the link between parts of his language	Silence	

II. THE PROCESS OF DISCOURSE ANALYZE

<sup>2</sup> There had been 61019 students in total attending the primary, senior, and advanced and university Chinese major classes of the Confucius Institute all over the world in 2010, among which 48434 took the primary Chinese class, which is 79.38% of all the students. (Data from <http://tpi.muc.edu.cn>).

<sup>3</sup> There had been 3256 courses set up by the Confucius Institute all over the world in 2010, among which 2230 are comprehensive courses. (Data from <http://tpi.muc.edu.cn>).

A. *Setting a Transfer Matrix*

Through repeatedly viewing the video of the class “How many minutes does it take to walk to the hospital?”, and recording the class according to the defined Discourse Interaction Analysis Categories, we have this Interaction Analysis matrix (see chart below) through DIDAS.

CHART 2:  
DISCOURSE INTERACTION ANALYSIS MATRIX OF THE SAMPLE CLASS

	1 <sup>a</sup>	2 <sup>a</sup>	3 <sup>a</sup>	4 <sup>a</sup>	5 <sup>a</sup>	6 <sup>a</sup>	7 <sup>a</sup>	8 <sup>a</sup>	9 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	Total
1 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	2 <sup>a</sup>	2 <sup>a</sup>
2 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	5 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	2 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	32 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	3 <sup>a</sup>	42 <sup>a</sup>
3 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	3 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	3 <sup>a</sup>
4 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	3 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	10 <sup>a</sup>	13 <sup>a</sup>	8 <sup>a</sup>	3 <sup>a</sup>	25 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	14 <sup>a</sup>	76 <sup>a</sup>
5 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	15 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	3 <sup>a</sup>	174 <sup>a</sup>	16 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	16 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	15 <sup>a</sup>	239 <sup>a</sup>
6 <sup>a</sup>	1 <sup>a</sup>	14 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	13 <sup>a</sup>	20 <sup>a</sup>	142 <sup>a</sup>	2 <sup>a</sup>	66 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	28 <sup>a</sup>	286 <sup>a</sup>
7 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	13 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	1 <sup>a</sup>	14 <sup>a</sup>
8 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	5 <sup>a</sup>	5 <sup>a</sup>	39 <sup>a</sup>	12 <sup>a</sup>	85 <sup>a</sup>	6 <sup>a</sup>	206 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	28 <sup>a</sup>	386 <sup>a</sup>
9 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>
0 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	5 <sup>a</sup>	1 <sup>a</sup>	7 <sup>a</sup>	19 <sup>a</sup>	34 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	23 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	68 <sup>a</sup>	157 <sup>a</sup>
Total	1 <sup>a</sup>	47 <sup>a</sup>	6 <sup>a</sup>	75 <sup>a</sup>	238 <sup>a</sup>	287 <sup>a</sup>	11 <sup>a</sup>	381 <sup>a</sup>	0 <sup>a</sup>	159 <sup>a</sup>	1205 <sup>a</sup>

In the shadowed boxes in the matrix, the number 0 to 9 respectively stands for the ten kind of discourse interactions showed in chart 1 Discourse Interaction Analysis Categories. In the unshaded boxes the numbers stand for the times that the actions in the X-axis occur first and then the actions in the Y-axis occur next in every 6 seconds.

B. *Research on Classroom Structures*

Through the statistics in chart 2, we can get the classroom structure data as follows:

CHART 3:  
CLASS STRUCTURE DATA OF THE SAMPLE CLASS

Category	Mean of Computing	Rate
Rate of teacher’s language	Numbers in 1 <sup>st</sup> row to 7 <sup>th</sup> row/total	55.1168%
Rate of student’s language	Numbers in 8 <sup>th</sup> row to 9 <sup>th</sup> row/total	31.9903%
Rate of non-efficient language	Numbers in 10 <sup>th</sup> row/total	12.8928%
Rate of teacher’s questions	Numbers in 4 <sup>th</sup> row /numbers in 4 <sup>th</sup> row to 5 <sup>th</sup> row	24.6057%
Rate of teacher’s language-student driven	Numbers in 1 <sup>st</sup> row to 3 <sup>rd</sup> row/numbers in 1 <sup>st</sup> row to 3 <sup>rd</sup> row plus numbers in 6 <sup>th</sup> row to 7 <sup>th</sup> row	31.0112%
Rate of student’s language-student initiative	Numbers in 9 <sup>th</sup> row /numbers in 8 <sup>th</sup> row to 9 <sup>th</sup> row	2.2670%

(1) **Rate of teacher’s language**

As it is shown in chart 3, the rate of teacher’s language in this class is 55.1168%, which is lower than the average rate of 68% (Qi Hua., & Li Wen, 2009). Through large amount of research, American educationalist Belek put forward his conclusion that “the teacher dominates the language activities in the class. According to the record on audio tape, the proportion of teacher’s and student’s activities is 3:1. Thus, putting away the unit of analysis, the amount of teacher’s language activity is far more active than that of the student’s.” (Gao W, 2009). In the sample class chosen in this paper, the proportion of teacher’s and student’s activities is roughly 2:1. The rate of teacher’s language is far lower than the result shown in Belek’s research, which means that the teacher have properly controlled his language in amount, providing the students with more chances to participate.

(2) **Rate of student’s language**

The rate of student’s language in this class is 31.9903%, which is higher than the average rate of 20% (Qi Hua., & Li Wen, 2009), which means that as the teacher properly controlled his language in amount, the students had more chances to speak in class, and thus had more opportunities to practice their language abilities.

(3) **Rate of non-efficient language**

The rate of non-efficient language in this class is 12.8928%, which is slightly higher than the average rate of 12% (Qi Hua., & Li Wen, 2009), which means that there was relatively more “vacant time”. Through studying the video record, we found that this was mainly due to the lack of fluency in Chinese expression of the beginners. It is normal that the rate of non-efficient language rises in moderation. However, the teachers should pay more attention to this and lower the non-efficient language rate while rise the efficiency of the class by fully preparation and proper arrangement of class time.

(4) **Rate of teacher’s questions**

This rate stands for the frequency of the teacher using questions to lead a discussion. The rate of teacher’s questions of this class is 24.6057%, which is slightly lower than the average rate of 26% (Qi Hua., & Li Wen, 2009). This means that in this class the teacher seldom uses questions to lead discussions. Compared with senior and advanced TCSOL classes, this is a marked feature in primary TCSOL classes, and is something that teachers should lay more stress on. Letting the students discuss, communicate and explore on their own is not only beneficial for the active minds and independent exploring abilities of the students, but also helpful for their study and research abilities in the future.

*C. Study on the Teacher’s Tendencies*

Through the statistics in chart 2, we can have data about teacher’s tendencies as follows:

CHART 4:  
TEACHER’S TENDENCIES DATA OF THE SAMPLE CLASS

Category	Mean of Computing	Rate
Rate of indirect influence and direct influence	Numbers in 1 <sup>st</sup> row to 3 <sup>rd</sup> row/numbers in 5 <sup>st</sup> row to 7 <sup>th</sup> row	25.2747%
Rate of positive influence and passive influence	Numbers in 2 <sup>nd</sup> row to 3 <sup>rd</sup> row/numbers in 6 <sup>th</sup> row to 7 <sup>th</sup> row	19.2182%

**(1) Rate of indirect influence and direct influence**

We can see in the chart above that the rate of indirect influence and direct influence is 25.2747%. Although there is no average data for us to refer to up to now, we can still infer that the time the teacher spends on accepting student’s ideas, expressing his own opinions, complimenting student and leading the student by putting forward questions is far less than the time he spends on giving lectures, giving orders and correcting the errors the students make while answering questions. Thus the teacher tends to have direct control over the teaching activities and the students.

**(2) Rate of positive influence and passive influence**

In this sample class, the rate of positive influence and passive influence is 19.2182%, which means that in the teaching process the teacher mainly emphasized his points by passive means. The passive means here refers to the error correction by the teacher, instead of criticizing. For the beginners of Chinese learning, they often make more mistakes when trying to answer a question, and a responsible TCSOL teacher should correct their mistakes timely. When affirming an answer by the student, the teacher usually uses relatively simple language because he is hurrying to start the next part, which made this rate even lower. However, if such situation lasts for too long during a class, the students may start to become frustrated and fatigued, and then become afraid of the difficulty. Thus it is important for a teacher to properly control the atmosphere of the class, and restrain the students from such passive emotions.

*D. Study on Classroom Emotions Atmosphere*

Through the statistics in chart 2, we can have data about classroom emotions atmosphere as follows:

CHART 5:  
CLASSROOM EMOTIONS ATMOSPHERE DATA OF THE SAMPLE CLASS

Category	Means of Computing	Rate
Rate of positive integrate	Times of positive integrate/ total	0.4029%
Rate of defect	Times of defect/ total	11.6841%
Rate of the crossing area of contents	Times of crossing area of contents / total	32.72%

**(1) Rate of positive integrate**

As it is known to us, positive integrate boxes are the nine boxes in the crossing area of row1 t row 3 with line 1 to line 3, thus this area’s proportion in all the 100 boxes is 9%. But we can see from the chart above that the rate of positive integrate in this class is only 0.4029%, which means that in the class the teacher failed to emphasize and encourage the students to take the initiative to speak. As we have mentioned previously, the teacher tends to have his control over the classroom.

**(2) Rate of defect**

Defect boxes are the four boxes in the crossing area of row6 t row 7 with line 6 to line 7, thus this area’s proportion in all the 100 boxes is 4%. We can see in the chart above that the actual rate of defect in this class is 11.6841%, which is higher than the average rate. Usually this data infers that the teacher has taken the most control over the classroom, and has criticized over students, while there are discipline problems. However in the sample class, most defect boxes fall into (6, 6), and this reflects that the reason for the high rate of defect is that the teacher guides the students to practice through giving continuous orders, instead of criticizing the students or emphasizing the discipline. This kind of situation occurs frequently for a TCSOL teacher with systematic training.

**(3) Rate of the crossing area of contents**

The rate of the crossing area of contents includes the crossing area of row 4 to row5 and line 4 to line 5, thus this area’s proportion in all the 100 boxes is 36%. If most statistics concentrate on this area, it infers that in the class the teacher mainly uses methods like asking questions and giving lectures to teach. Generally speaking, this is the most applied teaching method by teachers now. However, few teachers with higher flexibility are different. Shown on the chart, there would be more data falling in area other than the crossing zone. In this sample class, The rate of the crossing

area of contents is 32.72%, leaving relatively large number of data outside the crossing area, which reflects that the teacher is relatively flexible in terms of applying teaching methods.

#### E. Analysis on Discourse Interaction Patterns

Flanders' interaction patterns include "question and answer" and "inspiring questions". The "question and answer" pattern includes the data in the four boxes of (4, 4), (4, 8), (8, 4), (8, 8) (the boxes shaded in dark blue in chart 2), while the "inspiring questions" includes the data in the eight boxes of (9, 9), (9, 3), (3, 3), (3, 9) and (8, 3), (4, 9), (8, 9), (4, 3), (the boxes shaded in light blue in chart 2).

##### (1) "Question and answer" pattern

In this sample class, the frequencies of codes of (4, 4), (4, 8), (8, 4), (8, 8) are 10, 39, 25, 206 respectively. The highest frequency appears in (8, 8), which means that in this class the "question and answer" followed the pattern of (8, 8), which stands for the pattern of students continuously answering the questions put forward by the teacher. The frequency of this pattern goes far beyond than those of other patterns, and this means that the questions by the teacher are relatively short, and got relatively long answers from the students, not brief answers like "yes" or "no". Class time have been made good use of, the students have been provided with plenty of opportunities of practicing their oral Chinese and expressing their own opinions, but there have been a lack of trace and extend. Here we can see that in this class the patterns of discourse interaction are still yet to be diversified. Although the (8, 8) pattern which encourages the students to speak more are worth advocating, the rate of (8, 4) should also be increased.

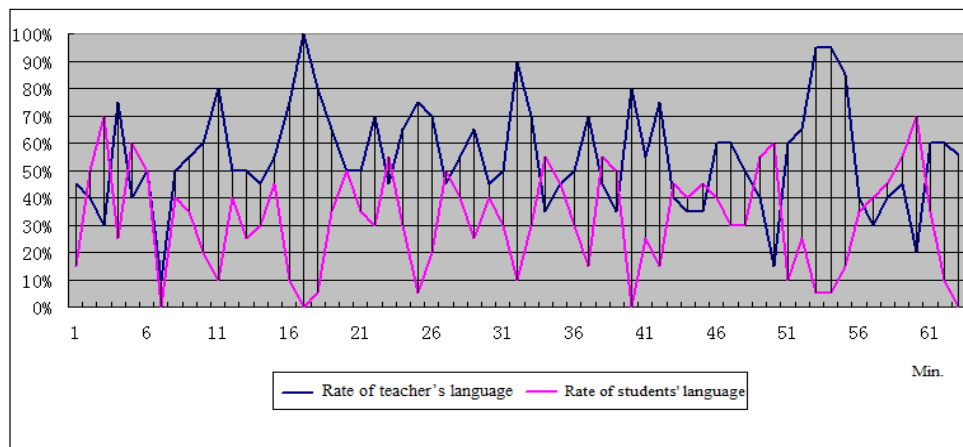
##### (2) "Inspiring questions" pattern

In this sample class, the frequencies of codes of (9, 9), (4, 9), (8, 3), (4, 3) are 8, 1, 7, 3 respectively. This reflects that in this class the students have both initiative and continuous language acts and freely expressing language acts instead of immediate answer after a question by the teacher; while the teachers have both acts like immediate affirm, clear or extend to the students answer and acts like explaining a question with student's opinions instead of letting other students to answer them. Generally speaking, however, the applying of "inspiring questions" is still very limited, and the frequencies of codes of (9, 3), (3, 3), (3, 9), (8, 9) are all 0, which means these kinds of "inspiring questions" was not applied in this class, although they have great importance for the development of creativity and questioning spirit of the students. Thus it can be seen that these are the fields that need to be improved in the future.

#### F. Dynamic Characteristic Curve

We can have a systematic and visual observation of the changing trends of the main data in the class by analyzing and computing the main data in DIDAS in the units of one minute and drawing the dynamic characteristic curve:

GRAPH 1:  
THE DYNAMIC CHARACTERISTIC CURVE OF THE SAMPLE CLASS



The blue curve and the pink curve are the dynamic characteristic curve of the rate of teacher's language and the rate of student's language respectively. We can see it clearly from the graph the trends and rhythms of their languages.

#### G. The Inspiration of the sample Class on TCSOL Evaluation

The inspirations through the analysis of the sample class on TCSOL evaluation are as follows:

First, in terms of the structures of the class, excellent TCSOL should properly add the chances for the student to speak, reduce the rate of teacher's language and avoid non-efficient languages through his outstanding ability of controlling over the classroom. Based on that the teacher could grasp the student's Chinese language ability levels well, he should lead discussions more with questions. However, if the rate of teacher's questions and non-efficient languages rise at the same time, the teacher should reconsider his question's qualities.

Second, in terms of the teacher's tendencies, under the condition that the TCSOL teacher has a proper control over the classroom, the practicing and error correcting acts will still reduce the rate of positive influence and passive

influence and rate of indirect influence and direct influence. If these two rates go too low, the teacher should be noticing that he might be taking too much control over the class and leaving little space for the students to exert their initiative.

Third, in terms of the classroom atmosphere, the rate of positive integrate should not go too high, or else the classroom tend to go too relaxed, while practicing and error correcting acts gives rise to the rate of defect. The teacher should properly deal with the relationship between these two rates in order to build a relatively concentrated and active classroom atmosphere.

Fourth, in terms of discourse interaction patterns, a TCSOL teacher should try to avoid the “question and answer” pattern of (4, 4), for that this reflects the lack of concision and precision if the questions by the teachers, while the “question and answer” pattern of (8, 8) usually means that the students are provided with plenty of opportunities of practicing their oral language.

Fifth, in terms of the dynamic characteristic curve, the swing of the curve should not be too fierce and the vibrational frequency should not be too low, for this reflects that there is a lack of discourse interaction, and the classroom is not active enough.

### III. CONCLUSION

The DIDAS provides a brand-new, quantified angle of view for the research on TCSOL’s ability levels, and it can be applied widely into teaching evaluations for TCSOL.

Firstly, it makes the evaluation for TCSOL objective, scientific and operative. The DIDAS emphasizes the observation of the discourse interaction acts between the students and the teachers, and uses “code” to record the facts in class, thus fully reflecting the teacher’s language acts and students’ response. When it comes to the processing method and applying of results, the DIDAS visualizes the complicated teaching process, avoids the subjectivity and randomness of traditional teaching evaluation, and greatly improves the objectiveness and scientificness of the process. And at the same time, sue to its high operability and semi-automatic analyzing character, it has great potential of popularizing, for it can be widely used for the general teaching evaluation for TCSOL.

Secondly, it is a method of self-evaluation for teachers. The teachers could record their teaching process without the help of a third person who might cause changes of the classroom circumstance. And also, teachers usually have no time to reflect their own teaching in the middle of a class, and viewing the record of their own classes, their evaluation could be influenced by their subjective emotions. DIDAS provides the teacher with a tool to get objective data about their performance, through which they can reflect their teaching activity, analyze their teaching language, realize their teaching method, thus improving their language style, controlling the steps of teaching, finding problems of their classes timely, and finally reaching the goal of enhancing their teaching performance.

Lastly, the norms of TCSOL discourse interaction should be built. Due to the differences between types of classes, the norms by previous researches may not be suitable for TCSOL class, thus it is necessary that we do research widely using this method and finally establish norms which suit for the TCSOL class. The establishing of the norms will further promote the applying of this system in TCSOL class.

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# The Form, Function, and Value of Buginese Utterances of Bone Society

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**Abstract**—This study discusses the exploration of form, function, and value of Buginese utterance of Bone society. This study aims at discovering, exploring, and explaining the form, function, and value Buginese utterance of Bone society. This study theoretically could be used by scientists to utilize the results of this research as new insights and materials for further studies of oral literature of Buginese society in Bone. The results showed that the utterance of Buginese society in Bone has six forms namely, proverbs, parables, sayings, metaphor, irony, and idioms. The Buginese utterance of Bone society has four functions, namely educative function, the personal ethics function, moral function, and social function. It has three values, namely religious, philosophical, ethical values. Religious value contains the value of the recognition of God and recognition of the good destiny and fate. Philosophical value contains the value of man as a creature of God, man as a personal being, and human beings as social creatures. Ethical value contains the value of ethics against God, against oneself ethics, and ethics of fellow human beings.

**Index Terms**—form, function, and value for the public expression of Bugis Bone

## I. INTRODUCTION

Culture is very closely linked to the public. Herskovits and Malinowski (in Bidney, 1996, p. 276) explain that everything contained in the society is determined by the culture which is owned by the community itself. Culture has a hereditary nature from generation to generation. It contains the entire understanding of values, norms, science and all the social and religious structure. Culture is a complex whole which contains knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and other abilities from any person as a member of society that has a way of life upheld by members of the public to form a local wisdom.

According to Geertz (1993), local knowledge is a form of culture that reflects the way of life of local communities, in substance, it is the values and norms prevailing in a society that is believed to be true and becomes a reference in the act and behavior every day. In other words, local wisdom is the ability to empower and address the noble values of the local culture. Therefore, local knowledge is a central entity for human dignity in the community.

Civilized society has always had language as a prerequisite to survive, and development of society and culture because language strengthens social and cultural development (Nababan, 1984, p. 52). The language used by a speech community will reflect the attitudes, perspectives, and beliefs held by its speakers. Moreover, the words used also always refer to objects, events, and anything that are symbolic and metaphoric.

Furthermore, Octavian (2006) explains that the form and meaning owned by a community culture will form a world view. The view of the world is like a big picture of how people view the existence of the world, and the actions are taken to events and interpret all the events. Society and culture also have a set of values to do something. View of the world is the understanding of life. The formation of worldview tends to be influenced by the religious community.

In addition, Liliweri (2003, p. 12) states that the worldview is a perspective of a speech community and a belief system that are formed under the influence of cultural values possessed. One of the speech communities in South Sulawesi is the Buginese community in Bone. Buginese community in Bone has much potential local wisdom used as signposts or guidance in their living. These signs serve as a guide, a reflection of nature, and personality of Buginese community in Bone. Those values are in the form of ethics, manners in the house, polite in public, including issuing opinions, talk to parents, dress, eating, and treating others.

Buginese language in Bone is a product of society reflecting the local culture Bone. People in Bone in everyday life always interact with their environment using a custom system that takes place continuously and bound by a sense of shared identity in social unity. The characteristics of community among fellow Bone in being always humble, gentle, polite toward each other are reflected in the utterances used by people in Bone.



Buginese language is the language applied by the community in Bone to communicate. As a language which unifies inter-ethnic, Buginese language is mastered by all members of the community owners, and it serves as a communication tool to understand the culture (Anwar, p. 2007). Buginese language has an utterance that reflects the local culture of Bone. The utterance has a function as a symbol of cultural identity of Bone which is considered synonymous with nature and behavior Bone. The utterance is one of the styles that is in the form of figurative language in the form of a sentence or group of words that are dense, compact, simple, and contains the norms, values, advice, comparisons, parables, principles and behavior. The use of the Buginese utterance by the Bone community is believed to have a range of values which is included in the national cultural values which are the local genius.

Correspondingly, Suseno (1991, p. 87) explains that the utterances in various forms and types of Buginese language describe the behavior of individuals and the way of life in Bone. The use of these utterances are typically used to quip, advice, affirm and make cautious. The utterances in Bone implies a public mindset that contains the value of life in the form of firmness, rigidity, simplicity, cooperativeness, respect for elders, applying thoughtful, thinking before acting, and compliance.

Today in Bone, the case of silting moral values has occurred and it is accompanied by the identity and personality crisis, especially the younger generations. Therefore, it can threaten the resilience of local and national culture. The local wisdom of Buginese in Bone is an embellishment of culture which becomes extinct. Therefore, some steps need to be implemented in an attempt to maintain the existence of local and national culture in Bone. Cultural behaviors such as refinement, sense of fairness and balance between the rights and obligations become the essence of local cultural values that must be maintained in Bone. Those things are crystallized in the language. It means that the language serves as a transmitter of cultural values. In fact, if someone wants to explore a culture system, then he or she should be included in the system to learn the language first. Therefore, the study of form, function, and value of Buginese utterance in Bone is interesting to be conducted.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Definition of Utterance

Poerwadaminta (1976, p. 1129) states that utterance is a word or group of words specifically to express an intention figuratively. Soedjito (1990, p. 220) defines the utterance as a compound word (phrase) whose meaning has been fused and should not be construed with the meaning of the elements that make it up, for example, aligned with, talking about, thank you, and based on. In these instances, it shows that the words (*to*, *with*, and *on*) are fixed utterance that cannot be changed or replaced by the other words. In this sense, it seems that Poerwadarminta and Soedjito equalize the phrases and idioms.

In Indonesian Dictionary (2005, p. 417) idiom is a construction whose meaning is not the same as the combined meaning of its element. For example *kambing hitam* (scapegoat) in the Indonesian sentence "*dalam peristiwa itu hansip menjadi kambing hitam, padahal mereka tidak tahu apa-apa*" (In the event, the security became a scapegoat, but he does not know anything). Keraf (2005, p. 109) also has a similar explanation that the idiom is structural patterns that deviate from the rules of the common language, usually a phrase, whereas meaning cannot be explained logically or grammatically by relying on the meaning of the words that form it, for example, *makan tangan* (eating hand) and *makan garam* (eating salt) in the form of Indonesian phrases. These examples are idiom because the means do not the same as the words that form it or cannot be explained grammatically. For examples of *makan garam* means having a lot of experience, *makan tangan* means exposed to punch or boxing.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the utterance is a word or words expressed as the wisdom of crowds derived from the experience of a long life.

### B. Forms of Expression

*The first is proverbs.* In Indonesian Dictionary (2005, p. 858), there are two definitions of proverb. First, it is a group of words or sentences with fixed structure, usually an analogizing specific intention. Second, it is a solid brief phrase or sentence, unbiased comparisons, parables, advice, life principles or rules of behavior. Danandjaya (1991, p. 28) explains that proverbs are fixed sentence stating its point by parable, satire, comparisons or similes and proverbs are groups of words or sentences with fixed arrangement. According to Danandjaya (1991, p. 28), there are some characteristics of proverbs. It must be a single sentence, it is not enough that only one word, such as *God, mad*. It has a standardized form. It has the vitality or viability of oral tradition, which can be distinguished from other forms of writing poetic, advertising, news, and etc.

*The second is sayings.* It is a proverb that contains advice or teachings of the elders, usually uttered to break interlocutors (MONE, 2005, p. 825). Gaffar (Aliana, Zakaria, and Joseph, 1984:, p. 24) also has a similar explanation that sayings are a short sentence in figurative form that is used to break the conversation. For example adage, *tong kosong nyaring bunyinya* (Empty barrel has a loud sound). This sentence *analogize* someone who *has* a lot of talk but less action. Thus, the specific characteristic of maxim is breaking interlocutors.

*The third is the byword.* In the Big Indonesian Dictionary (2005, p. 847) it has two meanings, namely (1) ridicule, mockery, sarcasm of being bandied people; (2) funny word to satirize. According to Badudu (1984, p. 7) byword is the words that became popular which are always uttered repeatedly either containing encouragement or containing. For

example, Indonesian words *oleh rakyat dari rakyat untuk rakyat* (*by the people, of the people, and for the people*) which are originally put forward by the New Order government then it is called a byword since it is often imitated by the people and uttered many times by people in different places. Therefore, it can be stated that special characteristics of byword is a form of speech that is short, concise, uttered many people many times.

*The fourth is parable.* It is an utterance about the condition or behavior of a person who uses the words of the parable or a comparison for example as and like (Badudu, 1984). It is also explained more clearly by Gaffar (Aliana, Zakaria, and Joseph, 1984: 28) that the parable is a sentence that likens or separates something like loveliness or favor someone or with the state of the natural surroundings, usually starting with the comparison words: like or as if.

*The fifth is imagery.* It is figuratively rhyming and rhythmic and sometimes like a poem, but in a shorter form, which is about only one lyric Gaffar (Aliana, Zakaria, and Joseph, 1984: p. 33). Badudu (1984, p. 7) defines imagery like parable but it is accompanied by explaining sentence. For example, *tua tua keladi in Indonesian means that someone is old, but he still behaves poorly.*

*The sixth is metaphor.* It is also almost the same as the imagery and similes. The difference is that the imagery has message and content, while metaphor only has message, but it is figurative message. For more detail, Gaffar (Aliana, Zakaria, and Joseph (1984, p. 35) define metaphor as a parable that uses natural reasonable comparison with the corresponding different nature itself in his life. Thus, a special feature of the metaphor is in the form of message in which the message is figurative, and it refers to the properties of natural objects or natural as the real circumstances in life. For example, *api makan seakan* (*fire eats as*) analogizes grudging people to others. Another example is *air di daun talas* (*the water is in taro leaves*) means that someone has been given the teachings but he did not use them.

*The seventh is idioms.* Badudu (1984, p. 146) explains that the idiom comes from the Latin meaning word or group of words that typically have a figurative sense. In Indonesian Dictionary (2005, p. 417), it is explained more clearly that the idiom is a construction whose meaning is not the same as the combined meaning of its elements, such as *kambing hitam* (*a scapegoat*) in the sentence *dalam peristiwa itu hansip menjadi kambing hitam, padahal mereka tidak tahu apa-apa* (in the event the security became scapegoat, but he did not know anything). Keraf (2005, p. 109) also has a similar explanation that the idiom is structural patterns that deviate from the rules of the common language, usually a phrase. However, the meaning cannot be explained logically or grammatically by relying on the meaning of the words that form it, for example, *makan tangan* (*eat hand*) and *makan garam* (*eat salt*). These examples are included the idiom because their meanings are not the same as the meaning of the words composing it. In addition, they cannot be explained grammatically.

### C. The Functions of Utterance

A wide variety of functions contained within a traditional utterance can be classified into four types, namely educative function. According to Indonesian Dictionary (2005, p. 284) the meaning of educative is didactic *instructive*. Therefore, educative function is a function of educating. Danandjaya (1991, p. 32) explains that the traditional utterance has a function as an educational tool. In addition, Gaffar (Aliana, Zakaria, and Joseph (1984, p. 6) state that the educative function on a traditional utterance can be for children and adults. Educating function in the context of ethnic traditional subjects refers to education in schools and also refers to the character education in the environment around the family. It can be inside or outside the home.

The second function is personal ethics. Bertens (2007, p. 4) reveals that the word ethics comes from the Greek word which means habit. In Indonesian Dictionary (2005, p. 309) ethics is defined as the science of what is good and what is bad and about right and moral obligation. Thus, ethics is a set of principles or values related to morals or values of right and wrong embraced by a group or community. In terms of the object of study, ethics is divided into two kinds, namely the ethics of virtue and ethical obligations (Bertens, 2007, p. 212).

Ethics of virtue relates to the principles and moral rules to be human, while the ethical obligations relates the principles and moral rules to do something. Ethics of virtue tried to answer question that "*what kind of person that I should be*". Meanwhile, the ethics of obligation try to answer the question "*what I have to do or what I should do*". The function of personal conduct refers to the ethics of virtue so that every phrase that indicates how the human should be or how the human nature should be would be categorized as an utterance that has a function of personal conduct.

The third is moral function. Bertens (2007, p. 4) explains that the word of moral means the customs. Furthermore, Bertens (2007, p. 212) explains that in terms of the object of study, ethics is divided into two kinds, namely the ethics of virtue and ethical obligations. Virtue ethics refers to the principles and moral rules to be human, while the ethical obligation refers to the principles and moral rules to do something. In Indonesian Dictionary (2005, p. 754) moral is interpreted as a character, manners, or morality. Therefore, moral functions are the functions that relate to ethical obligations, the principles and moral rules to do something good or bad doctrine commonly accepted regarding the actions, attitudes, and obligations of a person.

The fourth is social function. Koentjaraningrat (1979) explains that the social function of the traditional utterances are the functions that refer to the relationships within the community. It is in line with the meaning of the word *social* in the Indonesian Dictionary (2005, p. 1084), which is regard to the community. Therefore, the social function referred to in this study is a function that involves human relationships in society.

### D. The Value of Expression

Iskandar (1989, p. 864) states that the value means the degree, quality, quantity, extent, and nature elevation of thought, religion, society, and others. On the other hand, in Indonesian Dictionary (Depdiknas, 2005), the value is the properties which is important or useful to humanity. It means that the value is something valuable, important and necessary for human life. It is in line with the opinion of Sedyawati (2004) which states that the value is something to be treasured by man or group of men.

The Buginese utterance in Bone regency contains various values of life. Spradly (1980) stated that the concept of value appears to be one important topic in the study of literature. This is because the value that is attached to the speaker's utterance will differentiate one utterance with another utterance. Referring to some expert opinion on the value of a work of literature as well as in the form of utterance, more specifically the values which usually contain in the utterance are religious value, philosophical value, and ethical value.

### III. RESEARCH METHODS

This research is an ethnographic research. Ethnographic was chosen based on the consideration that this study aims at describing the depth and holistic form, function, and value of Buginese utterance of Bone society naturally. There were three aspects of this study. The first is the form of Buginese utterance of Bone. The second is the function of Buginese utterance of Bone Society. The third is the value of the Buginese utterance of Bone society. In addition, this research was categorized into types of ethnographic research because the data were taken through a phenomenon observed in everyday life.

The data were collected by using several techniques, namely (1) observation, (2) interviews, and (3) study the documentation. Observation techniques were used to observe people's behavior in Bone to communicate each other. This observation techniques were followed by field notes. The recorded data are in the form of the situation of the use of utterance which includes background, participation, function, and expression of interest. In-depth interview techniques were implemented to informants to obtain the forms of Buginese utterance which includes proverbs, sayings, parables, metaphor, and byword. This interview techniques use instruments such as interview guides, and recording techniques. Documentation study was conducted by recording the data in the form of written utterance contained in the book entitled *Kerajaan Bone di Lintasan Sejarah dan Ensiklopedia Kebudayaan Bone (Kingdom of Bone in track history and Culture Encyclopedia in Bone)*.

Data were analyzed using ethnographic analysis techniques (Spradly, 1980). Generally, the groove of ethnographic analysis is originated from the domain analysis, then it is followed by a taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, and analysis of the cultural theme.

Domain analysis was carried out by the principle of reading data of the utterance repeatedly and carefully in order to obtain the data that actually contains the form of Buginese utterance, the functions of Buginese utterance, and the values of Buginese utterance in Bone. This domain analysis is guided by the instrument guide for domain analysis. Domain analysis is used to find a number of general concepts (*cover term*) of the Buginese utterance.

Taxonomic analysis was conducted after the domain analysis. This analysis is looking for a number of concepts of citizens (*include term*) of any concept of public domain found during the domain analysis. From the domain analysis, the general concepts are found, for example, the dimension of utterance form, the dimensions of the utterance meaning, (3) the dimensions of the use of the utterance. The element of these aspects are then searched. The elements in this case are a smaller element (small portion) of the three domains. This step is guided by a guide instrument for taxonomic analysis.

Componential analysis was executed to analyze the smaller elements, and to analyze the internal structure of each of the elements that have been found. For example, on the findings of the style of narrative utterance, it is found that the style of narrative utterance of Buginese includes (1) proverb, sayings, parable, byword, and idiom; (2) the kind of language used; (3) the narrative as a motif motivation, innuendo; and (4) the narrative utterance in formal education activities.

Cultural theme analysis was undertaken to find three things, namely (1) the themes of each domain, (2) the relationship among the domains, and (3) the general theme of the entire domain. In the phase of cultural theme analysis, three sets of data analysis instruments were used, which refer to the focus of the research problem. The instruments of data analysis refer to three aspects. The first is the form of Buginese utterance of Bone society. The second is the meaning of Buginese utterance of Bone society. The third is the function of Buginese utterance of Bone society.

### IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

After going through the process of reduction, classification and analysis, it is found that Buginese utterance has six forms, including proverbs, parables, sayings, metaphor, byword, and idioms. Overall, the researchers found 14 forms of proverbs, 11 parables, 14 sayings, 12 metaphors, 11 bywords, and 12 idioms.

Buginese utterance in Bone present and serves four kinds of functions, which include educative function, personal ethics function, moral function, and social function. Each of these functions has a good message that is useful for Bone society to maintain the existence of their traditional values. Most of function of Buginese utterance in Bone innumerable is an educative function. The utterances contain messages about work ethic, consistent attitude, frugality,

hygiene, patient and sincere, independent attitude, thanksgiving favors, changing bad habits, self-confidence, the pursuit of achievement, unyielding, and neutral.

Buginese utterance in Bone also contains the function of ethics which refers to the ethics of virtue. Therefore, any expression that shows how it should be human nature will be categorized as an expression that has a function of personal conduct. The function of personal ethics of Buginese utterance in Bone contains a message about the attitude of introspection, embarrassed, assertiveness, diligent, politeness, away from the rough nature, a realistic attitude, obeying the truth, loving parents, responsibilities, compliant, away from the nature of the griping, and away from greed.

The moral functions in Buginese utterance in Bone contain a message about honest, trustworthy, appreciate kindness, guard of honor, and resignation. Three different messages with a social function were found in the Buginese utterance in Bone that represents local wisdom that is about maintaining unity, caring for others, and friendly attitude.

After going through the process of reduction, classification and analysis, it is found that the Buginese utterance in Bone present and serves three kinds of values namely religious, philosophical, and ethical values. Religious value is the value associated with divinity or entanglement with God with all of its Creation. The value is a value that is often found in the utterance. Creed or belief is a most fundamental values and principles for humans. The faith will compensate for a person's character in which the character is the triumph of the desire of some human desire to live in a row. The results of this research showed that in fact the value of the Buginese utterance of Bone Society has religious values containing recognition of the existence of God and the recognition of their good destiny and fate. A philosophical value is the contemplation and thinking about the world and the life hereafter. With these philosophical values, people in Bone are not looking for human nature but recognizing human life as a fact of life that must be accepted, only to find the essence of man where it comes from and where to go later. Based on the research finding, it is found that the Buginese utterance of Bone society has a value of man as a creature of God, man as a personal being, and human beings as social creatures.

Ethical Values in Buginese utterance in Bone highly regulates the life which is based on religious values and customs of the local community. Ethical values in the Buginese utterance in Bone cover ethical society against its creator (God), ethical about themselves, and ethical towards their fellow human beings. The personal ethical concerns man's relationship with the life and her-self. Humans in developing their life must understand ethics to themselves such as being realistic, introspection, assertive, away from the abusive nature, neutral, consistent, honest, loving parents, responsible, friendly, trustworthy, not greedy, diligent, never give up, patient and sincere, independent, diligent, obedient to the truth, changing bad habits, hygiene, guard her honor, saving, work ethic, self-confidence, the pursuit of achievement, having a sense of shame, being polite and well mannered, obedient, and avoiding rough nature Ethics to the community which is a form of judgment by others in a person to interact with each other. The ethics can be preserving unity among each other and appreciating the kindness of others.

## V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The Buginese utterance in Bone has six forms namely proverbs, parables, sayings, metaphor, byword, and idioms. Overall, it is found 73 utterances, covering 13 proverbs, 11 parables, 14 sayings, 12 metaphor, 11 bywords, and 12 idioms. It means that the Buginese utterance in the form of proverbs is 18%, parables is 15%, sayings are 19%, metaphor is 16%, byword is 15%, and idiom is 16%. Thus, the Buginese utterance in Bone is mostly in the form of sayings.

The Buginese utterance in Bone has four functions namely educative function, personal ethics function, moral function, and social function. There are 24 utterances which have educative function that contains a message about work ethic, consistent attitude, frugality, hygiene, patient and sincere, independent attitude, thanksgiving favors, change bad habits, self-confidence, the pursuit of achievement, unyielding, and neutral. In addition, there are 27 utterances which have the function of ethics personal which contain the message about the attitude of introspection, shame, assertiveness, perseverance, politeness, diligent (not lazy), away from the abusive nature, being realistic, obedient to the truth, loving parents, responsibility, submissive, away from the nature of the griping, and avoid greed. There are 13 utterances which have the moral function and contain a message about the nature of honesty, trust, appreciate kindness, honor guard, and resignation. Furthermore, there are 9 utterances which have a social function that contains a message about preserving the unity, caring for others, and friendly attitude.

The Buginese utterance in Bone has three kinds of value, including the religious, philosophical, and ethical values. There are two utterances that have religious value containing the value of recognition of God and the recognition of good destiny and fate. There are 8 utterances about philosophical value containing the value of man as a creature of God, man as a personal being, and human beings as social creatures. Meanwhile, there are 63 utterances containing ethical values consisting of the ethics of god, the ethics of self, and ethics of fellow human beings.

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# On Translation of Electric Power English from the Perspective of Translation Aesthetics

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**Abstract**—The translation of electric power English is getting prominent with the expanding of national grid and frequent exchanges of power industry among countries. From the perspective of translation aesthetics, electric power English translation is a language transformation activity that combines science and art together. Beginning with introduction to translation aesthetics theory and electric power English, under three criteria for judging aesthetic value of electric power English, this paper shall probe into the beauty of accuracy, conciseness, rhetoric and logic of electric power English and its translation. On the basis of analysis, translation techniques are proposed to represent these beauties in light of translation aesthetics.

**Index Terms**—electric power English, translation aesthetics, EST, translation techniques

## I. INTRODUCTION

Translation of EST (English for Science and Technology) plays an increasingly important role in frequent and deep scientific and technological communications across the world. For some time, translation aesthetics has only been applied to the study of literature translation while ignored in EST translation. Although language of EST is not as charming as that of literature, non-literary language has its unique aesthetic value. Electric power English involves a wide range of professional knowledge, frequent use of terminologies and complex expression structures. Electric power English, a branch of EST, is also featured in aesthetic value. The translation of electric power English shall reproduce the original aesthetic features via meeting aesthetic criteria.

## II. THEORY OF TRANSLATION AESTHETICS

In Practical Translation Aesthetics, Zhongxuan Fu (1993) holds that “translation is an aesthetic activity in which aesthetic subject of translation (translator) transfers aesthetic object of translation SL (source language) text into another aesthetic object of translation TL (target language) text by aesthetic medium (translators’ aesthetic consciousness)” (p. 2). Ronggui Mao (2005) assumes that in translation, translation objects refer to SL and TL while translation subjects are translators, editors and readers among which translators play the leading role (p. 22). In Miqing Liu’s *An Introduction to Translation and Aesthetics* (2012), non-literary translation is discussed from aesthetic perspective, which constitutes a breakthrough of aesthetic translation study.

The theory of translation aesthetics believes that translation seeks aesthetic equivalence and dynamic integration between SL text and TL text in consideration of aesthetic value and aesthetic criteria. In the practice of translating electric power English, translators, on the basis of their aesthetic consciousness, are supposed to understand and appreciate beauty of electric power English text and represent the original beauty in Chinese version.

## III BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO ELECTRIC POWER ENGLISH

Electric power English is a kind of specialized English. In general, electric power text involves a wide range of professional knowledge, frequent use of terminologies and complex expression structures.

Mengzhi Fang and Zhongming Mao (2005) categorize technology text into “specialized technology text” and “non-specialized technology text”. Similarly, electric power text can be classified into “specialized electric power text” and “non-specialized electric power text”. These two kinds of texts are different in content and language features. “Specialized electric power text” encompasses electric monograph, patent documents, technical standards, technical contracts, scientific papers of electric power application and so on. “Specialized technology text” is objective and logical with formal written style and prudent use of words. “Non-specialized electric power text” embraces operating procedures and regulations, maintenance manual, safety rules, product specification, materials for promoting electric power products, popular science books about electric power and so on. “Non-specialized technology text” is featured in plain words and clear sentence structures with frequent use of rhetoric (p. 91). Both specialized and non-specialized electric power text share common aesthetic features.

#### IV. AESTHETIC CRITERIA OF ELECTRIC POWER ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Both specialized and non-specialized electric power text share common aesthetic features. Similar to literary translation, electric power English translation enjoys beauty in content and form, but limited by its scientific style, its content should be accurate and true. Three aesthetic criteria, accuracy, conciseness and scientificness, should be fulfilled.

##### A. Accuracy

Shuchun Xu (1984) emphasizes that accuracy is the soul of EST translation (p. 26-28). Accuracy is the primary standard in electric power English translation, thus, ambiguity and mistakes should be avoided especially in the cases of polysemy.

##### B. Conciseness

Xiaowa He (1995) insists that “beauty of science lies in conciseness” (p. 12-13), which means a compact structure and concise use of vocabularies. In electric power text, nominalization and terminologies are used instead of sentences and abbreviations are used in place of whole words to follow the criterion of conciseness.

##### C. Scientificness

Electric power text should be scientific as it belongs to category of scientific text. Its scientificness lies in precise use of terminologies, prudent choice of words, and rational arrangement of syntax.

#### V. BEAUTY OF ELECTRIC POWER ENGLISH

The aesthetic features of electric power English are expressed as beauty of accuracy, conciseness, rhetoric and logic. This part shall focus on analysis of these beauties in electric power English text and its translation.

##### A. Beauty of Accuracy

The beauty of accuracy is mainly reflected in precise understanding of the original text and choices of word meanings as polysemous terminologies are frequently used.

Example 1: This excess of generation is then available for *picking up* suddenly applied customer loads or to *pick up* the load dropped by a generator that must be removed from service for emergency maintenance.

Translation: 超额的发电量, 可用于 *担负* 突然接入的用户负荷, 或因紧急维修而必须退出运行的发电机所甩掉的负荷。

Example 2: *Pick up* the 5EX relay by pushing the relay button and force L20FGX and L4X1 to logic “1”.

Translation: 按下继电器按钮而将继电器 5EX 吸合, 使 L20FGX 和 L4X1 处于逻辑状态“1”。(From *Theory and Practice of Electric Power Translation Between English and Chinese*, p. 114)

Example 3: Check the magnetic *pickup* if it is installed correctly.

Translation: 检查磁性 *传感器* 是否安装妥当。(From *Theory and Practice of Electric Power Translation Between English and Chinese*, p. 114)

In the above three examples, the same phrase “pick up” is translated into “担负” “吸合” and “传感器” (pickup) in different contexts for accuracy. Understanding of neighboring words such as “load” “relay” and “magnetic” and knowledge of electric power contribute to comprehension of phrase “pick up.”

##### B. Beauty of Conciseness

Electric power text delivers the most information with the least use of words. Simplicity of the text is mainly embodied in the extensive use of nominalization structure.

Example 4: Electronics is the *study* of the flow of electrons and the *application* of such knowledge to practical problems in communication and controls.

Translation: 电子学 *研究* 电子运动规律, 并把这种知识 *运用于* 通信和控制的实际问题。(From *Theory and Practice of Electric Power Translation Between English and Chinese*, p. 143)

In example 4, two noun phrases “the study of” and “the application of” are translated into two verbs “研究” and “运用” respectively in Chinese, which makes the translated version concise and fluent.

##### C. Beauty of Rhetoric

The function of rhetoric is categorized into aesthetic rhetoric and communicative rhetoric. Yushan Zhao and Liangqiu Lv (2013) hold that communicative rhetoric is mainly used in electric power text and subjective language should be avoided in electric power text (p. 47). Shoukang Yang (2004) insists that aesthetic rhetoric highlights vividness, activeness and elegance of language to achieve artistic functions. Although it is required that the electric power text should be objective, accurate and scientific without personal feelings, appropriate rhetoric can remove stereotypes of “stiffness” and “coldness” of power technology text. Rhetoric of personification, simile and metaphor is most commonly used in electric power English.

###### a. Personification

Personification is a figure of speech to compare one thing (including objects, animals, thoughts or abstract concepts) to a person by endowing it with human being's appearances, personalities or emotions. Embodied via adjectives, verbs or nouns, personification can evoke aesthetic imagination and empathy.

Example 5: Automatic machines having many advantages can only do the jobs they have been "told" to do.

Translation: 自动化机器虽然有许多优点, 但只能做人们“吩咐”的事。

In example 5, instead of “告知”, “had been told to” is translated into a more touching Chinese expression “吩咐” which manifests the superordinate-subordinate relationship between human and automatic machines, through which it pictures an obedient, helpful and friendly image of automatic machine.

#### **b. Simile**

A simile is a figure of speech that makes a comparison, showing similarities between two different things through words “like”, “as” “resemble” or “seem” and so on. Normally, simile includes three parts: subject, reference and indicator of resemblance. In translating, the vivid comparison should be represented and artistic image should be integrated to deepen readers' aesthetic sense.

Example 6: The porous wall acts as a kind of *seine* for separating molecules.

Translation: 多孔壁就像一把筛子, 能把质量不同的分子分开。

In example 6, porous wall whose function is separating molecules is compared to a kind of *seine*, which evokes readers' imagination for an abstract porous wall on the basis of a concrete image of *seine*.

#### **c. Metaphor**

Metaphor is a figure of speech which makes an implicit, implied or hidden comparison between two things that are unrelated but share some common characteristics. The purpose of metaphor is basically twofold: “the first purpose is cognitive, the second aesthetic” (Peter Newmark, 1988, p. 103). In translating, the image of metaphor is better to be kept for aesthetic sake, but it may be replaced for exact understanding of professional concepts of power technology related areas.

Example 7: Electric power has been the *servant* of man ever since the invention of motor.

Translation: 电动机发明以来, 电力一直为人类服务。

In example 7, the metaphor shows the relationship between man and electric power and electric power is regarded as servant of human beings. Normally “servant” refers to someone who performs duties or serves a master. The noun “servant” is translated to a verb structure “为人类服务” instead of “人类的仆人” to make it sound more objective.

#### **D. Beauty of Logic**

Shoukang Yang (2004) holds that the most unique beauty of EST lies in its logical beauty since EST texts involve scientific concepts, principles and facts (p. 15-18). In translating, sentence structure should be analyzed among which hidden logic should be sorted out and organized in order.

Example 8: Motor action results when the effects of the currents in the two windings are such that a unidirectional torque is produced on the rotor and is of sufficient magnitude to overcome the opposition to rotation caused by the load on the motor shaft.

Translation: 电流流经这两个绕组, 在转子上就会产生单向转矩, 并且当该转矩大于由电机主轴载荷引起的反向转矩时, 电机就会启动。

This sentence explains how motor starts to work. The stem of this sentence is an adverbial clause of condition led by “when”. In translating, this sentence is divided into meaning groups: motor action results / when the effects of the currents in the two windings / are such that / a unidirectional torque is produced on the rotor / and is of sufficient magnitude / to overcome the opposition to rotation caused by the load on the motor shaft/. In the Chinese version, the conditions are placed ahead of the motor actions, ensuring the clarity of understanding the sentence.

### **VI. TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES FOR AESTHETICS REPRESENTATION**

Aesthetic representation is a crucial process that carries out aesthetic activities (Miqing Liu, 2012, p.183). In this part, translation techniques including diction, omission, use of four-character structure, reserve and removal of rhetoric, inversion and division are suggested for the translation of electric power English for representing beauty of accuracy, conciseness, rhetoric and logic.

#### **A. For Beauty of Accuracy**

Translators should confirm the meaning of terminology through comprehension of context, neighboring words in particular and professional knowledge for beauty of accuracy.

##### **Diction**

In electric power English, exact Chinese equivalents should be found to ensure accuracy of the text as the same technical jargon has various meanings in different context. It requires specific knowledge and critical judgment in diction.

Example 9: Before the air enters the *turbine*, fuel is sprayed into it.

Translation: 在空气进入涡轮之前, 燃料就喷进了。



Revised translation: 在空气进入燃气轮机之前, 先喷入燃料。

Example 10: After rotating the *turbine* by the turning gear, allowing time for the rotor to assume a straight plane (no bowing), and the turning gear is disengaged and steam is admitted to the *turbine* to slowly warm the turbine.

Translation: 通过盘车转动涡轮机, 留出一定的时间让转子保持水平(无弯曲), 然后解开盘车, 让蒸汽进入涡轮机慢慢暖机。

Revised translation: 通过盘车转动汽轮机, 留出一定的时间让转子保持水平(无弯曲), 然后解开盘车, 让蒸汽进入汽轮机慢慢暖机。

A turbine is a rotary mechanical device that extracts energy from a fluid flow and converts it into useful work. Turbine can be categorized into gas, steam and water turbine. In translation, jargons should be exact and accurate. Getting a grip on neighboring words helps translators to find the exact jargon. In example one, the word “fuel” indicates that the “turbine” is gas turbine and in example two, the word “steam” indicates that the “turbine” in discussion is steam turbine. For the beauty of accuracy, the same word “turbine” is translated into “燃气轮机” and “汽轮机” respectively.

### B. For Beauty of Conciseness

Techniques of omission and conversion can be used to achieve beauty of conciseness in electric power English. Besides, if compendious Chinese four-character structures are properly used, beauty of conciseness shall be greatly sensed.

#### a. Omission

English is a hypotaxis-prominent language while Chinese a parataxis-prominent one. With the premise that complete information is delivered, some English components such as pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, determiners and sometimes even verbs can be omitted in E-C translation to maintain conciseness.

Example 11: There are two different kinds of electricity, *which we call* positive electricity and negative electricity.

Translation: 有两种电, 我们把它们称作正电和负电。

Revised translation: 电有两种: 正电和负电。(From *Methods and Techniques of E-C Translation for Electric Power Technology*, p.36)

In the first translation version, the English structure is duplicated, however, in the revised translation, without meaning ellipsis, “which we call” is omitted and replaced by a colon. The number of Chinese characters in revised translation is almost half as many as that of the first translation version.

#### b. Conversion

Conversion is to change part of speech into another. In electric power English, nominalization-structure can be conversed to verb-structure to conform to Chinese aesthetics.

Example 12: Fuse has found *application* for the *protection* of power system.

Translation: 熔断器的作用是用于保护电力系统。

Revised translation: 熔断器用于保护电力系统。

The nouns “application” and “protection” are conversed to Chinese verbs “用于” and “保护” which are concise and more native. In the revised translation, “作用是” is omitted since it repeats meaning of “用于”.

#### c. Use of Four-character Structure

Four-character structure embodies aesthetics through its rich contents, lively rhythms and tidy forms. On the basis of comprehension, proper use of four-character structure embodies conciseness of Chinese. Besides, as Chinese is a tone language, appropriate four-character structures make Chinese translated version more musical.

Example 13: These pumps are featured by their *simple operation, easy maintenance, low consumption and durable service*.

Translation: 这些水泵具有易于操作、易于维修、消耗量低和耐用的特点。

Revised translation: 这些水泵操作简便、维修容易、耗油量少、经久耐用。(From *Theory and Practice of Electric Power Translation Between English and Chinese*, p. 62)

In example 13, parallelism is embodied in the four “adjective-noun” structures, which injects musical rhyme into the description of features of these pumps. In Chinese revised version, four “verb-adverbial” structures represent the rhyme of the original four paralleled and forceful phrases and make the Chinese version concise and fluent.

### C. For Beauty of Rhetoric

Electric power English text is objective and logical with formal written style, but proper rhetoric devices can make the cold and stiff scientific content easy to understand, more aesthetic and less obscure. Through literal translation, the image of rhetoric shall be remained and knowledge related to electric industries shall be illustrated in a vivid way, however, if keeping the image of rhetoric may twist the meaning of the original text, translators may sacrifice rhetoric image to follow the accuracy rule as the first choice through liberal translation.

#### a. Reserve of Rhetoric

Rhetoric should be remained if the information is precisely delivered with vivid rhetoric through literal translation.

Example 14: Electricity flows through a wire just as *water flows through a pipe*.

Translation: 电流通过导线, 就像水流通过管道一样。

In example 14, the dynamic movement of “electricity flows through a wire” is compared to “water flows through a pipe”. For readers who lack imagination for a scene of flowing electricity in a wire, this photographic simile can link scenes that readers already know to phenomenon of electric power.

#### **b. Removal of Rhetoric**

Rhetoric should be removed if ambiguity and confusion are aroused in translated version through liberal translation.

Example 15: Whichever way the two two-way switches are left, one of the wires is “*alive*” and the other is “*dead*”.

Translation: 无论这两个双路开关合在哪一边, 两根导线中总有一根是“活的”, 一根是“死的”。

Revised translation: 无论这两个双路开关合在哪一边, 两根导线中总有一根是带电的, 一根是不带电的。

In this example, “wires” are endowed with life as they can be “alive” or “dead” just like mortals. But in electric power English, “alive” and “dead” expounds specific electric phenomena: the “livewire” or “live wire” refers to a wire with a flow of electrical current while the “dead wire” means no flow of electrical current in a wire. If “alive” and “dead” are translated into “活的” “死的” respectively, readers may feel confused as they assume that the wire that is alive can be used but the dead wire fails to function. In this case, removal of rhetoric is preferred for readers’ understanding.

#### **D. For Beauty of Logic**

Accurate representation of original meaning is based on analysis of sentence structure and comprehension of professional knowledge and logical expression in Chinese. In translating, hidden logic should be sorted out and organized in order for the sake of readers’ better understanding.

##### **a. Inversion**

Information order illustrates people’s thinking patterns. Inversion is a translation technique which means necessary change of word-order in accordance with the expression habit of target language.

Example 16: *It is much easier* to make the determination of the motion from dynamical principle if this part of the question is separated from the other, which belongs properly to Mechanics, than if the two parts were undertaken conjointly.

Translation: 从动力学原理研究运动会更容易, 如果把第一部分和本来属于机械学的那一部分分开, 而不是综合考虑两部分。

Revised translation: 把第一部分和本来属于机械学的那一部分分开, 从动力学原理研究运动, 这比把两部分合起来考虑容易得多。

In Chinese, comments are normally placed after facts while in English the exact opposite. In the revised translation, the comment of “it is much easier” is placed at the end of the sentence to conform to Chinese expression habit.

##### **b. Division**

Division is a translation technique which refers to necessary splitting of a long sentence into several shorter parts. Through division, knowledge related to electric power English can be reorganized in a logical way.

Example 17: The leakage current from each circuit conductor to the grounding conductor is to be calculated by dividing the voltage indicated by the voltmeter by the accurately known resistance of the resistor.

Translation: 从每条电路导线到地线的漏电, 应该用由电压表显示的电压除以电阻器上的已知电阻计算出来。

Revised translation: 电表所示的电压, 除以电阻器所示的已知电阻, 可计算出每根导线到地线的漏电情况。

The original text is a long sentence that describes the calculation of leakage current. The first translation duplicates the original structure through liberal translation strategy, which is still difficult to understand. In translating, the long sentence is divided into the following sense groups: The leakage current from each circuit conductor to the grounding conductor / is to be calculated / by dividing the voltage indicated by the voltmeter / by the accurately known resistance of the resistor /. After division, the calculation of leakage current is quite clear. Then it requires the translator to reorganize the sentence in accordance with Chinese expression ways by placing the calculation method ahead of the calculation result.

## VII. CONCLUSION

For quite a long time, translation aesthetics is exclusively used in studying literature translation while EST translation is required to be objective, unaffectionate and cold. Translation of electric power text is also supposed to be stiff and unemotional. But from the perspective of translation aesthetics, electric power English translation is an activity of aesthetic transformation that blends the beauty of science and art together. This requires that translators should cultivate their aesthetic consciousness in pre-translating; excavate aesthetic elements and unleash their aesthetic appreciation during translating; represent aesthetics of original text and achieve aesthetic transformation in language, style, thinking pattern and aesthetics in post-translating.

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# The Realization of Intensifiers in Banyumas Dialect

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**Abstract**—Linguistic provides a set of devices to express referential and affective functions. Intensifier as a linguistic device is generally found in all languages and it has various linguistic forms. In Banyumas dialect, a substandard of Javanese language, intensifier is basically used to intensify something. Banyumas dialect or *Banyumasan* is primarily spoken along Serayu River. Banyumas dialect is different from Javanese language in respect of phonological features and lexical items. Speakers express their intensity by using several linguistic devices including lexical items and reduplication. General lexical items consist of *bangèt* and *pisan*. *bangèt* and *pisan* experience degree of modification as they are attached to non-binary properties predicate. Specific lexical items include *rea*, *regeng*, *leder*, *njilep*, *cirut*, *lecit*, *kecu*, *kethuwek*. Reduplication is realized into full reduplication and partial reduplication. Partial reduplication employs reduplication with vowel change and reduplication of the final syllable of the stem. Grammaticalization happens to Partial reduplication with vowel change. Data is gathered from 250 recorded conversations between male and female speakers containing intensifiers. As intensifier is among the most rapid of linguistic element, this article reveals the realization of intensifiers in Banyumas dialect.

**Index Terms**—intensifier, Banyumas dialect, intensity, lexical items, reduplication

## I. INTRODUCTION

Intensifiers are generally found in natural language since speakers need it to enhance information among them. It focuses on affective functions as it does not carry significant referential content. It is commonly defined as linguistic devices that boost the meaning of a property upwards from an assumed norm (Quirk et al, 1985). It is also described as a modifier that gives no contribution to the propositional meaning of a construction but it increases its emotional meaning and it is also an adverb which maximizes or boosts meaning typically modifying adjectives or degree (Ito & Tagliamonte, 2003). There are two types of adverbial intensifiers: maximizers (*extremely*, *absolutely*) and boosters (*really*, *very*). It is very common for speakers to emphasize their utterance intentionally for certain reasons.

Daily conversation is generally conducted in local variety or dialect. Chambers and Trudgill (1994, p. 3) define dialect as a substandard, low status, often rustic form of language, generally associated with the peasantry, the working class, or other group of lacking in prestige. Dialect is also a term which is often applied to form of language, particularly those spoken in more isolated parts of the world, which have no written form. Dialects are also often regarded as some kind of (often erroneous) deviation from a norm-as a variation of a correct or standard form of language.

Banyumasan or Banyumas dialect is a non-standard form of Javanese language which is mainly spoken along Serayu River (Koentjaraningrat, 1984, p. 23). Banyumasan which is used in Banjarnegara regency, Purbalingga regency, Banyumas regency, Cilacap regency and Kebumen regency (*Barlingmascakeb*) is basically stated as a dialect of standard Javanese spoken in Yogyakarta and Surakarta. Javanese language is grouped into Proto Austronesian language which is then divided into two groups: west and east. The west Proto Austronesian consists of: Malay language, Sundanese, Javanese, Balinese, Maduranese, Bugis, and languages in North Sulawesi and Philippines archipelago (Wedhawati et al, 2006, p. 9). Compared to standard Javanese, Banyumasan has some differences due to phonological and lexical features.

Wedhawati et.al (2006, p. 18) mention the characteristic of Banyumasan vowels compared to Standard Javanese vowels are as follows: (1) phoneme /i/, when /i/ occurs in a closed coda, it will be realized as [i] in Banyumasan, and [i] in Standard Javanese, (2) phonem /u/, when /u/ occurs in a closed coda, it will be realized as [u] in Banyumasan, and [U] in Standard Javanese;(3) phoneme /a/, when /a/ occurs in an open coda, it will be realized as [a] in Banyumasan, and [ɔ] in Standard Javanese.

TABLE 1:  
 THE REALIZATION OF STANDARD JAVANESE AND BANYUMASAN VOWELS

No	Phoneme	Orthography	Standard Javanese	Banyumasan	Meaning
1	/i/	<i>Pitik</i>	[pitɪʔ]	[pitik]	chicken
2	/u/	<i>Abuh</i>	[abUʰ]	[abuh]	abscess
3	/a/	<i>Lara</i>	[lɔrɔ]	[laraʔ]	ill

Regarding the differences in consonants between Standard Javanese and Banyumasan, Wedhawati, et.al (2006, p.18) further elaborate as follows: The characteristics of Banyumasan consonants are reflected in phonemes /b, d, g, k, and ?/. If they are compared to Standard Javanese, they will be realized as [p], [t], [k], [ʔ], and [Ø]. Table. 2 displays the examples of the above elaboration.

TABLE 2:  
THE REALIZATION OF STANDARD JAVANESE AND BANYUMASAN CONSONANTS

No	Phoneme	Orthography	Standard Javanese	Banyumasan	Meaning
1	/g/	<i>endhog</i>	[ənd <sup>h</sup> ɔ k]	[ənd <sup>h</sup> og]	egg
2	/b/	<i>Ababe</i>	[ab <sup>h</sup> ap <sup>h</sup> e]	[ab <sup>h</sup> ab <sup>h</sup> e]	mouth smell
3	/d/	<i>Babat</i>	[b <sup>h</sup> ab <sup>h</sup> at]	[b <sup>h</sup> ab <sup>h</sup> ad]	part of meat
4	/k/	<i>Bapak</i>	[b <sup>h</sup> apaʔ]	[b <sup>h</sup> apak]	father
5	/ʔ/	<i>Ora</i>	[ora]	[oraʔ]	no

From those two table above, it can be seen that the major differences in vowel is that Banyumas vowels tend to be front vowels and standard Javanese are tend to be back. As far as consonants are concerned, Banyumas consonants tend to be voiced consonants.

There are also some differences in Standard Javanese and Banyumasan lexical features as they are shown in table. 3. We provide some different lexical features found in Standard Javanese and Banyumasan

TABLE 3:  
THE LEXICAL FEATURES OF STANDARD JAVANESE AND BANYUMASAN

No	Standard Javanese	Banyumasan	Meaning
1	<i>Tela</i>	<i>boled</i>	cassava
2	<i>Blonjo</i>	<i>becer</i>	shopping
3	<i>Manthuk</i>	<i>bali</i>	go home

Banyumasan is widely spoken in Banjarnegara regency, Purbalingga regency, Banyumas regency, Cilacap regency and Kebumen regency (*Barlingmascakeb*). However, it also used in Brebes regency, Tegal regency, and Pemalang regency as it is depicted by figure. 1. Below is the map showing the spread of Banyumasan.



Figure1. The Spread of Banyumasan

Intensifier has become an interesting topic in linguistic research. It calls researchers’ interest on intensifiers’ semantics and intensifiers’ usage in social interaction. Researchers on intensifiers’ semantic have highlighted that boosting effects can be gained through different types of semantic operations and the context where intensifiers are used broaden further from the category of gradable expressions (McNabb, 2012; Beltram and Bochnak, 2013). Intensifiers’ usage in social interaction has identified that the use of intensifiers is not distributed evenly across the social space, but it varies across macro-social categories, such as gender and age (Macaulay, 2006; Tagliamonte, 2008). Different from those two major topics in intensifiers’ research, Eckert (2012) highlights that intensifiers are often exploited to build specific style and identities.

Brown (2014) presents a synchronic study on the grammaticalization of *wicked* and other intensifier in New Hampshire. She demonstrates that *wicked* is in the process of gramaticalizing through the mechanisms of desemantization and extension. She concludes that *wicked* collocates widely with the Dixon Semantic Types, that it

functions both attributively and predicatively, and that it is used in both positive and negative contexts- three indications of the first two mechanisms of grammaticalization, desemanticization, and extension. However, the data does not confirm nor deny the third nor fourth mechanism of grammaticalization, cliticization and erosion. Brown states that *wicked* is stereotypically used as an intensifier by New Englanders as it is commonly found in various regional product names, restaurant, and tourist merchandise, as well as in everyday speech (2014).

In addition to intensifiers' usage in social interaction, several researches have been conducted. They can be classified into two major categories. First, intensification systems are not stable and change rapidly in any speech community (Macaulay, 2006; Rickford, 2007; and Tagliamonte, 2008). Second, there is a tendency that the use of intensifiers varies across demographic categories. Those demographic categories especially focus on age and gender (Brown and Cortés-Torres, 2013; Sardabi and Afghari, 2015).

Brown and Cortés-Torres (2013) conduct a research on Puerto-Rican intensifiers which include *bien* and *mu*. The quantitative result shows that in informal, spontaneous, conversational Spanish, use of *bien* (86%) as an intensifier for adjectives far outweighs use of *mu* (13%) in frequency. In each generation, women use *bien* (88%) more than men (83%). The younger generation (both men and women) have a higher frequency of use (91%) of *bien* than the older generation (85%, 82%).

A recent study conducted by Sardabi and Afghari (2015) shows the use of intensifier among Iranian students based on gender differences. It shows that women utilize intensifier about twice as much as men. It is due to the fact that society does not allow women to show their power and position. Moreover, Iranian women are faced with another social limitation, that is, the dress code which might put them in a more limited and inferior position and might deprive them of the chance to establish their social status. Baron has mentioned that language is used as one of the means of distinguishing gender differences in almost all societies: as such a lot of researchers have elaborated women's speech as being different from the speech of men (1986).

Intensifier as any other linguistic feature develops and changes through time. Murphy (2010, p. 111) states that the rate at which intensifier change is among the most rapid of linguistic element. Based on the researches stated before, the realization of intensifiers in Banyumasan, a dialect of Javanese language, has not been conducted. In fact, intensifier is a productive linguistic feature in Banyumasan which is often utilized to gain various purposes. Thus, different intensifiers are chosen. This article reveals the linguistic realization of intensifier in Banyumas dialect, a substandard of Javanese language.

## II. METHOD

This research belongs to qualitative research since it tries to reveal language phenomena and present it in qualitative explanation without considering statistics. Cresswell (1994) mentions that a qualitative research is an exploratory research where the researcher explores a single entity or phenomenon (the case) bounded by time and activity and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time. Data are gathered from natural conversation among Banyumas native speakers. There are two techniques in collecting data. First, we are actively involved in natural conversation with Banyumas native speakers and invite them to produce intensifiers. Second, we secretly record the conversation to get a natural setting. Natural occurring data is preferable in qualitative research (Hammersley, p. 1992).

Having collected the data both by recording and note-taking, classification is conducted. Data are classified based on the type of intensifier, whether it is lexical item or reduplication. The lexical items consist of *bangèt* and *pisan*. In addition, specific lexical items include *rèa*, *régéng*, *lèdèr*, *njilèp*, *cirut*, *lècit*, *kècu*, *kèthuwèk*. Reduplication contains full reduplication partial reduplication, reduplication with vowel change, reduplication of the final syllable of the stem.

Data are presented by using Max Planck's convention for interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glosses (2015). We use word-by-word alignment in which interlinear glosses are left-aligned vertically so that each meaning can be clearly shown. An explanation is given for each data in relation to the theoretical frame work to answer the research question.

## III. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The result shows that intensifiers in Banyumas dialect are realized into lexical items and reduplication. Lexical items are subdivided into general lexical items and specific lexical item. Reduplication is realized into full reduplication and partial reduplication. Partial reduplication consists of reduplication with vowel change and reduplication of the final syllable of the stem.

### A. Lexical Items

Lexical items used to show intensity in Banyumas dialect are classified into two categories, general and specific ones. The general intensifiers include the word *bangèt* and *pisan*. The use of *bangèt* and *pisan* are similar to English intensifiers *very/ really/ awfully*. In addition to the general ones, the specific ones consist of *rèa*, *régéng*, *lèdèr*, *njilèp*, *cirut*, *lècit*, *kècu*, *kèthuwèk*. Thus, the discussion of lexical items used as intensifiers in Banyumas dialect is elaborated in two major categories. Before analyzing the specific lexical items, the general lexical items are depicted as follows.

General words used to show intensifier in Banyumas dialect are *bangèt* and *pisan*. The sentences below show the use of *banget* and *pisan*.

(1) umahé                    gèdhé                    banèt  
house (his/her)        big                        very  
His house is very big.

(2) umahé                    gèdhé                    pisan  
house (his/her)        big                        very  
His house is very big.

From (1) and (2) above, it can be seen that the word *bangèt* and *pisan* have a clear semantic meaning 'very'. Consequently, *bangèt* and *pisan* are free variation since they can replace each other and construction (1) and (2) are acceptable in Banyumas dialect without changing the meaning. *Bangèt* and *pisan* are general lexical items to show intensity in Banyumas dialect. Both *bangèt* and *pisan* are placed after adjective *gèdhé*.

*Bangèt* as an intensifier is rarely found in front of adjective as it is found in (1b).

(1b) umahé                    banèt                    gèdhéné  
house (his/her)        big                        very  
His/her house is very big.

In spite of the fact that (1b) is acceptable and understandable for Banyumas native speakers, the construction (1b) is not commonly used and the similar thing happens to *pisan*.

The use of *bangèt* and *pisan* in (1) and (2) are similar to English intensifiers such as *really*, *very* and *awfully*. They indicate the boosted conditioned (the target of the intensifier). As it has been mentioned, intensifiers are functioned to boosting the meaning of another expression, however, they must be associated with a scalar and non-binary property (Eckardt, 2009). Compare sentence (1) and (1c).

(1) umahé                    gèdhé                    banèt  
house (his/her)        big                        very  
His house is very big.

(1c) bocahé                    lanay                    banèt  
Boy                        man                        vey  
The boy is very man.

Sentence (1) shows the use of intensifier to boost the modified expression (a very big house). It shows the scalar of bigness. By using intensifier *bangèt*, speaker wants to inform that the house is very big. Big as well as other adjective have scalar categories, such as, bigger and the biggest. The combination of intensifier (*bangèt*) and other entity (*umah é*) indicate the quantitative degree of the entity, it means that the entity posses the quality described in the adjective. It is acknowledged as degree modification (Kennedy and McNally, 2005).

Sentence (1c) indicates that the predicate *lanay* does not match degree modification as the predicate has discrete character. In Banyumas dialect, *lanay* 'male' is the opposite of *wadon* 'female'. *lanay* and *wadon* are binary sex properties in Banyumas dialect. It is not common for Banyumas speaker to utter *lanay banèt* to express the degree of maleness. It indicates that intensifier does not match the targeted predicate, to be specific the predicates which carries binary properties.

In addition to general lexical items, specific lexical items are also used as intensifier in Banyumas dialects. To mention a few are *r áu*, *r ég éng*, *lèdèr*, *njilèp*, *cirut*, *lècit*, *kècu*, *kèthuwèk*. The sentences below show the realization of the specific word to show intensity.

(3) sègané                    sèpa                    réa  
rice                        tasteless very  
The rice is very tasteless.

Sentence (3) shows that the food is tasteless. It is explicitly mentioned in the sentence that *r áu* is used to show intensity. Instead of using the word *banget* which also means very, the word *r áu* is used by the speaker to show that the food is very tasteless. The word *r áu* is tightly used with the word *sèpa*. It cannot be used with other word, for example, *sugih* 'rich'. There is no construction like *\*sugih r áu* in Banyumas dialect.

Similar to *r áu*, the word *r ég éng* also has similar meaning 'very' as it can be seen from (4).

(4) jañané                    anta                    régéj  
food                        tasteless                very  
The food is very tasteless.

Sentence (4) indicates that the word *r ég éng* is strongly related to *anta*. Speakers cannot say *\*anta rea* in Banyumas dialect because *\*anta rea* is not acceptable for native speakers. Even though the word *anta* is closely-related to *r ég éng*, it still can be followed by *bangèt* and *pisan*. Thus a speaker may say sentence (5) and (6)

(5) jañané                    anta                    bangèt  
food                        tasteless                very  
The food is very tasteless.

(6) jañané                    anta                    pisan  
food                        tasteless                very

The food is very tasteless.

The word *lèdèr* is also used as intensifier with specific circumstance. It is only used with the word *pait* as it is shown in (7).

- |              |        |       |
|--------------|--------|-------|
| (7) jamuné   | pait   | lèdèr |
| herbal drink | bitter | very  |

The herbal drink is very bitter.

Sentence (7) clearly shows that the word *lèdèr* is only used with the word *pait* to intensify the degree of bitterness. By saying *jamuné pait lèdèr*, speakers want to inform that the herbal drink is very bitter. If sentence (7) is transformed into (8), it is still acceptable in Banyumas dialect.

- |              |        |       |
|--------------|--------|-------|
| (8) jamuné   | pait   | baṅèt |
| herbal drink | bitter | very  |

The herbal drink is very bitter.

Sentence (8) highlights that the word *baṅèt* is a general intensifier in Banyumas dialect since the replacement of *lèdèr* into *baṅèt* does not change the meaning of the construction. In a simple way, it can be explicitly mentioned that the construction of *pait lèdèr* and *pait baṅèt* are acceptable in Banyumas dialect.

Sentence (9), (10), (11), (12), and (13) shows the realization of *njilèp*, *cirut*, *lècit*, *kècu*, *kèthuwèk* consecutively.

- |            |       |        |
|------------|-------|--------|
| (9) wédaṅè | adhèm | njilèp |
| drink      | plain | very   |

The drink is very plain.

- |             |       |       |
|-------------|-------|-------|
| (10) jeruké | kècut | cirut |
| Orange      | sour  | very  |

The orange is very sour.

- |             |           |       |
|-------------|-----------|-------|
| (11) kaliné | bacit     | lècit |
| river       | smell bad | very  |

The river smells very bad.

- |              |      |      |
|--------------|------|------|
| (12) lambéné | biru | kècu |
| lips         | blue | very |

The lips are very blue.

- |             |       |          |
|-------------|-------|----------|
| (13) kulité | irèṅ  | kèthuwèk |
| skin        | black | very     |

The skin is very black.

The words of *njilèp*, *cirut*, *lècit*, *kècu*, *kèthuwèk* in (9), (10), (11), (12), and (13) can be replaced by the word *baṅèt* and *pisan*. In spite of the fact that the word *kèthuwèk* and *kecu* are used to intensify color as they can be found in (12) dan (13), they cannot replace each other. To intensify blue color, speaker use *kecu* instead of *kèthuwèk* and the word *kèthuwèk* is used to intensify black color, not the other way around. To be exact, the construction of *\*irèṅ kecu* and *\*biru kèthuwèk* are not acceptable in Banyumas dialect.

Similar to general lexical items in construction (1), (2), (5), (6) and (8); specific lexical items are also placed after adjective as it can be seen in construction (3), (4), (7), (9), (10), (11), (12), and (13). It can be inferred that intensifiers in Banyumas which consists of general lexical items and specific lexical items are placed after adjective. Basically intensifier in Banyumas dialect is used to intensify a condition. It is in accordance with Quirk et.al (1985: 439) who divides intensifiers into three semantic categories: emphasize, amplifiers, and downtoners. They demonstrate that intensifiers do not only significantly point out intensification and only show a point on the intensity scale which may be high or low.

### B. Reduplication

Reduplication can be utilized to show intensity in Banyumas dialect. It is realized into full reduplication and partial reduplication. Stewart (2001: 126) states that reduplication is a process of forming new words either by doubling an entire free morpheme (total reduplication) or part of it (partial reduplication). There are some constructions in Banyumas dialect using full reduplication to express intensity.

Sentence (14) shows the use of full reduplication as intensifier.

- |                |       |           |
|----------------|-------|-----------|
| (14) tandurané | ijo   | royo-royo |
| plants         | green | very      |

The plants are very green.

*Royo-royo* is used to intensify the condition of green color. By stating *royo-royo*, speakers want to intensify the condition of the plants. *Royo-royo* still can be replaced by the word *baṅèt* or *pisan* without changing the meaning. Therefore, sentence (15) and (16) are acceptable in Banyumas dialect.

- |                |       |       |
|----------------|-------|-------|
| (15) tandurané | ijo   | baṅèt |
| plants         | green | very  |

The plants are very green.

- |                |       |       |
|----------------|-------|-------|
| (16) tandurané | ijo   | pisan |
| plants         | green | very  |



The plants are very green.

Linguistically, it is widely known that reduplication has several different functions in some languages. In Banyumas dialect, reduplication is used as an intensifier. Besides, it is also used as a plural marker as in the construction *bocah-bocah* means 'children'. Reduplication as a plural marker can also be found in Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia). *Anak-anak* means 'children' in Bahasa Indonesia. In Tagalog, reduplication is used as a future marker. A construction *bili* which means 'buy' becomes *bibili* in its future form 'will buy'.

Full reduplication to show intensity is also depicted by sentence (17).

- (17) *layañané*            *mabur*            *dhuwur*            *laur-laur*  
kite                    fly                    high                very

The kite flies very high.

*Laur-laur* is used to intensify the height of the kite. Intensifier is used by speakers to boost the condition of something. In other way, intensifier carries emotional meaning even though it does not contribute to the propositional meaning. To inform that the kite flies high, speakers do not have to utilize an intensifier, however, when they want to add emotional content to their utterance, intensifier is highlighted.

Sentence (18) and (19), point out the use of full reduplication as intensifier in Banyu's dialect.

- (18) *adhiné*            *mañkat*            *sèkolah éruk*            *uput-uput*  
his/her sister            go                    school                morning                very

His sister goes to school very early in the morning.

- (19) *kakanjé*            *manjon*            *nañ*            *gèdhoñ*            *magroñ*            *magroñ*  
His brother            stay                in                big                house                very

His brother stays in a very big house.

Partial reduplication is also used as an intensifier device in Banyumas dialect. It is employed by reduplication with vowel change and reduplication of final syllable of the stem. Reduplication with vowel change can be seen in the sentence (20), (21), and (22).

- (20) *sèkolahané*            *adoh*                *mèlah-mèluh*  
school                    far                    very

The school is very far.

- (21) *bocahé*                *lèmu*                *ginak-ginuk*  
child                    fat                    very

The child is very fat.

- (22) *umahé*                *nañ*                *gunuñ*                *minañ minuñ*  
his/her house            in                    mountain                very

His house is in the very mountain.

Sentence (20), (21), and (22) show the use of partial reduplication with vowel change as intensifier in Banyumas dialect. It can be seen that vowel [a] change into [u] in *mèlah-mèluh ginak-ginuk*, *minang minung* which means that reduplication with vowel change happens. Th

Another form of partial reduplication found in Banyumas dialect intensifier occurs when the final syllable of the stem is repeated. Those are uncovered by sentence (23), (24), and (25).

- (23) *woñ tuwané*            *mlarat*                *jèrat*  
His/her parents            poor                    very

His/her parents are very poor.

- (24) *nyoñ*                *apal kècépal*                *urutané*  
I                    very much remeber                order

I remember the order very much

- (25) *pañanané*            *wutuh njètuh*  
food                    untouched at all

The food is untouched at all.

Construction *mlarat-jèrat* is formed by reduplicate the final syllable of the stem *mlarat*. *Mlarat* means 'poor'. It has two syllables *mle-* and *-rat*. *Jerat* is formed by adding *je-* before the final syllable *-rat* and becomes *jerat*. Similar to *mlarat-jerat*, *apal kècépal* is also formed by reduplicate the final syllable of the stem *apal*. *Apal* has two syllables *a-* and *-pal*. By adding *kècé-* before *-pal*, *kècépal* is formed. *Apal* means 'remember'.

Intensifiers in reduplication form, whether it is full reduplication or partial reduplication (reduplication with vowel change) undergo desemantization which means the construction lose its meaning content (Heine, 2003, p. 279). Those constructions *laur-laur*, *magrong-magrong*, *royo-royo*, *melah-meluh*, *ginak-ginuk*, and *minang-minung* do not have any semantic content. Thus, it can be highlighted that intensifiers in full reduplication and partial reduplication (reduplication with vowel change) experience grammaticalization because lexical items become functional or grammatical items.

Intensifier is used by speakers to show the emotional content in their utterances. By adding emotional content to their utterance, speakers want to convey more than just referential meaning (Holmes, 2006). Affective meaning is being employed by speakers to some extent. Speakers may want to show their affection or to shorten the distance with the

interlocutors. The tendency of using affective function instead of referential functions has become the characteristic of women's speech. It is in line with Baron (1986) who has summarized that language is used as one of the means of distinguishing gender differences in almost all societies; as such, many researchers have described women's speech as being different from the speech of men.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The result reveals that intensifiers in Banyumas dialect are realized into two linguistic categories, lexical items and reduplication. Lexical items consist of general lexical items and specific lexical items. The general lexical items can replace the specific lexical item but not vice versa. Both of them are placed after adjective. Thus, it can be inferred that lexical items such as *bangèt* and *pisan* experience degree of modification as long as they are attached to non-binary properties.

Reduplications which are used as intensifiers are classified into full reduplication and partial reduplication. Reduplication with vowel change undertakes grammaticalization because lexical items which are used in this reduplication lose their semantic content. On the other hand, grammaticalization does not happen to general lexical items due to the fact that they still have their semantic content when they are used as intensifiers.

The result does not quantitatively show the occurrence between general lexical items and specific lexical items to show intensity in Banyumas dialect. However, it can be explicitly inferred from the discussion that the general lexical items (*bangèt* and *pisan*) have broader distribution. A further research on the use of *bangèt* and *pisan* can be conducted to quantitatively show the distribution of those intensifiers.

The research does not clearly state the context of occurrence in which what situation certain intensifiers are used whether the general lexical items are used in formal or informal situations, or spontaneous conversation and so forth. By considering the context of utterance, a deeper insight of intensifiers in Banyumas dialect can be deliberately elaborated. Context can be further explained by considering who speaks what to whom and where. Gender and age can be variables in the further possible research of Banyumas intensifiers.

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# On the Avoidance Phenomenon in Writing

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**Abstract**—The Avoidance phenomenon is a negative method used by learners who are reluctant to take risks in the process of learning language. For a long time, it is regarded as a kind of learning strategy which has been misused greatly and has hindered the improvement of language learning efficiency. Therefore, through the analysis of English major students' various kinds of avoidance in writing, this article advocates that corresponding measures should be taken to prevent or reduce the occurrence of this phenomenon in English writing teaching.

**Index Terms**—avoidance phenomenon, writing, avoidance in vocabulary, avoidance in grammar

## I. INTRODUCTION

In English major writing teaching practice, the author found that the composition of many students often has few grammar mistakes, but the whole writing uses simple vocabulary and sentence patterns, which is not parallel to their English. The main reason that leads to this phenomenon is that some students are afraid of making mistakes and losing face, but at the same time, they want to achieve the purpose of communication. Therefore, they avoid using the language and structure that they are less familiar or uncertain about. And the above mentioned phenomenon is called “avoidance” in language.

By analyzing the vocabulary and grammatical avoidance in compositions of English majors, this paper aims to explore the solutions of the avoidance phenomenon from different aspects.

## II. THEORETICAL STUDY OF AVOIDANCE

The avoidance phenomenon is first put forward by Schachter (1974) in the study of English learners whose mother tongue are different when they are handling the restrictive attributive clauses. According to her, when the second language learners are facing with language difficulties, the avoidance phenomenon will occur because they tend to give up the use of certain words or rules so as to obtain the accuracy of language.

Avoidance is very common in second language acquisition. Thus the detailed information about this phenomenon will be analyzed in the following part.

## III. THE AVOIDANCE PHENOMENON IN ENGLISH WRITING

### A. Avoidance in Vocabulary

The avoidance of English major students in vocabulary is mainly manifested in the following four aspects:

#### 1. Use superordinate and general words

In English, superordinate and general words denote large classes or broad areas, actions or qualities. Specific words indicate individual objects, actions or qualities that compose classes or areas (Wang, 2003).

Generally speaking, in English major students' writing, they tend to use superordinate and more general words instead of subordinate or more specific words. Example 1:

There is a small garden in front of my grandpa's house. And he is very good at raising plants and flowers. Some of the plants were very small at the beginning, but now they are large and very beautiful. And there are a lot of colorful flowers inside, white, red, pink, yellow and so on. They not only look pretty but also smell good. My grandpa devotes a lot of time to his garden. Every morning and evening I see him taking care of his plants and flowers like little children. All our friends love to come to his garden to see the beautiful world that my grandpa has made.

From example 1, it can be clearly seen that the superordinate word “flower” is commonly used rather than some subordinate words such as “tulip”, “rose”, “violet”, etc.

Although both general and specific words are useful, a student learning to write should make an effort to master specific words wherever possible because specific words help to make writing more informative, impressive and effective.

For instance, when students want to describe a man that is “good”, they can use more specific words such as “generous, selfless, considerate, sympathetic” and so on. If the food is “good”, words like “tasty, appetizing, nourishing” are more vivid.

#### 2. Use synonyms

English is rich in synonyms. But there are in fact few or no exact synonyms because the so-called synonyms often have subtle differences of meaning. Synonyms can be different in connotation, stylistic level, the degree of emphasis,

emotional coloring and collocation, etc. For instance, “eagle” and “hawk” may seem identical to us Chinese, but in English eagle is a bird that soars high and thus sees far, but to “have an eagle eye” means to have excellent vision; while hawk, a bird of prey, symbolizes harshness, thus people call the hard-line politician “the hawks”. Then “dove” and “pigeon” may seem to us the same thing, but people say “peace dove” instead of “peace pigeon”. To us Chinese, “dumb” and “mute” may mean the same thing; yet “dumb” conveys a negative meaning of not being wise, so people say “the deaf and mute school” but never “the deaf and dumb school”. Furthermore, “statesman” and “politician” have the same denotative meaning—one who is skilled in the science of government or politics. In their connotative meaning, however, they are quite different. “statesman” is a complimentary term, meaning “a person with wisdom and skill in managing the affairs of the state”; “politician” is a derogatory term, a term of contempt, implying “a person who is in politics merely for personal gain, and schemes for self-interest”. Therefore, people refer to the government leader whom they respect as a statesman, but they call the government official whom they oppose and despise a politician (Wang, 2003).

When the students write their articles, they often can not find some specific and appropriate words immediately. At that time, they will try their best to use a synonym to meet the demands of communication. After that, the sentences they write can always cause confusion or ambiguity.

Example 2: His hard work is going to show consequence.

In this sentence, “consequence” often expresses a derogatory sense. However, the meaning of the sentence does not accord with the meaning that the author want to convey, so people can use the neutral word “results” instead.

Example 3: Look at that lovely tiny boy.

In this example, “tiny” should be replaced by the word “little” because “little” implies the feeling of fondness which means attractively small. On the contrary, “tiny” means something that is extremely small and sometimes abnormal.

Example 4: This is a peace-loving country.

Country, nation, state and land are synonyms. However, they are different in connotation. “Country” means an area of land and its population and government, such as an island country. “Nation” emphasizes “the people of a country” such as a peace-loving nation. “State” usually refers to the government or political organization of a country, that is “state organs”. “Land” is similar to “country”, but it is less precise and more literary and emotive. For instance, “I love my native land” (Ding, 1994).

Mark Twain once has shown very vividly the importance of choosing the exact word: “Use the right word, not the second cousin” or “The difference between the right and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.” According the above-mentioned examples, we can draw the conclusion that if students want to write more effectively, they must be very sensitive to the shades of meaning between synonyms and choose the right word that can appropriately express what they are willing to convey.

### 3. The negative transfer of native language

In the process of writing, the negative transfer of native language is another reason to cause avoidance. For example, being influenced by Chinese, the students usually use “give him some color to see” to express the meaning of “teach sb. a lesson”.

Example 5:

Internet is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it makes people’s life easier, convenient and colorful. On the other hand, it brings disadvantageous effect. (a) Let me give you several my own experiences. As people know, internet in fact is a gigantic database that stores the worldwide information. When facing with these multiple choices, I can hardly devote myself to one thing. For example, (b) every time when I get ready to find an English video to improve my level in listening, there are some irrelevant or worthless news distracted my attention. So my time was finally used for browsing some web pages aimlessly.

Obviously, sentences (a) and (b) are negative transfer of Chinese to English. So the two sentences should be revised as “Let me share my own experience with you.” And “every time when I get ready to find an English video to improve my listening”.

### 4. Paraphrase and rephrase

Paraphrase and rephrase is also a way of avoidance commonly used by English major students. When they can not express a certain word, the students tend to convey their idea in a roundabout way so as to achieve the purpose of communication. As in the sentence “Arts Festival is a good platform for the students to show themselves”, when the students don’t know how to express “platform”, they may use the following way of expression: Arts Festival is a good way for students to show themselves.

## B. Avoidance in Grammar

### 1. Avoid passive voice

The structure of the passive voice in English is “be + the past participle”. Since the form of past participle is further divided into regular changes and irregular changes, and the passive voice is often combined with a variety of tenses, which undoubtedly increases the difficulty of communication. To avoid errors, students tend to use the active sentences, and avoid the use of passive sentences, such as in the following sentences, students are more willing to use sentence (a) instead of sentence (b).

(a). He wanted his wife to wash his clothes at once.

(b). He wanted his clothes to be washed at once.

(a). They has lost the battle.

(b). The battle has been lost.

Although generally the active voice is acceptable because it is precise and direct, sometimes the passive voice is more impressive than the active, as in the following: When the doer of the action is not important as “The desks and chairs in this room should be more reasonably arranged” Or when the agent is unknown or needs to be emphasized: “In this war, millions of people were driven from their hometown”, “This novel was written by William Shakespeare”, etc.

From the above examples, it can be seen that passive voice is an important means to achieve effective expression of people’s thoughts. Hence, students should endeavor to make full use of it.

#### 2. Avoid long or complex sentences

In writing, the sentence patterns of English major students are generally simple sentences, such as “subject + predicate + object” structure or “subject + verb + complement” structure, and they avoid using long or complex sentences. If all the sentences in a piece of writing are of the same structure and of similar length, it will be monotonous and boring, and then the writing is less effective and impressive. In daily writing, teachers can solve this problem by means of sentence combining practice to improve students’ writing style, such as:

(a). The Wuyi Mountains are noted as the most picturesque area in Southeast China.

(b). The Mountains extend more than 500 kilometers along the border of Fujian and Jiangxi.

Sentences (a) and (b) are all subject-first sentences which make the idea diffused, thus they be combined as one: Extending more than 500 kilometers along the border of Fujian and Jiangxi, the Wuyi Mountains are noted as the most picturesque area in Southeast China.

#### 3. Avoid inversion

Inversion is an important grammatical device in English. The proper use of inversion can make the writing more vivid, emphatic and persuasive.

Such as:

(a). Never have I found him in such a good mood.

(b). In this chapter will be found an answer for you.

(c). Quickly and impressively she went to hug her mother.

(d). So much does he worry about his financial position that he can’t sleep at night.

However, in practical writing, due to the use of inversion is much more complex than the normal word order, students often avoid using it.

#### 4. Avoid subjunctive mood

As a special verb form in English, the subjunctive mood usually expresses wishes, demands or making statements contrary to fact. For instance:

(a). If I won the game, I would buy the book you want.

(b). If Mary had hurried, she could have caught the bus.

(c). If he were to go abroad, he would go to Italy.

Because of its syntactic and semantic complexity, subjunctive mood is hard to comprehend and master for English learners. Therefore, it’s not surprised to find its absence in their writing.

### IV. THE CAUSE OF AVOIDANCE

The main reason of avoidance phenomenon is that a lot of English major students don’t have a solid language foundation. Some of them don’t have enough vocabulary or can not fully grasp certain syntactic rules. In that case, avoidance comes into being. At the same time, the negative transfer of mother tongue and the differences between English and Chinese can also lead to this phenomenon. In addition, if students lack confidence and are afraid of making mistakes in English, they will also make use of avoidance to achieve the purpose of communication. Look at the following example (example 6):

Today I’d like to share with you a topic which is closely related to us. That is “The Enrollment Expansion in Chinese Universities”.

With the development of social economy, people proposed new requirements for higher education owing to the bad need of talents. The 16th National Party Congress pointed out that: “We must strive to improve the quality of people to speed up the construction of socialist modernization.” The essential step is to fast the pace of the popularity of higher education.

Well, is the enrollment expansion a good thing? In recent years, the continuous expansion of college enrollment, on the one hand, meet people’s demand for higher education, while it also caused many problems. We should adopt a scientific attitude to face the problems. And it is conducive to the harmonious development of the universities.

First of all, I want to talk about the advantages. Enrollment expansion gives students more chances to get higher education. A great number of people with higher education will probably promote our economic growth. Next it can improve the quality of people to enhance education and narrow the gap with foreign countries. Finally, it can alleviate the pressure of employment.

Since every coin has two sides, the problems are also very obvious. The first problem is the decline of the education

quality and the lack of infrastructure. Many students need to solve the accommodation problem themselves. Meanwhile, the lack of teachers leads to a sharp decline of school teaching quality. Therefore, the expansion means the lower standard for students to go to college and it won't bring students good teaching resources. Finally it will lead to the employment issue.

In summary, 21st century is an important strategic period for China's rapid development. Enrollment expansion is a right choice and what we should do is to seek truth from facts and moderate expansion speed so as to create more excellent talents for society!

This short article was written by one of the author's English major student in writing class. When we read it through, we can get that the whole writing want to convey the advantages and disadvantages of the enrollment expansion in Chinese universities. Although it has expressed the main meaning of the topic, it's language is not very effective because it didn't vary the sentence structure and length.

## V. COUNTERMEASURES TO AVOIDANCE

### A. *Have a Comprehensive Understanding towards Avoidance*

The essence of avoidance phenomenon is a kind of communication strategy. The form of it is to use existing knowledge to avoid that of unknown or uncertain. In many cases, the students who use avoidance strategy in writing can achieve the goal of all or part of the communication. Therefore, on one hand, avoidance strategy has a positive effect, that is the reason why it existed. On the other hand, when students are to avoid writing difficulties, because they do not insist on the use of the expression it should be, part of the communicative purpose are given up. At that time, their written language can not be further improved. So this is the negative aspects of avoidance phenomenon. In writing teaching practice, if teachers don't enhance the study or accumulation of new knowledge and do not induce the students to overcome their language difficulties, avoidance will be frequently used in writing. In that case, the avoidance phenomenon will do harm to the student's language acquisition because too much avoidance may hinder the absorption and assimilation of new language, and thus lead to their English writing cease to advance.

### B. *To Strengthen the Quantity and Quality of Target Language*

The ultimate reason of avoidance phenomenon is the inefficiency of language input. The students' language information stored in their brain is extremely limited and they have too little accumulation in common vocabulary, sentence pattern and fixed expression. Thus, teachers should increase the quality and the number of target language input, which will be beneficial to enhance the students writing ability and prevent them from using the expression and grammatical structures repeatedly.

### C. *Pay Attention to the Way of Error Correction*

Error is inevitable in language learning. Because college students' emotional temperament has been formed, they are inclined to protect themselves and avoid making mistakes. In writing teaching, the teacher should avoid direct and harsh way of error correction. First, teachers should distinguish different types of mistakes, that is, distinguish between global and local error, serious and general error. And the teacher need not correct every mistakes made by students. Second, teachers should adopt flexible ways of correcting errors, such as it can be the spot check by teachers, mutual correction by students or simply self-correction. No matter which way do the teachers use, they should try their best to guide students to find his mistakes and correct by themselves, rather than simply correcting directly.

The following example 7 is a composition written by an English major student on the topic of "My View on College Students' Psychological Problems".

Example 7:

In reality, a lot of college students have varies degree of different psychological problems. There are three common problems among college students.

The most public one is that their psychological endurance of setbacks is weak. When they come into the campus of college, they have a good image for their college life. But when they start and live the college life for a period of time, they find that the college is not like what they looked forward to. For example, maybe their roommates are not so friendly and the class activities are not that colorful. And the gap between the ideal and the reality forms a big reason for college students to have psychological problems.

Another serious mental problem is emotional distress. There are two concentrated expressions. The first is the troubled love. College students love is a common phenomenon. Some students have difficulty in facing and dealing with problems when their relationship is not as usual. The second is friendship trouble. Friendship is an important aspect of people's life. The growing adolescents especially have a strong self-esteem, identity, a sense of need. Everyone's goal and aspiration is different. So when they don't know how to handle these emotional problems, they will feel depressed.

The last problem I want to say is caused by employment. Many college students are under the dual pressure of economy and employment. In general, there is a wrong psychology. Most students recognize only those with genuine talent, to an invincible position in the society in the future. Some students make this pressure into motivation. Therefore, they study hard to improve their competitiveness in the employment market. But there are also many students who are

difficult to get rid of the wrong psychology of disposable, eventually arouse a sense of depression or low self-esteem.

In modern society, psychological qualities are essential for everyone. As college students, we should have a positive attitude to what we have, what we do and the life we live. You should believe that you are away from psychological problems.

In this example, some words that the student used are not appropriate and effective, and there are also many chinglish sentences in it. During the process of error correction, the teacher firstly underlined the vocabulary and sentences that has problems. Then the teacher asked the author of the composition and another student to revise the composition again. After that, the teacher gave some suggestions to improve the article just as the following:

In reality, a lot of college students have different psychological problems to some degree. In my opinion, there are three reasons that can account for the phenomenon.

Above all, a lot of college students have poor ability to deal with problems and difficulties they encounter. When they first enter into the university, they have high expectation towards campus life. However, when they start to live in the campus for a period of time, they find that college life is different from what they have imaged. For example, maybe their roommates are not so friendly to them and the class activities are not that colorful. Therefore, the great gap between the ideal and the reality will make the college students feel unhappy and then they may have psychological problems.

The second reason is about their emotional distress. It can be caused by two main factors, that is, campus love and friendship. As we all know, campus love now is a common phenomenon among college students. However, some students have difficulty in facing and dealing with problems when they are frustrated in love or their relationship ends. Similarly, when the college students have problems with their friends, because some of the students have strong self-esteem and they don't know how to handle the problems. Thus, they may feel very depressed.

The last problem is caused by employment pressure. Some of the college students regard pressure as a kind of motivation. Therefore, they study hard to improve their competitiveness in the employment market. However, some students waste most of their time and energy to watch movies, play computer games and surf some useless information on internet, which eventually arouse a sense of depression or low self-esteem.

To conclude, as a college student myself, I think we should have a positive attitude and try to be strong enough to face all the challenges in our life, and I also advocate that universities and society can offer more instruction to help the college students solve their psychological problems.

During this error correction process, students can realize their own language problems by themselves, and their motivation can be improved.

#### D. Encourage Students to Conquer Psychological Stress and Anxiety

The reason why some learners avoid using the difficult language points is also related to their psychological stress and anxiety. In daily writing training, the teachers should create relaxed and appropriate language learning environment so as to reduce the students' fear of writing. And students should also be encouraged to have the enthusiasm to use new words and sentence patterns. In that case, students can write more vivid and appropriate language.

## VI. CONCLUSION

In a word, avoidance is a complicated language phenomenon. The above-mentioned avoidance in English major students' writings in vocabulary, grammar and its countermeasures are summarized by the author according to her teaching experience. It is hoped that this article can inspire a number of writing teachers and English major students to improve their teaching and writing.

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# The Effect of One-way and Two-way Tasks on Iranian EFL Learners' Lexical Learning

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**Abstract**—This study investigated the effect of one-way and two-way tasks on lexical learning of Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners. Participants included 40 male and female Iranian EFL learners with the age range of 11-21, at the pre-intermediate level and from two English language institutes. They were assigned to two experimental groups: a one-way-task group and a two-way-task group. Knowledge of the intended lexis was established by a pre-test. The experimental groups underwent different treatments for eight 30-minute sessions during which they told stories based on the picture-cued stories. After the treatment, a post-test and a delayed post-test were administered. The results of the one-way repeated measures ANOVAs indicated that both one-way and two-way tasks had a significant effect on the learning of lexis. Meanwhile, gain scores of pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest were compared using independent samples T-tests. It indicated that two-way tasks, compared to one-way tasks, were more effective in the retention of lexis. The findings of this study could attract the attention of material developers to include one-way and two-way tasks in the books. Teacher trainers and EFL teachers could utilize similar task types in the classroom and could provide EFL learners with an effective way of vocabulary acquisition.

**Index Terms**—task-based language teaching, one-way task, two-way task, lexical learning

## I. INTRODUCTION

When learners attend English courses, one of the driving forces of their attendance is the ability to speak in the target language. In attaining the goal, one of the important components of language- vocabulary- is required to be learnt in a way that facilitates the process. Hence, a change was felt in teaching methodology; from synthetic language teaching strategy and as Rutherford (1987) calls it the “accumulated entities” view of language learning to an analytic language teaching strategy in which the focus falls on the communicative purposes for which the language is used. As a result, communicative language teaching (CLT) was established in the early 1970s as a reaction against previous traditional approaches of teaching learners a fixed set of grammatical structures and fragmentary lexical uses. With an emphasis on the main role of learners as well as the practical use of language in situations other than educational setting, CLT and its different aspects came into prominence.

One of the branches of CLT is related to task-based language teaching (TBLT) and task-based syllabi which refers to teaching a second/foreign language that seeks to engage learners in interactionally meaning-based (Breen, 1989) and outcome-driven language use by having them perform a series of tasks comparable to real world activities (Ellis, 2003; Skehan, 1998; Willis & Willis, 2001). In this approach the prime focus is given to the concept of “task” as a distinguishing feature. Different authors defined task according to specific purposes (Nunan, 1989; Skehan, 1998; Willis, 1996).

One of the design factors regarding the manipulation of tasks has to do with how information is distributed among the participants and how it flows during interaction; whether it is directed in one-way or two-way. According to Mackey and Gass (2005) in one-way tasks, one of the members possesses the information, which she/he must provide the listener with to do something with it. While in two-way tasks, each member has part of the information to share with the others for the task to be completed successfully. Applying one-way and two-way tasks in the interactions may affect the learning process. This study reported in this article is one contribution to this area and focused on the effect of one-way and two-way tasks on learners' lexical learning.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Two early applications of a task-based approach within a communicative framework for the language teaching were the Malaysian Communicational Syllabus (1975) and the Bangalore Project carried out by Bretta and Davies in 1985

and Prabhu in 1987. In his *Second Language Pedagogy*, Prabhu (1987) provided more information and accurate details on the Bangalore project.

Over the last three decades, in the SLA field, there have been varying interpretations of what constitutes a 'task' in language education (Breen, 1989; Bygate, Skehan & Swain, 2001; Crookes, 1986; Ellis, 2003; Lee, 2000; Nunan, 1989; Prabhu, 1987; Skehan, 1996); and it covers a wide variety of topics such as whether the tasks involve real world activities or they are designed for pedagogic purposes, whether they are merely defined in communicative terms or they involve communication, whether they are directed at fostering receptive or productive skills, and whether all tasks necessitate language use and production, i.e., if they have a linguistic or non-linguistic outcome. In order to create a better understanding of the concept of task, some areas need to be elaborated on.

#### **TBLT and Vocabulary Learning**

In TBLT, in order for an effective interaction and outcome to occur, some linguistic features are required. One feature to mention is vocabulary learning. According to Ellis (1999), vocabulary learning in TBLT means the incidental acquisition of vocabulary that occurs when learners do not focus their attention to learn that specific vocabulary. Ellis mentions two reasons to focus on vocabulary acquisition. The first reason is that vocabulary development is now recognized by researchers, as well as by learners, as an important and main aspect of learning a new language. In the last few decades, applied linguists, particularly SLA researchers, have increasingly paid attention to vocabulary learning (Huckin & Coady, 1999; Hatch & Brown, 1995; Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997).

The second reason proposed by Ellis (1999) is that vocabulary acquisition is easier to investigate than the acquisition of grammatical knowledge. Learners need ample exposure to L2 input in order to attain specific grammatical or pragmatic features. In contrast, the incidental acquisition of L2 vocabulary that is gained by quite small amounts of exposure can be measured relatively easily.

Recently, with the development of task-based approaches to teaching different components of language, pedagogical tasks were identified as another principal source of incidental vocabulary learning (Fallahrafie, Rahmany & Sadeghi, 2015; Hedayatipanah, Mirzaei & Azizifar, 2015; Newton, 1995; Shintani, 2012; Wesche & Paribakht, 2000).

In a study carried out by Ziyaemehr (2013), the effectiveness of task types on vocabulary learning in multilevel language ability classes was investigated. As a result, the treatment groups that received instruction through those task types indicated no statistically significant difference whereas their language proficiency level significantly influenced their performance in vocabulary learning.

Javanbakht (2011) observed the impact of three task types, reading comprehension, reading comprehension with fill-in gaps, and sentence writing on incidental vocabulary learning and retention of Iranian male elementary learners. The results indicated the significant impact of task involvement on the incidental learning of vocabulary by male elementary EFL learners.

Khodareza and Shabani (2016) compared the effect of one-way versus two-way tasks on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' phrasal verb learning. The participants were sixty EFL learners majoring in TEFL studying in the second semester of academic year 2015. The outcome revealed that both the OWT group and the TWT group had vocabulary gains but the effect of two-way tasks on phrasal verbs learning was more noticeable than that of the one-way task.

Pourramzan, Taghipour Bazargani, and Zohouri Vaghei (2016) attempted to investigate the effect of one-way versus two-way tasks on the development of collocation competence among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. Data analysis revealed the fact that two-way task group outperformed the one-way task group. The findings also showed that both groups progressed from pretest to posttest.

Most studies have witnessed the positive effect of different task types on learners' vocabulary learning and acquisition. Since the researchers realized a vacuum in dealing more with the effect of one-way and two-way tasks on lexical learning of EFL learners, in this thesis, an attempt has been made to further investigate the issue to provide support for the use of one-way and two-way tasks in syllabus design and curriculum development.

### III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions presented the aim of the study:

Q1- Do one-way tasks affect Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' lexical knowledge and long-term retention of lexis?

Q2- Do two-way tasks affect Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' lexical knowledge and long-term retention of lexis?

Q3- Is there any significant difference between the effect of one-way and two-way tasks on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' (long-term) retention of lexis?

### IV. MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### *A. Participants*

Participants in the study were 40 pre-intermediate Iranian EFL learners, with the age range of 11 to 21, all Persian native speakers, with an almost two-year experience of second language instruction. Meanwhile, learners' consent on participating in the study was obtained before the study.

### B. Design

This quantitative quasi-experimental study utilized a pretest-posttest comparison group design and a delayed posttest with four Iranian EFL classes in 2 language institutes as the experimental groups. Both experimental groups received a one-month treatment. One group was exposed to one-way tasks (OWT) and the other to two-way tasks (TWT). The posttest was administered one week after the last treatment session during which learners in both groups carried out one task per session. Meanwhile, in order to examine the long-term effect of the study, a delayed posttest was also conducted one month and a week after the treatments.

### C. Instruments

The instruments applied in the present study were of three types as follows.

#### 1. Oxford Quick Placement Test

In order to find out the groups' homogeneity of English proficiency, an Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) with a total number of 50 multiple choice items was administered in 35 minutes. In order to select the intended participants, those classes were selected that were at the pre-intermediate level with the scores ranging from 10-18.

#### 2. Pretest

The pretest to which the participants were exposed was a four-section, 17-item teacher-constructed test of vocabulary, for the test was designed to assess the vocabulary learning of learners. The test consisted of selected response item types, i.e., 10 multiple-choices, and 7 fill-in-the-blanks. Of 17 items for the vocabulary section, 5 questions were presented as distractors in order to avoid participants' attention to the target features during testing. The time allotted to the vocabulary pretest and posttest was 25 minutes, and all these tests sessions were supervised by the researcher.

#### 3. Posttest

This test which was administered one week after the treatment sessions. It was equal in all respects to pretest except for the arrangement of some items. It is worth mentioning that some items of the test in the posttest were rearranged, the primary purpose of which was to reduce or avoid the testing effect and subjectivity.

#### 4. Delayed Posttest

To investigate whether the treatment had any effect on the long term retention of learners' acquisition, another test was administered one month after the posttest. The content of the delayed posttest was the same as the pretest and posttest except for the arrangement of some items.

### D. Treatment

The materials were 8 picture-cued stories (pictures as a sequence of cues to tell a story), one for each treatment session, which were presented to each group. The stories included three popular English stories by the names of "The Gingerbread Man", "The Little Red Hen", "Red Riding Hood"; one picture-cued story was taken from page 73 of *Second Language research: Methodology and Design* by Mackey and Gass (2005) and four other picture-cued stories were taken from web sources. For controlling learners' tasks, their voices were recorded during the process of storytelling.

### E. Procedure

The experimental sequence of the study was carried out over a period of one month during winter 2016. First, an OQPT was administered to all participants by the researcher. Then, of four intact classes, those approximately homogeneous and at the pre-intermediate level were assigned to two experimental groups; a one-way-task group (OWT) group and a two-way-task (TWT) group. The OWT group (EG 1) consisted of 19 participants and the TWT group (EG 2) had 21 participants. One week prior to the first treatment session, all participants took a vocabulary pretest. Then, the two groups underwent different treatments. The treatments consisted of eight sessions which were conducted in thirty minutes, two sessions per week for each EG. The last treatment session was followed by a vocabulary posttest a week later. In addition, in order to assess the long-term effect of the treatments, a delayed posttest was also administered after a month.

Prior to the treatment, the vocabulary test as well as two out of eight tasks were pilot-tested on a separate group of learners similar to those in the experiment. After calculating item difficulty and item discrimination, some ineffective items were either excluded or modified from the final version of the test. For measuring the reliability of the test, a test-retest ( $r = 0.79$ ) was carried out. Moreover, the test's internal consistency was measured by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The obtained Cronbach's alpha for the test was 0.94. To investigate learners' performance regarding the implementation of tasks and proper use of targeted lexis, all data were audio-recorded by voice-recorders.

At the beginning of each session, based on the treatment group type, EG1 and EG2, picture-cued stories were distributed among learners. Pictures were cut into separate pieces. For EG1, each learner received all pieces of pictures and had to make the story individually and then describe it to his/her partner. One point the researcher considered in this type of task was that both learners in one group needed to describe the story to one another because in case, one learner only described the story, there would be a possibility that the other partner did not pay enough attention and the aim would not be met. For EG2, learners were divided into groups of two. Each learner had part of information; picture parts were distributed equally between the two learners or when the number of parts was odd, one learner had one part more than his/her partner. Then, they negotiated with each other to make the story together. Each treatment session

consisted of a pre-task phase and a task phase. The pre-task phase lasted about 10 minutes. The task phase lasted about 20 minutes.

## V. RESULTS

### A. The First Null Hypothesis

The first null hypothesis of this study addressed that “One-way tasks do not affect Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners’ lexical knowledge and long-term retention of lexis”. To investigate this hypothesis, a one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted. The results are presented in Table 4.1 to compare vocabulary scores of OWT group on the pretest, posttest and delayed posttest at Time 1 (prior to the treatment), Time 2 (following the treatment) and Time 3 (one month and a week after the treatment). There was a significant effect for time, Wilks’ Lambda= 0.146,  $F(1, 17) = 49.657$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , multivariate partial eta squared= 0.854.

TABLE 1  
ONE-WAY REPEATED MEASURES ANOVA OF OWT ON VOCABULARY LEARNING (MULTIVARIATE TESTS<sup>a</sup>)

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Time	Pillai's Trace	.854	49.657 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	17.000	.000	.854
	Wilks' Lambda	.146	49.657 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	17.000	.000	.854
	Hotelling's Trace	5.842	49.657 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	17.000	.000	.854
	Roy's Largest Root	5.842	49.657 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	17.000	.000	.854

a. Design: Intercept

Within Subjects Design: Time

b. Exact statistic

Inferential statistics in Table 1 and 2 indicate that the significant difference between group means is between Time 1 and 2 as well as Time 1 and 3. In other words, OWT had a great short-term and long-term effect on vocabulary knowledge of pre-intermediate EFL learners. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected at  $p < 0.05$ . As the results indicate participants’ scores in the delayed posttest were lower than their scores in the posttest because they had a one-month interval between the tests and there is a probability of forgetting the parts of the subject of the study in this type of task.

TABLE 2  
ONE-WAY REPEATED MEASURES ANOVA OF OWT ON VOCABULARY LEARNING (PAIRWISE COMPARISONS)

Measure: MEASURE\_1

(I) Time	(J) Time	Mean Difference (I - J)	Std. Error	Sig. <sup>b</sup>	95% Confidence Interval for Difference <sup>b</sup>	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	-3.421 <sup>*</sup>	.336	.000	-4.308	-2.534
	3	-3.158 <sup>*</sup>	.441	.000	-4.322	-1.994
2	1	3.421 <sup>*</sup>	.336	.000	2.534	4.308
	3	.263	.357	1.000	-.680	1.206
3	1	3.158 <sup>*</sup>	.441	.000	1.994	4.322
	2	-.263	.357	1.000	-1.206	.680

Based on estimated marginal means

\*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

### B. The Second Null Hypothesis

Considering the second research question, the following null hypothesis is as follows: “Two-way tasks do not affect Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners’ lexical knowledge and long-term retention of lexis”. To investigate this hypothesis, a one-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted. Table 3 compares vocabulary scores of TWT group on the pretest, posttest and delayed posttest at Time 1 (prior to the treatment), Time 2 (following the treatment) and Time 3 (one month and a week after the treatment). There was a significant effect for time, Wilks’ Lambda= 0.101,  $F(1, 19) = 85.000$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , multivariate partial eta squared= 0.899.

TABLE 3  
ONE-WAY REPEATED MEASURES ANOVA OF TWT ON VOCABULARY LEARNING (MULTIVARIATE TESTS<sup>a</sup>)

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Time Pillai's Trace	.899	85.000 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	19.000	.000	.899
Wilks' Lambda	.101	85.000 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	19.000	.000	.899
Hotelling's Trace	8.947	85.000 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	19.000	.000	.899
Roy's Largest Root	8.947	85.000 <sup>b</sup>	2.000	19.000	.000	.899

a. Design: Intercept  
Within Subjects Design: Time  
b. Exact statistic

Data from Table 4 reveal that the significant difference between group means is between Time 1 and 2 as well as Time 1 and 3. In other words, TWT had a great short-term and long-term effect on vocabulary knowledge of pre-intermediate EFL learners. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected at  $p < 0.05$ .

TABLE 4  
ONE-WAY REPEATED MEASURES ANOVA OF TWT ON VOCABULARY LEARNING (PAIRWISE COMPARISONS)

Measure: MEASURE\_1

(I) Time	(J) Time	Mean Difference (I - J)			95% Confidence Interval for Difference <sup>b</sup>	
		Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig. <sup>b</sup>	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	-4.524 <sup>*</sup>	.363	.000	-5.471	-3.576
	3	-4.857 <sup>*</sup>	.443	.000	-6.016	-3.699
2	1	4.524 <sup>*</sup>	.363	.000	3.576	5.471
	3	-.333	.386	1.000	-1.343	.676
3	1	4.857 <sup>*</sup>	.443	.000	3.699	6.016
	2	.333	.386	1.000	-.676	1.343

Based on estimated marginal means  
\*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.  
b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

C. The Third Null Hypothesis

Considering the third research question, the following null hypothesis is as follows: "There is not any significant difference between the effect of one-way and two-way tasks on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' (long-term) retention of lexis". To investigate this hypothesis, two independent samples T-tests were conducted alternatively. Table 5 and 6 indicate the significance.

TABLE 5  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST FOR GAIN SCORES OF THE VOCABULARY PRETEST-POSTTEST BETWEEN OWT AND TWT GROUP

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Gainscore- pretestposttest- vocab	Equal variances assumed	1.50	.23	-2.22	38	.033	-1.10	.498	-2.110	-.095
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.23	37.98	.032	-1.11	.494	-2.104	-.102

TABLE 6  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST FOR GAIN SCORES OF THE VOCABULARY PRETEST-DELAYED POSTTEST BETWEEN OWT AND TWT GROUP

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Gainscorepretestdelayedpostte stvocab	Equal variances assumed	.34	.56	-2.71	38	.010	-1.70	.627	-2.969	-.430
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.72	37.92	.010	-1.70	.625	-2.965	-.433

The data in Tables 5 and 6 reveal that TWT had a more significant effect on participants' lexical acquisition both in short-term ( $p=0.03$ ) and long-term intervals ( $p=0.01$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected at  $p<0.05$ , which means that there is a significant difference between the gain scores of TWT group compared to OWT group in short-term and long-term regarding lexical learning.

## VI. DISCUSSION

The main objective in this study was to revisit the issue of the importance of one type of task with its two levels (i.e., one-way and two-way) involved in the process of vocabulary acquisition.

The first and second null hypotheses jointly stated that "one-way and two-way tasks do not affect Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' lexical knowledge and long-term retention of lexis". Data analysis revealed that the experimental groups that received treatment in form of both OWT and TWT improved considerably from pretest to posttest and delayed posttest. Therefore, the first and second null hypotheses are rejected. Based on the present quasi-experimental study, there is a difference in the effect of one-way and two-way tasks on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' lexical knowledge and long-term retention of lexis. These findings support the previous claims for the efficacy of one-way and two-way tasks on learners' lexical learning (Khodareza & Shabani, 2016). Khodareza and Shabani (2016) compared the effect of one-way versus two-way tasks on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' phrasal verb learning.

Furthermore, the findings lend support to a previous study which has demonstrated the benefits of task-based approach on vocabulary learning and enhancement in ESP courses (Hedayatipناه, Mirzaei & Azizifar, 2015). Based on their results, they concluded that task-based approach was more effective in teaching technical vocabularies.

There is also one study that, not in line with the present study, has found no significant difference on the effectiveness of task types on vocabulary learning (Ziyaeemehr, 2013). The distinctions between the two studies are, the type of task that was implemented, i.e., one-way tasks, and the post-task phase which was excluded from the present study for the lack of time. However, there is one result that supports the result of the present study. It shows dialogs and interactions are more appropriate tasks to improve students' language ability in terms of vocabulary knowledge.

As the results reveal, one-way and two-way tasks had a significant effect on the acquisition of lexis in both short and long-term intervals. However, the significant difference was higher in the TWT group compared to OWT group. Therefore, the study confirms that both one-way and two-way tasks are appropriate means in the learning of lexis.

The results are in line with Newton' (1995) and Shintani's (2012) study. There are some other studies which investigated the effect of various tasks types on vocabulary learning and acquisition of EFL and ESL learners (Fallahrafie, Rahmany & Sadeghi, 2015; Javanbakht, 2011). Although these studies and the current study are not exactly comparable, the common aim they share is that they all state the effectuality that implementing tasks has on lexical acquisition of learners.

Regarding the third null hypothesis, data analysis revealed that the experimental groups that received treatment in form of TWT improved considerably from pretest to posttest and delayed posttest than OWT group. Therefore, the third null hypothesis is rejected. Based on the present study, there is a significant difference between the effect of one-way and two-way tasks on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' (long-term) retention of lexis.

The present study is congruent with Pourramzan, Taghipour Bazargani, and Zohouri Vaghei (2016). Their study confirmed that two-way tasks are more beneficial in teaching and learning of collocations than one-way tasks.

The results of the present study are congruent with Long's (1983) Interaction Hypothesis which claims that learners acquire language through interaction with others; the more opportunities available for interaction, the more likely acquisition is to happen. Meanwhile, the findings of most of the above studies were in line with Ellis' (2003) notion that TBLT is a successful approach to second/foreign language teaching which emphasizes the implementation of various tasks to create effective results in L2 learning context.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The current study was conducted to assess the effect of one-way and two-way tasks on vocabulary learning of Iranian intermediate EFL learners. The obtained data was analyzed using SPSS22 software. The analyses showed that both one-way and two-way tasks had a significant effect on vocabulary learning. It was also concluded that two-way tasks were more effective in vocabulary learning than one-way tasks.

This study has several limitations. Among them are a small sample, conducting the study in the dual role of a researcher and a teacher, the participants' English level, sample size, and the limited time which was allotted to the researcher to conduct the study. The present study showed the effectiveness of OWT and TWT on the acquisition of vocabulary in certain circumstances under which the study was conducted. It should be noted that many questions concerning foreign/ second language vocabulary acquisition need to be answered, and the key to answering these questions is the findings of the future empirical research in these problematic areas.

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# On Chinglish in English Study of Vocational College Students in Leshan City, Sichuan, China

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**Abstract**—In this fast-changing and globalized world, English study is more and more important for Chinese college students. Nevertheless, the differences between English and Chinese and the influence of mother tongue have caused great trouble in English study of Chinese college students, especially vocational college students. Among the problems, Chinglish is the most serious one which hinders them in making progress in English study. The author has carried out a study in Leshan Vocational and Technical College about vocational college students' Chinglish problem. Hopefully, the paper is to help vocational college students to avoid Chinglish and further to provide some advice for English teaching and learning in colleges and universities, on the basis of the findings of the study like the types and causes of Chinglish.

**Index Terms**—Chinglish, English study, Vocational College students

## I. INTRODUCTION

With the development of the world, English is of vital importance to Chinese people's life and study. Chinese students spend more and more time studying English than ever. Due to the lingual and cultural differences between English and Chinese, Chinglish, as a characteristic of Chinese English study, has caused a lot of discussion and research. It is true that some Chinglish like "Long time no see" and "No Zuo, No Die" have been totally accepted by western world, but this does not mean Chinglish is not a barrier to affect communication between Chinese and foreigners. As a matter of fact, Chinglish is a big problem that hinders the cross-cultural communication and incorrect translation in signs causes inconvenience to foreigners who come to China. For example, "小心滑落" (Xiao Xin Hua Luo) with Chinglish translation "Slip Carefully" is a sign that foreigners might see in China and fail to understand. And the right English should be "Watch Your Step!" Thus, Chinglish should be avoided.

Then, what is Chinglish in the first place? Although there is no authorized definition, Chinglish refers to a combination of English and Chinese, and it is also called "Chinese English" that is produced by Chinese in their study of English due to the influence of Chinese. In the book *The Translator's Guide to Chinglish*, Pinkham (2007) defines Chinglish as "a kind of misshapen, hybrid language which is neither Chinese nor English but which could be regarded as English with Chinese characteristics". Besides, the Wikipedia defines Chinglish as the spoken or written English language which is influenced by Chinese.

For this problem, the author carried out a study in Leshan Vocational and Technical College about vocational college students' Chinglish problem, analyzing the various causes of Chinglish according to the results of the questionnaires and putting forward some advice for vocational college students to avoid Chinglish and for EFL teachers to improve their English teaching.

## II. PREVIOUS STUDIES OF CHINGLISH

Pinkham (2007) studied Chinglish from the perspective of translators in the book *The Translator's Guide to Chinglish*. And in her book, she presented the definition of Chinglish and further analyzed the causes of Chinglish such as unnecessary nouns, unnecessary verbs, unnecessary modifiers, as well as improper sentence structures, etc. A lot of examples were presented as proof. For example, "to accelerate the pace of economic reform" contains unnecessary nouns, which should be corrected to be "to accelerate economic reform". But the book failed to touch the reason why Chinglish happened and the methods to avoid Chinglish.

Then, many educators and scholars studied this topic of Chinglish and put forward different opinions from many perspectives. In the paper *Lost in Translation*, Huimei Liu, Frank Feather, and Wei Qian (2004) studies the main four causes of Chinglish as follows: wordiness, wrong word order, direct translation and cultural difference.

Many educators and scholars in China also analyzed Chinglish and put forward different views about the reasons for Chinglish from different perspectives. In the paper *On Intrinsic and Extrinsic Causes of Chinglish*, Niu Maoying (2008) probed into the external causes and internal causes by examples and analysis. The writer attributed the intrinsic reasons to learners' age and psychological structure, etc. and attributed the extrinsic reasons to mother tongue's effect on English study. Lin Qiong (2001) and Wu Hui (2010) shared the causes of Chinglish in common by analyzing the characteristics of it. Besides, they put forward some advice on how to avoid Chinglish for English learners.



### III. RESEARCH DESIGN

#### Research Subjects

Leshan Vocational and Technical College is near the writer's working unit, Leshan Normal University, so it is very convenient for the writer to do the research. The writer is acquainted with several EFL teachers in Leshan Vocational and Technical College, so the writer can invite them to hand out the questionnaires to the students they teach. Specifically, the writer chose 100 students of non-English majors in Leshan Vocational and Technical College as the study objects, who have studied English from middle school to college thus to have a certain foundation of English and are likely to use spoken and written Chinglish due to the English level. In addition, the 100 subjects consist of 50 male students and 50 female students, their age ranging from 18 to 20, their English level being diverse, and their majors including Medicine, Computer, Accounting, Hotel Management and Finance.

#### Research Questions

The following are the research questions about Chinglish used by students in Leshan Vocational and Technical College:

1. What do you know about Chinglish?
2. What are the most difficult problems in your English study?
3. What are the common mistakes you make in your English study?
4. Does Chinese often affect your English study?
5. Do you know the cultural difference between English-speaking countries and China?
6. What are the causes of Chinglish?

#### Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire on Chinglish research consists of the following five parts. Part 1 is about the research subjects' background information such as name, gender, age, major, the time of Studying English, etc. Part 2 is about the research subjects' major problems and common mistakes in English study. Part 3 is about the research subjects' views and advice about their English class. Part 4 is about the causes of Chinglish in the eyes of the research subjects. And part 5 is some Chinese sentences for the students to translate, like “我们不应该食言。” “人生的沉浮。” “在你方便的时候，” “我的地址是四川省乐山市海棠路 1210 号。” etc.

#### Procedures

First of all, the author invited 20 students to finish the questionnaires as a pretest in order to find the possible questions and problems that might occur in the study. Then, the author carried out the main research by cooperating with the English teachers of the subjects, distributing the questionnaires to all 100 students. And all students are asked to finish the questionnaires honestly within 15 minutes without writing down their names.

#### Data Collection and Data Analysis

After all the students finished the questionnaires, the author recollected them. Among the 100 questionnaires, 96 were valid, and the other 4 were invalid in that 2 of the subjects failed to complete all the questions while the other 2 did more choices than is required. Finally, the author put the data of the 96 questionnaires into the computer for statistical analysis by SPSS16.0.

### IV. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS

After the data collection and data analysis, the writer will touch the common mistakes of Chinglish and go further to analyze the causes of those mistakes, hoping to find clues and present advice for both EFL teachers and vocational college students.

#### Common Mistakes of Chinglish

After the further analysis of the data, the author concluded the following common mistakes in terms of Chinglish.

1. Misuse of words: For example, “我们不应该食言。” Chinglish translation is “We should not eat our words.” This is a wrong use of words. The students translate the sentence word for word. And the correct translation should be “We should not break our words.”
2. Improper word order: For example, “人生的沉浮。” Chinglish translation is “the downs and ups of life.” This is a wrong word order. The students translate the sentence in a Chinese order, failing to realize the different expression in English. And the correct translation should be “the ups and downs of life.”
3. Improper Collocation: For example, “爸爸总爱发脾气。” Chinglish translation is “Dad always like losing his temper.” This is a wrong collocation. The students have a wrong understanding of the verb “like” and use it by an improper collocation. And the correct translation should be “Dad is apt to lose his temper.”
4. Improper Subject: For example, “在你方便的时候，” Chinglish translation is “when you are convenient，” This is a wrong subject. The students fail to master the right subject of the word “convenient”. And the correct translation should be “when it is convenient for you”.
5. Improper Voice: For example, “这本书是他姐姐送他的。” Chinglish translation is “The book is his sister gave him.” This is a wrong voice. The students are affected by their mother tongue in a negative way, forgetting the active voice and passive voice in English. And the correct translation should be “The book was given by his sister.”

6. Improper Sentence Order: For example, “我的地址是四川省乐山市海棠路 1210 号。” Chinglish translation is “My address is Sichuan Province, Leshan City, Haitang Road No. 1210.” This is a wrong order. The students follow their Chinese thinking pattern to translate the location and place word for word. And the correct translation should be “My address is No. 1210 Haitang Road, Leshan City, Sichuan Province.”

7. Improper Dangling Modifier: For example, “天气很好, 同学们决定出去春游。” Chinglish translation is “Being a fine day, the students decided to have a spring outing.” This is a wrong dangling modifier. The students fail to master the different subjects of the main clause and subordinate participle structure. And the correct translation should be “It being a fine day, the students decided to have a spring outing.”

8. Redundancy: For example, “我的妹妹业余时间喜欢唱歌。” Chinglish translation is “My sister likes singing songs in her spare time.” This is redundancy. The students fail to master the meaning and usage of the word “sing”. And the correct translation should be “My sister likes singing in her spare time.”

9. Comma Splice: For example, “已经五点半了, 我们天黑前到不了城镇。” Chinglish translation is “It is nearly half past five, we cannot reach town before dark.” This is a comma splice. This is a common mistake for students who are affected by their Chinese. They tend to use comma splice or run-on sentences. And the correct translation should be “It is nearly half past five. We cannot reach town before dark.” or “It is nearly half past five, and we cannot reach town before dark.”

10. Cultural Difference: For example, “送别外国朋友时‘慢走, 走好。’” Chinglish translation is “Walk slowly, walk well.” This is a wrong translation due to cultural difference. The students translate in this way because of the long-established way of parting to show politeness, failing to realize that this way of parting will cause uncomfortable feeling to foreigners. And the correct translation should be “Take care.” or “Goodbye.”

### Causes of Chinglish

1. Chinese Thinking Pattern: The deep-rooted thinking pattern shaped from the very beginning of one's life decides the way how people deal with language. Though vocational college students make great efforts to learn the western thinking pattern, they achieve little and they are consciously or subconsciously affected by their Chinese thinking pattern. In the process of translation, the Chinese thinking pattern has a great impact on the students in a negative way, which inevitably causes Chinglish among vocational college students.

2. Negative Transfer by Mother Tongue: Language learners' mother tongue is a decisive factor in second language acquisition. Adults' mother tongue system has developed to a certain degree that it resists a new language. The older the language learners are, the more difficult for them to learn a second language. When vocational college students learn English, they tend to be affected by their mother tongue in a negative way. Thus, this negative transfer by mother tongue is an obvious cause for Chinglish.

3. Improper Translation Method: The data of questionnaires show clearly that most of the vocational college students may use improper translation method when they deal with English. Actually, they use the same translation method from the beginning to the end in all conditions, failing to adjust the methods flexibly. In the process of English to Chinese translation, vocational college students tend to use a word-for-word translation method which is obviously improper and will consequently cause Chinglish.

4. Cultural Difference: The data of questionnaires show clearly that most of the vocational college students know little about the culture of English-speaking countries. And what makes things worse is that they lack the interest in the culture and never take initiatives to study it. Due to the cultural difference between China and English-speaking countries, the translation made by them is apt to be Chinglish.

## V. IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The above-mentioned findings trigger the following implications not only for vocational college students to avoid Chinglish but also for EFL teachers to improve their English teaching.

### 1. Fostering a Good Habit of Thinking in English

When we learn a second language, we should not always translate it into our mother tongue. Only when we totally forget our mother tongue in the process of using the second language can we truly master the second language. In English teaching and learning, both the teachers and students should recognize the significance of thinking in English. Only in this way can students avoid Chinglish and improve their English level. Besides, in their daily life, the students should foster the good habit of using English-English dictionaries and reading original English novels without Chinese translation. They should think of English whatever they see and whatever they hear. Finding every chance to practice English is a must for English learners. The more input, the more output.

### 2. Taking Advantage of Positive Transfer of Mother Tongue and Avoiding Negative Transfer of Mother Tongue

The EFL teachers should help the students to realize in a right way the positive transfer and negative transfer of mother tongue. Then, on one hand, the students can take good advantage of positive transfer of mother tongue like the similar pronunciation, the common parts of speech and sentence constituents, the common sentence types and patterns as well as the similar cultural knowledge between English and Chinese; but on the other hand, the students should try to avoid negative transfer of mother tongue, clarifying the differences between English and Chinese like the singular and plural forms as well as the tense of English verbs. Only when the students master the difference between English and

Chinese can they avoid being affected by Chinese in a negative way.

### 3. Improving Translation Methods

The EFL teachers should help students to master different kinds of translation methods like literal translation and free translation as well as grammar-translation method, etc. The students should learn to adjust the translation methods flexibly according to different context. The students need to realize the improper translation method they often use, avoiding Chinglish in the first place. Besides, the EFL teachers should improve their teaching by promoting their teaching methods, so as to arouse the students' interest in English study. Only when the students master diverse translation methods can they avoid Chinglish.

### 4. Improving Cultural Awareness

When it comes to English study, it is widely acknowledged that both language points and cultural knowledge play equal and vital importance in communication. Therefore, in English teaching, the EFL teachers should not only teach English vocabulary and grammatical points to the students, but also impart social customs and historical background of English-speaking countries to the students. Only in this way can the students improve their English level and avoid pragmatic mistakes especially Chinglish. For example, animals like dogs have different meanings and connotations in different cultures, being treated as inferior ones in most Chinese idioms like “偷鸡摸狗”, “狗急跳墙” and “狐朋狗友” while being treated as loyal companions and positive ones in most English idioms like “He is a luck dog” and “Love me, love my dog.”

## VI. CONCLUSION

It is true that Chinglish is a specific problem that occurs in the process of Chinese students' learning English, which obviously affect the English level of the students and impair the communication between the foreigners and the students. According to the above-mentioned study, Chinglish are primarily caused because of Chinese thinking pattern, negative transfer by mother tongue, improper translation method and lack of cultural knowledge of English-speaking countries. In order to improve the English level of vocational college students and to improve the EFL teaching, the writer puts forward some advice to Chinglish avoidance. The EFL teachers and the vocational college students should make joint efforts to tackle the problem. On one hand, the EFL teachers should improve their teaching methods, focusing not only on the basic skills of English, but also different translation methods. And on the other hand, the vocational college students should form a good habit of thinking in English and take initiative to learn the culture of English-speaking countries. Although there are limitations in the study due to subjective and objective factors, hopefully the paper is helpful for vocational college students to avoid Chinglish and for EFL teachers to improve their English teaching.

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# Grieving over the Degradation of Nature in Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*

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**Abstract**—Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* focuses on the loss of species as a result of toxic contamination and pesticides. The loss of nature and environment affected people and led them to grieve. The term environmental melancholia which is used by Renee Lertzman deals with the grief and mourning over the loss of nature. Therefore, the current paper intends to shed light on *Silent Spring* by applying Lertzman's environmental melancholia. As people face the degradation of the nature and they are unable to take any action, they will lead to melancholia. Therefore, this paper will indicate the ways people contribute in nature saving or its improvement based on *Silent Spring*. Besides the article will explain how to take care of the environment and nature.

**Index Terms**—environmental melancholia, *Silent Spring*, degradation, loss, pesticide, nature

## I. INTRODUCTION

Melancholia is the loss that subject experiences in his life. Sedehi et al., notes that various philosophers and critics discussed melancholia in different disciplines; therefore, the object of loss should have a huge effect on people's lives that leads them to mourning and grieving (2015). One of these critics is Julia Kristeva who considered loss of mother as the cause of melancholia. As the melancholic subject cannot communicate this loss with others; he isolates himself (Rosli and Sedehi 2014). However the main critic who connects nature and melancholia is Renee Lertzman. As the natural environment is the subject of exploitation, chemical products and degradation, people have the sense of loss within themselves. They cannot have the experience of outdoors as they had before. These concerned people are worried about natural environment and at the same time, they cannot do anything as fear and anxiety of future made them paralyzed. This inaction is response to environmental degradation which leads people to melancholia. As Lertzman noted "the issue of loss and mourning (in the face of ecological degradation) and what it means, quite simply, to live in a world presented as continually under threat" should be studied by scientists (2015). On the other hand, there are some other people who do not care about the ecological degradation. Therefore, the question is how we can motivate people care more about nature and save it.

As the use of chemicals is increased these days, water, soil, fauna and flora are in danger. When people have less contact with nature, they will be led to melancholia and they will experience depression. This paper intends to indicate how environmental melancholia happens and provide the solutions for ecological degradation. In addition to intoxication of the nature and deforestation, "ozone depletion and a warming atmosphere" are considered as part of environmental destruction (Lertzman 2015).

## II. ANALYSIS

As the *Silent Spring* opens, farmers use the pesticides and they destroyed the nature by them. Moreover, the pesticides affected the people.

Then a strange blight crept over the area and everything began to change. Some evil spell had settled on the community: mysterious maladies swept the flocks of chicken; the cattle and sheep sickened and died. Everywhere was a shadow of death. The farmers spoke of much illness among their families. In the town the doctors had become more and more puzzled by new kinds of sickness appearing among their patients. There had been several sudden and unexplained deaths, not only among adults but even among children, who would be stricken suddenly while at play and die within a few hours. (Carson 2000)

It somehow shows that the end of nature will be the end of humans. As "the history of life on earth has been a history of interaction between living things and their surroundings. To a large extent, the physical form and the habits of the earth's vegetation and its animal life have been molded by the environment" (Carson 2000). Humans and environment lived peacefully together in the past. However, after a passage of time humans destroyed the nature by their activities. "The most alarming of all man's assaults upon the environment is the contamination of air, earth, rivers, and sea with dangerous and even lethal materials" (Carson 2000). They not only killed the pests but the natural environment as the exposure of chemical products to sun light can change the formula of the product; therefore, not only the pest, but also the plants are killed. If nature is destroyed, it will take so much time to recover as "it took hundreds of millions of years

to produce the life that now inhabits the earth" (Carson 2000). In fact, contamination of the natural world is a wrong that must be righted; however, humans are ignorant and they do not have any intention to preserve the environment.

The farmers use pesticides; however, they should be called "biocides" as they kill other organism, flora and fauna (Carson 2000). However, "all this is not to say there is no insect problem and no need of control. I am saying, rather, that control must be geared to realities, not to mythical situations, and that methods employed must be such that they do not destroy us along with the insects" (Carson 2000). The method of killing pests and insects should be changed and the process should be rationalized.

In order to save the nature, humans' contribution is to gain knowledge of "the basic of animal populations and their relations to their surroundings" (Carson 2000). People do not use the knowledge as they do not care about the nature. "We allow the chemical death rain to fall as though there were no alternative, whereas in fact there are many and our ingenuity could soon discover many more if given opportunity" (Carson 2000). People just take everything easy as it is easier not to be bothered than taking actions.

No one pays attention to environment health as "arsenic- contaminated environments have also caused sickness and death among horses, cows, goats, pigs, deer, fishes and bees; despite this record arsenal sprays and dusts are widely used" (Carson 2000). But people do not take any action. It is not animals' life in danger but also humans are not safe either. "Farmers using arsenic dusts over long periods have been afflicted with chronic arsenic poisoning" (Carson 2000). Alderin which is a type of insecticides, "projects a menacing shadow into the future, the shadow of sterility" (14). There will be no animal as the animals will be barren. Because of pesticides, humans' and animals' life will be in danger. First they will show some symptoms of the illnesses and gradually they will die. "The movements of the whole body become uncoordinated: tremors, muscular spasms, convulsions, and death quickly result" (Carson 2000). The pesticides have very dangerous effects on whole environment. The pesticides are not only dangerous for those who are exposed to it but even for the doctors who treat the poisoned patients "unless they wear rubber gloves in handling the victims of poisoning" (Carson 2000).

Besides killing the flora and fauna indirectly by using pesticides, human pollute the water as well. Though "water must also be thought of in terms of the chains of life it supports" (Carson 2000) still people pollute it by throwing rubbish in it. The pesticides can also pollute the soil. Therefore, the crop will be polluted as well, and "a menace that remains as long as the insecticide contamination is in the soil" (Carson 2000). Therefore, there will be a vicious circle of contaminated soil and later crop and human's illness. By using pesticides, humans sacrifice nature, humans and generally the whole environment. "Now millions of acres of sagebrush lands are sprayed each year" (Carson 2000)... "What are the results?"... "The antelope and the grouse will disappear along with the sage. The deer will suffer, too, and the land will be poorer for the destruction of the wild things that belong to it. Even the livestock which are the intended beneficiaries will suffer; no amount of lush green grass in summer can help the sheep starving in the winter storms for lack of the sage and bitterbrush and other wild vegetation of the plains" (Carson 2000). The whole environment will suffer from loss of sage and humans are ignorant as they only think of getting rid of the pests without paying attention to the side effects of those pesticides. Later on, people will mourn as they lose the familiar ecosystem and its inhabitants (Erney 2006).

Some people are even worst. They are so irresponsible toward their work and environment and they are really careless. "In a southern New England town one contactor finished his work with some chemical remaining in his tank. He discharged this along woodland roadsides where no spraying had been authorized. As a result, the community lost the blue and golden beauty of its autumn roads" (Carson 2000). Because of the irresponsibility of one person, the people should feel the loss of autumn and mourn for the loss of its beauty. "And where are the men who supposedly understand the value of proper habitat for the preservation of wildlife? Too many of them are to be found defending herbicides as 'harmless' to wildlife because they are thought to be less toxic than insecticides" (Carson 2000). No one stands for the right of the environment as they never consider insecticides as a threat to humans or environment. The humans do not want to hear about the negative effects of pesticides as these chemicals are the only ways to get rid of those pests and insects.

However, there are some devoted researchers who spend their life contributing to save nature. They did some research and found out that "once properly treated, an area becomes stabilized, requiring no respraying for at least 20 years" (Carson 2000), furthermore, "here and there the method of vegetation management by selective spraying has been adopted" (Carson 2000). Therefore, there are some new options to preserve the nature. Many researches have been done and indicated that "people spraying their lawns with 2, 4-D and becoming wet with spray have occasionally developed severe neuritis and even paralysis" (Carson 2000)... "Some very recent work indicates that reproduction of birds may be adversely affected by these and certain other herbicides at levels far below those that cause death" (Carson 2000). The researchers have conducted these researches to inform people about the harmful effects of pesticides on nature and humans as well. The results will be fatal so these people will risk their own life.

As we have seen, soil and the living things in and upon it exist in relation of interdependence and mutual benefit. Presumably the weed is taking something from the soil; perhaps it is also contributing something to it. A practical example was provided recently by the parks in a city in Holland. The roses were doing badly. Soil samples showed heavy infestations by tiny nematode worms. Scientists of the Dutch Plant Protection Service did not recommend chemical sprays or soil treatments; instead, they suggested that marigolds be planted among the roses. This plant, which

the purist would doubtless consider a weed in any rosebed, releases an excretion from its roots that kills the soil nematodes. The advice was taken; some beds were planted with marigolds, some left without as controls. The results were striking. With the aid of the marigolds the roses flourished; in the control beds they were sickly and dropping. Marigolds are now used in many places for combating nematodes. (Carson 2000)

Therefore, sometimes people should leave the nature to handle things itself. As people intend to control the weeds, they change the whole cycle of nature of by meddling in it. They are damaging the nature unconsciously. For example, "in the same way, and perhaps quite unknown to us, other plants, that we ruthlessly eradicate may be performing a function that is necessary to the health of the soil" (Carson 2000). People are just eradicating the plants without noticing its consequences. "The history of the recent century has its black passages- the slaughter of buffalo on the western plains, the massacre of the shorebirds by the market gunners, the near- extermination of the egrets for their plumage. Now, to these and others like them, we are adding a new chapter and a new kind of havoc- the direct killing of birds, mammals, fishes and indeed practically every form of wildlife by chemical insecticides indiscriminately sprayed on the land" (Carson 2000). Men killed animals for the sake of financial benefits; however, in this case, they kill animals and destroy environment only because they want to get rid of insects. "Under the philosophy that now seems to guide our destinies, nothing must get in the way of the man with the spray gun. The incidental victims of his crusade against insects count as nothing; if robins, pheasants, raccoons, cats, or even livestock happen to inhabit the same bit of earth as the target insects and to be hit by the rain of insect-killing poisons no one must protest" (Carson 2000). They do not care about the environment or the ecosystem, they only care about their project which is spraying the insects. "On the one hand conservationists and many wildlife biologists assert that the losses have been severe and in some cases even catastrophic. On the other hand the control agencies tend to deny flatly and categorically that such losses have occurred, or that they are of any importance if they have. Which view are we to accept?" (Carson 2000). People want to emphasize the losses but the agencies deny that as their profit is in insecticides and pesticides. They do not care about the nature, its degradation and different losses. As the men in power do not bother themselves to conserve the nature,

The concept of public apathy is often invoked in response to a perceived absence of care towards environmental quality of protection demonstrated by either the absence of certain practice, or an apparent disregard for conservation. (Lertzman 2015)

Unlike some careless people, there are some people who really care about whatever happens in the ecosystem. "Within a few days after the dusting operation, the Detroit Audubon Society began receiving calls about the birds. According to the Society's secretary, Mrs. Ann Boyes, 'The first indication that the people were concerned about the spray as a call I received on Sunday morning from a woman who reported that coming home from church she saw an alarming number of dead and dying birds. The spraying there had been done on Thursday'" (Carson 2000)... "Birds picked up in a dying condition showed the typical symptoms of insecticide poisoning- trembling, loss of ability to fly, paralysis, convulsions" (Carson 2000). These people cannot do anything to stop the local industry or use of pesticide as they are not in power. As a result of feeling incapable to do anything, they are led to melancholia and mourn the loss of beautiful ecology. The reports show the fatal effect of insecticides not only on birds, but all the species of animals, even humans are affected by insecticides and they showed some symptoms of "nausea, vomiting, chills, fever, extreme fatigue, and coughing" (Carson 2000). People can never accept that they lost nature because of their stupidity, lack of knowledge and attention. "Heavy losses were occurring among wildlife and domestic animals" (Carson 2000), but no one is concerned about that. These caring people contacted the nature saving companies to do something about the degradation of nature as the loss of nature concern them a lot.

Humans intend to kill the insects but these poisonous chemicals kill all kinds of species. Humans will mourn for the loss of these creatures as they are "innocent of any harm to man. Indeed, by their very existence, they and their fellows make his life more pleasant. Yet he rewards them with a death that is not only sudden but horrible" (Carson 2000). The animals are pleasant to look at or to listen to, but humans kill them by using these insecticides. As a result of those poisonous chemicals, many birds did not return back to United States. "This sudden silencing of the song of the birds, this obliteration of the color and beauty and interest they lend to our world have come about swiftly insidiously, and unnoticed by those whose communities are as yet unaffected" (Carson 2000). People mourn the loss of some birds and their beauty. Some of the people really care about the nature and its changes as "from the town of Hinsdale, Illinois, a housewife wrote in despair to one of the world's leading ornithologists, Robert Cushman Murphy, Curator Emeritus of Birds at the American Museum of Natural History" (Carson 2000). She grieved the loss of beautiful nature and birds and asks for help. For her, the nature is "a form of sanctuary that has been lost" (Lertzman 2015). She accuses all the insecticides that made lively nature into a depressing environment. Based on her opinion, "it is hard to explain to the children that the birds have been killed off, when they have learned in school that a Federal law protects the birds from killing or capture, 'will they ever come back?'" (Carson 2000). The animals' life was threatened so how these birds can return again to the same environment. The nature is devoid of those species because of inconsiderate people. "There was not a sound of the song of a bird. It was eerie, terrifying" (Carson 2000). The people are used to these birds and now they mourn the loss. "One story might serve as the tragic symbol of the fate of the birds- a fate that has already overtaken some species, and that threatens all" (Carson 2000). These people should recognize the reasons behind the ruin of "the inherent beauty of a bucolic and autumnous nonhuman world" (Bukeavich 2003). The life of all the species is at risk as humans use all those of pesticides without thinking. "These treetop feeders are affected either directly by

easting poisoned insects or indirectly by a shortage of food” (Carson 2000). When people meddle in natural phenomenon, they destroy the whole cycle of life.

Other people also reported the case of animal loss within certain areas. “I am dreading the days to come soon now when many beautiful birds will be dying in our back yard” (Carson 2000). She grieves the loss of birds as she is concerned about her local ecology. Not only the plants and animals but also sea creatures are in danger. She is acknowledging the loss of nature as she has “sense of powerlessness, and efficiency” (Lertzman 2015). She asked the responsible people to help the nature, but no one care about the ecology. “Soon after the spraying had ended there was unmistakable signs that all was not well. Within two days dead and dying fish, including many young salmon, were found along the banks of the stream” (Carson 2000). DDT is harmful to fishes and all the sea creatures. As the sea creatures are in danger by DDT, “the future of salmon fisheries in New Brunswick may well depend on finding a substitute for drenching forests in DDT” (Carson 2000). But the question is whether they really care about the loss of sea creatures or not. The living organisms of the ocean face exponential danger and most of the humans are not bothered. The poisoned water becomes the tomb for water species. The paradoxical part is that humans are not even concerned about their lives.

Like the constant dripping of water that in turn wears away the hardest stone, this birth-to-death contact with dangerous chemicals may in the end prove disastrous. Each of these recurrent exposures, no matter how slight, contributes to the progressive buildup of chemicals in our bodies and so to cumulative poisoning. (Carson 2000)

The insecticides and pesticides remain in human bodies and create cancerous cells; however, the people whose benefit is in the industry of chemical poisons intend to deny it as their profit is in those products. Whatever the humans did in nature destroyed the balance and cycle of nature. “The balance of nature is not the same today as in Pleistocene times, but it is still there: a complex, precise, and highly integrated system of relationships between living things which cannot safely be ignored any more than the law of gravity can be defined with impunity by a man perched on the edge of a cliff” (Carson 2000). Instead of improving the situation, the meddling in nature destroyed lives of the species and in turn led the concerned people to melancholia as they mourn these losses. To save the nature, Patrick mentioned that there were two different methods of writing about the nature and informing people about its degradation and second one providing scientific proof for people about the negative effects of industry and pesticides (2007). However, based on Tesh, some of these environmental movements and nature preserving are failed as the goals which may lead to public health are not well researched therefore there will be no change in the status quo (1994).

### III. CONCLUSION

From the first day of creation man and nature have been connected. As humans progressed and used technology, they exploited the nature and ruined it. The degradation of nature led to their melancholia and they mourn in their lives. However, not all the people are concerned about the degradation of the nature. As a result, it is the scientists’ duties to inform people about the negative effects of technology, specifically use of biocides in nature. The writers and journalist can write more about the connection of man and nature to bring awareness to man. This way, people might reconsider the use of chemicals in daily basis.

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# An Analysis of Factors Influencing Transmission of Internet Memes of English-speaking Origin in Chinese Online Communities

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**Abstract**—Meme, as defined in Dawkins' 1976 book 'The Selfish Gene', is "an idea, behaviour or style that spreads from person to person within a culture". Internet meme is an extension of meme, with the defining characteristic being its spread via Internet. While online communities of all cultures generate their own memes, owing to the colossal amount of content in English and the long & widespread adoption of Internet across all strata of society in English-speaking countries, the vast majority of high-impact and well-documented memes have their origin in English-speaking communities. In addition to their spread in the original culture sphere, some of these prominent memes have also crossed the cultural boundaries and entered the parlance of Chinese Internet communities. This paper seeks to give a brief introduction to Internet memes in general, and explore the factors that control and/or facilitate a meme's ability to enter Chinese communities.

**Index Terms**—Internet meme, cross-cultural communication, Chinese Internet

## I. INTRODUCTION

Internet meme, an extension of the term "meme" first coined by Richard Dawkins (1976) in his work *The Selfish Gene* (p. 192), refers to the unique form of meme that spreads through the Internet. Internet memes in their various forms currently enjoy substantial popularity among Internet users all around the globe, and are flourishing and becoming increasingly entrenched in the mainstream culture of all the disparate societies in this connected world. Scraps of information online are gaining and losing their meme status by every passing day, through large-scale replication and selection by the legions of interested Internet users.

An example of Internet meme that is fairly close to the daily life of almost all of Chinese Internet users would be the various images used by users of instant messaging services such as Tencent QQ as canned expressions, commonly referred to as "emotes" or "stickers". While normally not thought as such, the stickers do indeed express all the properties as units of cultural transmission, and undergo processes of replication, transmission, mutation and selection when used by the users of instant messaging services. Replication and transmission occur when the images are sent to other users and appropriated by others for their own use, the modification of the images and creation of derivatives corresponds to mutation, and selection is the basis of the rise and fall of the frequency of appearance of different images in chats.



Fig. 1 - Instances of the "emotes"

While every community online generates its own memes, owing to the colossal size and maturity of English-speaking Internet, the vast majority of Internet memes that achieved worldwide success have their origins in English-speaking communities, and among these memes are some outliers which have also managed to penetrate the Chinese Internet. What are these memes? How did they enter Chinese online communities, despite the great differences in culture and language? This paper seeks to answer these questions.

## II. MEME AND INTERNET MEME

An explanation of the concept of meme and Internet meme is necessary before we are to move on and discuss the memes themselves. As is mentioned in the introduction, the concept of meme comes from Dawkins' 1976 work,

invented to describe the humanity's cultural evolution, as the basic unit of information existing in brain and the mental space, and as an analogue to the gene – the vital part of biological evolution, sharing various characteristics with it, especially its nature as replicator. Some of the examples of common memes are tunes, ideas, catchphrases, and so on. (p. 192)

Internet meme, obviously, refers to a meme that is propagated over the globally-connected network, the Internet. Yet the simplistic explanation proved to be insufficient, as it is found that the concept of Internet meme carries certain characteristics that differentiate itself from the traditional concept of meme – the memetics researcher, Susan Blackmore even went so far as defining Internet meme as belonging to a new subset to the concept of meme called *temes* – a wholly new category of replicators, memes which live in technological artifacts instead of human minds (Zetter, 2008). It is observed that the typical contemporary Internet meme propagates among people by means of email, instant messaging, forums, blogs or social networking sites, and commonly consists of offbeat news, websites, images or video clips (Bauckhage, 2011). Also of note is that unlike traditional memes that reside in traditional media, which render tracing and analysis of the propagation of a particular meme difficult, the utilization of Internet as the medium by Internet memes lends to comparatively easier retrieval and analysis of the track of transmission: digital tracks are left behind whenever an email is sent, a message is posted on a bulletin board, or a chat is initiated over an instant messaging platform, and the longevity and fidelity of data on digital storage devices (Blackmore 2000, p. 216) plus the existence of powerful search engines both greatly facilitates the study of Internet memes – which this study took particular advantage of.

### III. RELATED AND PRIOR WORK

The study of memetics has a relatively late start in Chinese academia, with initial attention only brought to the field as late as 2002 with a mention of the concept of meme and a suggestion for further research in a preface for the book *Language and the Culture* (Gu, 2002). Following Gu, one of the more prominent early researchers in the field of memetics would be He Ziran, whose works (He, 2003; 2005) served to introduce the theory to a broader audience, and to pioneer in employing the theories of memetics in the study of language. Pertaining to the current study, it is unfortunate that despite the popularity of the research on the Internet memes in the Western academia (see below), studies at home that deal directly with the phenomenon of Internet memes by itself, unbound to subjects such as online language or computer-mediated language use, remained scarce. Nevertheless, this paper draws inspiration from early studies on the use of online language/"netspeak" by Li (2006), Cao (2008), and Tan (2011). Of particular note is the work by Li, which proposed a set of factors affecting the success of online language and incorporated the same framework in justifying the research as in this paper, and served as an important reference for this paper.

For western studies, aside from the works by Dawkins (1976) and Blackmore (2000) which were introduced in the section prior to this one and which serve as the cornerstones of the study of the memetics, this study specifically owes its theoretical framework upon which the entire analysis relies on to Heylighen's influential works (1996; 1999) on the replication of Internet memes on the Internet, and the selection criteria of meme replication. One interesting line of development in study of memes in the western academia is the empirical studies that go beyond the theoretical, qualitative inquiries into memes, and which sought to establish and test predictive models of meme propagation: such as Bauckhage (2011); Adar and Adamic (2005); Lin et al. (2010). While not overly relevant to the current study, these studies have provided certain valuable insights into the spread of Internet memes, and the use of research tools such as online meme databases and search engine statistics were incorporated into this study.

### IV. THE PRESENT STUDY

This study seeks to understand what are potential factors affecting the success of a particular meme in transgressing the cultural boundaries; specifically, what factors made certain memes which have their origin in the English-speaking Internet, a completely different cultural context, succeed in entering the Chinese online communities and gaining popularity among Chinese Internet users; and how these factors fit within the meme replication & selection framework postulated by Heylighen (1999). Therefore, the research questions are as follows:

1. What are the factors leading to the success of certain Internet memes of English origin in achieving cross-cultural transmission and entering Chinese online communities?
2. How do these factors relate to the meme replication selection criteria model?

These questions will be answered through comparative analysis of several examples of extant memes originating in the English-speaking Internet, of which some achieved mainstream popularity among Chinese Internet users in relatively intact form, and the rest failed in managing to achieve cross-cultural transmission despite having relatively similar forms and a comparable level of popularity in the original cultural context. The following section details the memes used in this study.

### V. MEMES IN THIS STUDY

#### A. *Examples of Successful (Achieved Prominence in Chinese-speaking Online Communities) Memes*

## 1. Downfall / Hitler Reacts



Fig. 2 - One of the iconic scenes in *Downfall*, which is essentially always present in parodies.

The "Downfall" is a series of parody-subtitled videos of a scene from the 2004 German film *Der Untergang*, a World War 2 epic drama. The scene depicts Hitler, upon learning from the top military commanders that the defeat of Germany is inevitable, orders everyone to leave except the four highest ranking officials, succumbs to a breakdown, and starts a rant full of scathing attacks on the upper echelon of Nazi military before calming down and resigning to fate.

Content creators quickly made use of the language barrier and started to create parody videos from various segments from the film. Taking advantage of the particular scene's original acting and audibly raging voice of Hitler, videos with parody, anachronistic subtitles in English that were angry rants generally expressing disbelief and anger at what the authors were against, or had strong opinion on quickly popped up ("Downfall / Hitler Reacts", n.d.). Many similar videos followed, typically discussing current events and trivial news. The phenomenon was quickly covered by *Wired* (Wortham, 2008) and *Laughing Squid* (Beale, 2008), and later by *New York Times Magazine* (Heffernan, 2008).

While it cannot be reliably determined which video is the earliest instance of Downfall parodies subtitled in Chinese, searching suggests that the earliest one is dated November 12, 2008, and is a direct translation of a parody originally in English. This video is relatively unremarkable – Hitler, upon learning that his gaming console was banned from the multiplayer platform, goes on a rant against Microsoft. Needless to say, the appeal of the video was rather limited and the content prevented the parody from gaining influence outside of gaming circles.

The Chinese derivations of the Downfall meme saw a significant surge in mainstream popularity in 2010, during the height of the 360 v. Tencent disputes over competitive practices. A parody, titled "Exposed: Tencent's Confidential Anti-360 Meeting" (2011) was uploaded to Youku, the leading Chinese video website, and received considerable attention from Chinese Internet users, totaling upwards of 2 million playbacks (as recorded by Youku). The meme was then commonly referred to as "Fury of the Führer" on Chinese Internet.

## 2. Doge

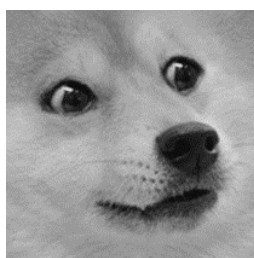


Fig. 3 - One of the more iconic pictures of the "doge"

"Doge", an intentional misspelling of "dog", is a meme (in its initial form) associated with a picture of a specific Shiba Inu (or in its earlier form and some of the current instances, any Shiba Inu) accompanied by multicolored text in Comic Sans in the foreground. The text represents a form of internal monologue, and is almost always written in deliberately broken English with an overabundance of the five modifiers "so", "such", "much", "very" and "many", usually appearing at the beginning of every line. The modifiers are applied in such a way that the noun phrase is always ungrammatical.

The particular picture associated with the Doge meme is a Shiba Inu named Kabosu, rescue-adopted by a Japanese kindergarten teacher Atsuko Sato. This peculiar picture of Kabosu, sitting on a couch and glancing sideways at the camera with raised eyebrows, was uploaded along with other photos by Ms. Sato to her personal blog. Later in the year, a photo of Kabosu was submitted to the /r/Ads section on the popular news aggregation site reddit, and received some attention from its users. This marked the first known and well-documented posting of the picture on English-speaking Internet ("Doge", n.d.). It took some time for the meme to evolve to its current form – initially merely included as one photo in a variety of other pictures of dogs used as backgrounds of internal monologues, and in a set of photos of Shiba Inus used as backgrounds for a single-topic tumblr blog "Shiba Confessions", the Doge later garnered enough popularity – probably thanks to the peculiar pose of the picture and its general cuteness - to become one single Internet meme by itself, and the styling of the internal monologue put on Doge pictures is actually derived from the style used

on the “Shiba Confessions” blog. Besides than the internal monologue form, another form of the Doge meme consists of digitally altered images of a Shiba Inu – often Kabosu, or the face of Kabosu placed in other pictures.

The spread of Doge meme on Chinese Internet saw relatively little use of the Internet meme in its original form – the internal monologue, conveying a humorous overtone through intentional misspelling and ungrammatical wording, did not resonate well with a Chinese audience due to the presence of the language barrier. Instead, many Chinese netizens became “enchanted” by the peculiar picture of Kabosu and the meme proliferated on Chinese Internet in its other form, in the digitally altered photos and derivational artworks of the Shiba Inu.

Casual observation alone is enough to reveal Doge’s widespread use on Chinese Internet. While the popularity might have waned these days, it was almost impossible to avoid seeing a Doge image or two in discussion groups with a reasonable number of young members, of whatever instant messaging tool one uses. Searching the keyword “doge” with the Baidu search engine now (as of May, 2017) yields tens of millions of results, ranging from the original image, simple altered images to original derivational artworks and even more amusing, picture of a certain actress that some pointed out looked like the Doge. Another powerful evidence of Doge’s influence would be Sina Weibo’s tweet emoticon list, which at the moment prominently features a simplistic emoticon derived from Doge in the first row of the first page, aptly named [doge].

### 3. Rage Comics



Fig. 4 - Example of a “rage comic”

“Rage Comics” refers to series of webcomics featuring characters sometimes called “rage faces” that are simplistic line drawings made in entry level drawing software such as Microsoft Paint. The theme of the comics is not strictly limited to any particular genre, but normally the stories reflect real-life experiences of the authors. As implied by the name of the Internet meme, Rage Comics often tell stories of authors’ grievances and other negative experiences in life and express anger and/or frustration on certain subjects.

The pool of characters available in Rage Comics, the “rage faces”, started relatively small but is steadily growing, with newer additions enjoying varying levels of popularity. Some of the common early characters include the following: Rageguy, Trollface, Okay Guy, Forever Alone, which represents rage, trolling (intentionally expressing controversial/incorrect opinions for dramatic effect), resignation in face of the realities of daily life (“everything is okay”), and inability to find a partner due to personal defects and peculiarities.

Aside from the characters, there are also several terms and styles unique to Rage Comics, but usage of these are not always required or necessary. For example, “le”, a French article, is often placed at the beginning of a sentence to signify action or used as a general replacement of “the”. This custom originated from a comic from the early days of Rage Comics, which unsurprisingly was about French people and used “le”s liberally. In another example, two words, “herp” and “derp” are often used as words indicating stupidity; they are used as placeholders for unimportant dialogues, replacement word for stupid/unimportant actions, or as names for characters in a comic, often in a slightly altered form (e.g. “Derp Herpington”, “Depth of Herpuary”). (“Rage Comics”, n.d.).

Rage Comics entered Chinese Internet communities in 2008, and saw rapid dissemination through social networking websites. The meme went through considerable localization on Chinese Internet – unique Chinese names were created for the characters and creators, mostly free from knowledge of the dogmas and formulas laid down by the Rage Comics’ early creators, developed their own styles and used the characters liberally – few retained their original meaning in Chinese versions of Rage Comics. In 2010, the addition of the “Yao Ming Face” character to the pool of Rage Comics characters greatly boosted its popularity. Possibly motivated by this addition, new characters featuring faces of Chinese celebrities, that are either unique to Chinese Internet or shared with the global community of Rage Comics creators soon emerged – examples include Jackie Chen, Fengjie, the poet Du Fu, and so on.

In 2012, the spread of Rage Comics meme on Chinese Internet was further boosted by the creation of a website dedicated to creation and hosting of Chinese Rage Comics (“Rage Comics – An Internet Cultural Brand Belonging to the Young”, 2015). Consider that the entry barrier of creation of new instances of the Rage Comics was already low enough – presence of pre-made, canned characters meant that creation required little to no artistic skills, only a story in hand plus most basic skills in using drawing software to copy-paste characters and adding subtitles. The launching of the website made Rage Comics creation even more accessible to average Internet users by streamlining the creation process and handling the hosting of images and comments.

The meme also went beyond humor and was picked up by commercial interests – The “Rage Big Events” series, which is a popular online talk show launched in 2013 by the company behind the aforementioned website, features a host wearing masks of characters in Rage Comics (ibid.). In 2012, a crudely drawn advertisement featuring Rage Comics character for an online store went viral on Chinese Internet, and thanks to the humor and easily recognized characters the store reportedly experienced a spike in sales during the lifetime of the advertisement (“Rages Comics Becoming Advertisement”, 2012). Slogans originating from Rage Comics – for example “destined to be alone forever”, a derivation of “forever alone” – have also entered common parlance of Chinese Internet users. All in all, over years the Rage Comics meme has already integrated itself into the online culture of Chinese Internet.

## B. Examples of Memes of Comparable Popularity Restricted to English-speaking Internet

### 1. LOLcats

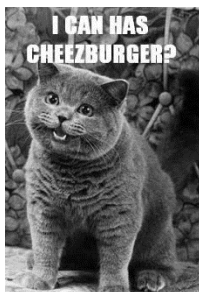


Fig. 5 - An example of LOLcats, with the stock phrase “I can has cheezburger?”

LOLcats is an Internet meme with a main format consisting of a randomly picked cat picture (that is considered to be cute or otherwise attractive) plus captions in a specific style, “lolspeak”. The style is intended to convey a feeling of immaturity and cuteness through the use of ungrammatical constructions and intentional misspelling – for example, the common stock phrase in LOLcats memes, “I can haz cheeseburger?” (Silverman, 2007; “Lolcat”, 2017). The style is not as freeform as the description might suggest – certain established forms are present, such as the tendency to write “s” as “z” and the common recurring phrasal form “Im in ur [noun of item] [verb of activity related to item]-ing ur [noun related to first item].” LOLcats’ popularity can be seen through the coverage it has received on the mainstream media. On June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Time Magazine (Grossman, 2007) reported that a Google search for “lolcat” then yielded over 3.3 million hits; the meme went so far as sparking academic interest in research on Internet memes and the LOLcats itself, which is covered in an article from the Atlantic (Rosen, 2012) in May, 2012.

### 2. All Your Base Are Belong to Us



Fig. 6 - A variation on the phrase in a poster protesting mass surveillance of the US government

“All your base are belong to us” is a popular, albeit somewhat historical early Internet meme based on the catchphrase that has its origin in a broken, mistranslated English phrase found in the opening cutscene of the 1992 Mega Drive video game *Zero Wing* (“All your base are belong to us”, 2017). The meme was popularized by an animation of the opening text of the game which gained considerable popularity on the Something Awful forums (Dibbel, 2008), and later on the phrase or variation thereof has appeared in countless articles, books, images, games, comics, and so on. One of the testaments to the influence of the phenomenon is the *Wired* (Benner, 2001) report on it, covering its propagation from its origin as animation to its then current status as a major online catchphrase that even managed to make strides in the real life in the form of T-shirts. Another case of the meme being used which demonstrated its popularity among Internet users was the appearance of the phrase on the front page when the world’s largest video sharing website YouTube was taken down for maintenance in 2006 (Sandoval, 2006).

### 3. Do a Barrel Roll

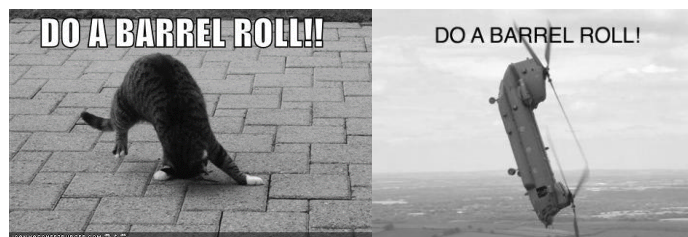


Fig. 7 - Examples of the “do a barrel roll” meme

“Do A Barrel Roll” is a catchphrase used to call on someone to perform a 360 degree horizontal spin, and comes from the 1997 video game *Star Fox 64* where one of the characters in the game orders the player to do a barrel roll. The phrase is often used to caption images where the subject appears to be in mid-rotation, or in case of animations where the subject is performing a full rotation, as seen in the examples (“Do A Barrel Roll”, n.d.). One of the meme’s earliest recorded spike of popularity on the imageboard 4chan dates back to August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007, and the meme has managed to achieve such recognition that the world’s largest search engine provider, Google, actually implemented an easter egg function for the search keywords “do a barrel roll” which upon entry would rotate the screen for 360 degrees clockwise. (Burns, 2011)

## VI. COMMON PROPERTIES INFLUENCING SUCCESSFUL CROSS-CULTURAL TRANSMISSION OF MEMES

Analyzing the examples of successful and unsuccessful (judged by whether the specified Internet meme of English-speaking communities origin achieved a high popularity in Chinese online communities) Internet memes, three common properties influencing the successful transmission of an Internet meme across cultural boundaries can be isolated; specifically, 1) the significance of the verbal component, 2) the ability to evoke feelings without relying on the original cultural background, either universally or in a way adapted to the new culture, and 3) the presence of external actors promoting the transmission of a certain meme for any purpose.

The first two properties are present in the successful examples of Internet memes and noticeably absent in the unsuccessful examples – which are by themselves memes of considerable popularity and success, thus removing any possibility that the memes were merely incapable of standing on their own at all – pointing to their relative importance in cross-cultural transmission of Internet memes. The last property, presence of external actors promoting the meme, is present in a significant manner in one of the examples and generally present for other examples, but due to its nature generally cannot be found in unsuccessful examples. Thus, the author considers it to be a minor factor and only includes it for the sake of completeness.

### 1. Significance of verbal component in original language

The first factor, significance of verbal component refers to the position text and other verbal information occupies in a particular meme. Memes which rely heavily on the verbal component to express meaning are considered to be dependent on the verbal component, and vice versa. Also of note is that the term “verbal component” here refers to verbal content in the original language of the Internet meme that must be retained, or transformed to a form closely related to and conveying precisely the same meaning as the original form.

Each of the examples of successful memes exhibits a low dependence on unchanged verbal content, while none of the unsuccessful cases does. In case of *Hitler Reacts* and *Rage Comics* memes, the verbal component can be replaced entirely without any detrimental effect to the transmission of the memes; and in case of *Doge*, the verbal component is often simply discarded. On the other hand, *LOLcats* depends heavily on the presence of intentionally ungrammatical and misspelling-ridden language to express its meaning, and the pictures of cute cats by themselves lack a distinct character to be the sole carrier for the meaning of the meme. The same goes for the *All Your Base* and *Do a Barrel Roll* memes as well, both placing significant importance on the verbal component due to their basic form as catchphrases and derivations of so.

### 2. Able to evoke feelings without reliance on the original culture

Survival and further transmission of an Internet meme in communities which do not share a common cultural background as its origin obviously depends on its ability to evoke feelings and emotions, without requiring a cultural background that the new, prospective host might not necessarily have.

The successful examples mentioned before in this paper are all capable of evoking feelings in a way that is independent of their original cultural background, but through slightly different means. All of the successful memes achieve universal appeal through pandering to universal human feelings, with information that is universally recognized and beyond any specific cultural setting. It’s easy to understand *Doge*’s appeal: by exploiting people’s curiosity and fondness of cute animals, with graphic information that is well understood in different cultures (note that the picture originated in Japan, and only later gained unprecedented popularity on English-speaking Internet), the meme managed to conquer many without even needing accompanying text or a shared cultural background, as recognition of cute animals is universal (Golle et al. 2013).

The *Downfall* and *Rage Comics*, however, also take a different approach in addition to being universal. All three have a significant graphic component, and are easily processed by new hosts. But it should also be noted that they all

often contain a host-generated verbal component too, which is adapted to the cultural setting they're currently in. This component, as stated before in the descriptions of the respective memes, generally expresses the frustrations and complaints of the author, documents frustrating events in daily life, or presents self-deprecating humor. All of these are rather easy for other members of the same cultural setting to understand and sympathize with.

For a negative example, consider the Barrel Roll meme. Although superficially the meme can be easily understood by anyone, its real power, the factor that powered its spread is its origin as a part of a shared cultural heritage. Being a derivation of a notable scene in a best-selling video game, the meme is well capable of reminding the majority of those who make and spread memes – young adults their childhood memories, and thus evoking a feeling of familiarity. What made it successful in English-speaking communities is likely also the reason of its failure elsewhere as the meme is too tightly integrated into one culture and one shared memory, that it becomes incomprehensible for those who don't share the same heritage – such as the majority of Chinese netizens.

### 3. Presence of external actors promoting the transmission

Certain memes of foreign origin that managed to enter Chinese online communities were also helped in popularity by external actors, who have more social influence than any average netizen or host of an Internet meme, intentionally pushing for their transmission for various reasons. A cursory survey of the Sina Weibo microblogging platform revealed that the examples of successful memes introduced before were/have been used for promotion of marketing accounts, to draw attention to other content provided. While these actions are motivated entirely by selfish reasons, it cannot be denied that they in fact helped to promote the memes in question at the same time, and acted as powerful external actors in the meme lifecycle.

Besides memes merely being used for promotion, an unusual case is the Rage Comics meme which, as is described before in this paper, actually received significant investment from an external actor by itself. However, the final result, the boosting effect on the meme's popularity, remains the same.

## VII. ANALYZING THE EFFECT OF THE PROPERTIES UNDER THE MEME REPLICATION SELECTION CRITERIA MODEL

Heylighen's (1999) model for a meme's replication lifecycle breaks the process of meme replication through hosts into four stages of assimilation, retention, expression and transmission, with different types of "selectors", traits of memes that determine the fitness for survival of a certain meme at each stage. Situating the three properties, expressed in the aforementioned Internet memes that managed to transgress the cultural boundaries, within the framework of the model allows us to explain how these properties benefit the memes in question in the competition for survival. Analysis in this interpretation suggests that the properties translates to benefits to survival and further transmission through their effects primarily on the selectors in the subjective and inter-subjective groups, specifically in simplicity, coherence, utility, publicity and expressivity. The item-by-item breakdown is as follows.

### 1. Simplicity

Defined as "requiring less processing for the meme to be understood", it is readily apparent that both low dependence of verbal content and of shared cultural background serve to lower the difficulty in assimilating the meme for a host who neither speaks the language of the original meme, nor shares a common cultural background; as is the case in the transmission of a meme originating from English-speaking communities to the Chinese Internet.

### 2. Coherence

The coherence selector refers to the connection and consistency between old memory traces and new perception, or in other words the ability for preexisting concepts to support the newly incorporated information. The independence from specific cultural backgrounds as displayed by the examples of "successful" memes in general allows the memes to appear more coherent, or appeal to baser concepts such as emotion or universal recognition of facial expressions, etc. and allow themselves to be supported by these preexisting concepts, instead of a presumably shared cultural background which may or may not exist in all situations – a defect especially obvious in cases of cross-cultural transmission.

### 3. Utility and expressivity

For an Internet meme, of which almost the only purpose to its hosts is to be shared to the others for benefits in either an interpersonal (social relationship, popularity in social group) or material (in case of Internet personalities, actual return for "clicks") sense, the utility of a meme is closely related to its expressivity; in other words, expressivity equals to utility for most of the Internet memes, and any improvement in expressivity ("the ease with which a meme can be expressed in an intersubjective medium") results directly in an increase in utility to the host. Similar to the case for the simplicity selector, low dependence on verbal content in a specific language and low dependence on a shared cultural background helps in lowering the difficulty for a Chinese-speaking host to express a meme with origin in English-speaking communities by allowing the textual content to be eliminated or changed to a form more acceptable, and posing no difficulty in interpreting a unfamiliar cultural background. The expressivity advantage, in turn, translates directly to an advantage in utility to the hosts.

### 4. Publicity

Heylighen defined the publicity selector as the efforts by host(s) put into broad distribution of the message. The effect of having an external actor with significant influence actively seeking to promote an Internet meme of English origin mostly manifests within the domain of publicity, where the host devotes higher amount of resources to

transmission of a meme for own purposes (see before for utility of an Internet meme in terms of Internet personalities), thus adding into a meme's publicity and promoting its fitness for survival.

### VIII. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, several prolific Internet memes of English-speaking communities origin that achieved exceptional popularity were investigated, their common properties which were crucial in gaining acceptance in the completely different linguistic and cultural settings that is the Chinese online communities summarized. Analyzed in comparison with the aforementioned memes were Internet memes of considerable popularity in English-speaking communities that failed to gain recognition in China, which appeared to lack the properties displayed by the more successful Internet memes. The common properties were placed in and analyzed with the meme lifecycle model proposed by Heylighen (1999), and it is concluded that the properties benefit the memes in fitness for survival in all four stages of meme transmission, through the selectors in subjective and inter-subjective group - specifically, simplicity, coherence, utility, expressivity and publicity.

It is apparent that Internet memes will remain to be an integral part of the online culture for the foreseeable future. Countless Internet memes are being born, transmitted, replicated, discarded and otherwise used in all kinds of ways in online communities all across the globe at this very moment, and some of these would manage to gain a popularity significant enough to enter the mainstream parlance, cross cultural boundaries and eventually become a common part of culture shared by millions, or even billions. The importance of studying a phenomenon that is affecting essentially everyone in this online age cannot be dismissed; the nature of Internet memes' primary media also means that often very visible and traceable digital footprints are left behind occurrences of transmission and replication, which makes the phenomenon extra conducive to future research and studies. The author hopes that this paper would spur some academic interest in this field of inquiry and lead to further research on the subject of cross-cultural transmission of Internet memes.

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# The Effect of Computer-mediated Communication Tools in Online Setting on Iranian EFL Learners' Teaching, Social and Cognitive Existence

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**Abstract**—This study was conducted to explore the effect of computer-mediated communication tools in online setting on Iranian EFL learners' teaching, social and cognitive existence. The population of the study included 60 English Language Teaching students (B.A) of Zanjan Islamic Azad University using convenient sampling method. Experimental group included half of the participants (n=30) and other half of the participants (n=30) was assigned to control group. As a pretest, participants were asked to fill in the Community of Inquiry (CoI) questionnaire in both experimental and control groups. The learners in the experimental group were taught through electronic mail and chat and the assignments and homework were sent to the learners by E-mail. The teachers asked the learners to answer the questions and send the fulfilled assignments in the telegram group. The learners in the control group were taught conventionally. After the treatment, the questionnaire was re-administered among the learners in the both groups as posttest. The learners who received synchronous online communication tools, compared to the respondents who received no treatment, gained higher mean scores on social, teaching and cognitive presence. The findings of the present study can have implications for ESL/EFL contexts from several aspects.

**Index Terms**—cognitive presence, Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC), Community of Inquiry (CoI), social presence, synchronous online communication tools, teaching presence

## I. INTRODUCTION

Distance learning is a formal means within which the scholar and educator are not within the same place (Parsad & Lewis, 2008, p. 1). According to Parsad and Lewis (2008), using websites and online learning tools as computer-mediated communications (CMC) put distance learning in practice. Developments of academic establishments in providing online courses and advances in technologies of personal computer and internet result in growth of online learning literature. Despite all developments and advances, no research has studied the impact of computer-mediated communication (CMC) on teacher education (Mehri & Izadpanah, 2017). So, it is necessary to examine the relationship between students perception and CMC technology in learning process.

Online learning entails different degrees of Internet-based instruction. Tallent-Runnels, Thomas, Lan, Cooper, Ahern, Shaw, & Liu (2006) have outlined online courses as those delivered utterly via the web and blending courses as those that mix online components with ancient, face-to-face components (as cited in Salloum, 2011, p.2). Classifying online courses, they are fallen into synchronous or asynchronous (Palloff & Pratt, 2007). Synchronous learning refers to situations where participants interact in learning tasks at an equivalent time using CMC tools such as group chats in web, video or voice chats, instant text chat. In contrast to synchronous learning, Asynchronous method refers to situations where participants interact in learning activities at separate and freelance times (Salloum, 2011). According to Clark and Mayer (2008), synchronous communication is mainly text-based and employs tools such as e-mail, blogs, wikis, or discussion forums (as cited in Salloum, 2011).

Online learning requires cooperation and interaction activities by nature (Bonk, 2009; Palloff & Pratt, 2007). CMC allows learners to cooperate with other learners while they share opinions, resources, and information with each other. Through various kinds of CMC tools such as e-mail, news forums, discussion forums, web-conferencing, and text chat, students and instructors communicate with each other (Repman, Zinskie, & Carlson, 2005; as cited in Salloum, 2011). Teaching or social presence can be promoted by various CMC tools. Finding students perceptions about CMC tool helpfulness is necessary to promote social and teaching presence as well as the influences of tool helpfulness on social and teaching presence. Moreover, it is critical to know the effect of different CMC tools on student perceptions of social, teaching, and cognitive presence.

In spite of introducing various CMC tools including e-mail, news forums, discussion forums, and web-conferencing into online learning, few studies have attempted to assess student perceptions of their helpfulness for learning (Mehri & Izadpanah, 2017). Given to the importance of CMC tools in education, online course designers and online course instructors should be provided with necessary information about the fact that which CMC tools are most helpful for students.

It has been seen that CMC tools such as e-mail, news forums, discussion forums, and web-conferencing influence online learning positively; however, research studies should be conducted to explore students perception of mentioned tools (Mehri & Izadpanah, 2017). This study has attempted to fill the mentioned gap using theoretical basis of Community of Inquiry to investigate the impacts of online CMC tools on the learners' cognitive and social existence.

Therefore, the present study attempted to study EFL learners' attitudes towards online CMC tools effectiveness plus the impact of it on learners' teaching, social and cognitive existence. In fact, social existence assess the develop to which students perceive themselves as real people engaged in communications and interactions with others. Teaching existence assess the develop to which students perceive the instructor's design and facilitation of the learning experience. Cognitive existence assess the develop to which students perceive an ability to construct meaning (Salloum, 2011).

In this study, following questions are investigated:

What are the attitudes of Iranian EFL learners towards online computer-mediated communication tools?

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Defining communication, Dale states (1969) that communication is "the sharing of ideas and feelings in a mood of mutuality" (p.10, as cited in Salloum, 2011). Based on Dale's definition, computer-mediated communication involves activities in which individuals share their opinions and emotions mutually using CMC tools.

Computer mediated communication can be either synchronous or asynchronous. In synchronous CMC which includes conference by video, chat using text messaging or audio, etc., second language learners can interact with others automatically (or simultaneously). In Asynchronous CMC which includes bulletin boards, electronic cards, e-mail, etc., second language learners have chance of checking and processing messages when they are offline. These are also called real-time communications (Synchronous) and delayed-time (Asynchronous) communications. Regarding CMC tools, Wang (2005) stated,

The internet has overcome problems of distance communicatin by providing different types of communication methods. It means that learners can find partners in other language for learning their target language. The internet present some major ways of interaction such audio/video/text chatting, bulletin boards, electronic mails. For example, Yahoo messengers help learners connect with their partners using audio/video chats or send instant messages which are useful for listening and speaking skills improvement.

In an exploratory study, Johnson (2004) investigated theories related to teaching, learning, and teaching design to design a model for online learning and identify factors relating to teacher training education. There were some factors including input and decision options which were measured by continuum scales. Input factors include course goals, instructional intent, nature of content, content structure and complexity, technology resources, and learner characteristics. Decision options include learning objectives, task orientation, teacher role, meta-cognitive goals, and course scheduling and pacing (Salloum, 2011, p.17).

Different types of CMC tools provide different types of media by which learners can communicate and interact with each other. Use and integration of CMC tools can affect attitude of learners toward usefulness of CMC tools in learning process and toward cognitive, social, and teaching existence.

Introducing social existence, Garrison, Anderson and Archer (2001) declared that social existence provides enjoyable and comprehensive group conversatons which supports the learning process. Effective communication requires that learners will be accepted and heard by other group members (Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, & Archer, 2001). Studying 73 post-baccalaureate teachers with at least one year of teaching experience, Mykota and Duncan (2007) evaluated student perceptions of social presence in four education online courses using a survey instrument developed by Yen and Tu (2008). As the findings revealed, there was a moderate correlation between previous online courses and student perceptions of CMC proficiency and social presence.

Teaching existence is a process of designing, providing, and directing social and cognitive procedures in order to identify personally significant and academically valuable learning results (Anderson, Garrison, & Archer, 2001, p. 5). Anderson et al. (2001) attempted to evaluate teaching presence in asynchronous, text-based learning. As the researchers concluded, differences in teaching style, educational philosophy, class size, and familiarity with technology may explain the variations. The researchers also stated that the tool can be used as an identification instrument and a research instrument in order to evaluate teaching existence and investigate factors influencing teaching existence.

Interpreting cognitive existence, Garrison, Anderson and Archer (2001) and Shahlou, and Izadpanah (2016) stated that cognitive existence is the degree of learners' ability to perceive meaning using continuous thinking and discourse by critical query. Garrison et al. (2001) employed a coding instrument to conduct content analysis on transcripts of asynchronous computer conferences. Based on the content analysis results, most indicators reflect the exploration phase of cognitive presence. Lower frequencies of the integration and resolutions phases were attributed to less focus on

advanced inquiry, lack of instructor facilitation, and effects of the communication medium. It was also suggested that the model of Practical Inquiry might be best suited for applied knowledge learning contexts (as cited in Salloum, 2011, p.49).

Musa, Mohamed, Mufit, Latiff, and Amin (2015) conducted an action research on a project work implemented in Academic Communication Course in Malaysia to investigate the effectiveness of one type of CMC. It was concluded that in addition to the facing challenges, it was very helpful to use CMC during face-to-face interactions to complete the project work. Bataineh and AL-Abdi (2015) explored Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) effect on EFL learners' sociocultural competence using chat by web-cam. As the research findings revealed, performance of experimental group was better than control group in that experimental group showed more sociocultural factors of language regarding to CMC method of Web-cam chat. As concluded, the experimental group acquired some sociocultural aspects rather than the others. It was also found that the experimental group students have developed their language skills. Rezaee and Ahmadzade (2012) investigated the impact of CMC integration using Face-to-Face interaction in a synchronous and asynchronous method on vocabulary learning of EFL learners. Findings showed that there was no significant improvement in vocabulary scores of the students in the comparison group. However, participants' score in post-test was better than pre-test in both experimental groups. Dehjalali, and Izadpanah, (2017); Mehri, & Izadpanah, (2017); Niazi and Pourgharib (2013) analyzed the effects of E-mail on improving EFL learners' writing skill and to show the benefits of using one of the new learning opportunities of the age, (e-mail) electronic mail, in an EFL writing class for both students and teachers. For measuring the writing skill, a pre-test and post-test was administered to the learners in the experimental and control groups. The results of the two posttests show improvement of the experimental group.

Therefore, the present project attempts to shed light on the effects of online computer-mediated communication tools on EFL learners' teaching, social and cognitive existence. To this end, the Community of Inquiry as the theoretical framework required to judge student perceptions of the helpfulness of CMC tools was used. In this regard, the following research question was formulated:

Is there any significant difference in students' attitudes toward learning programs with/ without online synchronous meeting (telegram ...) by considering social, cognitive, and teaching existence?

### III. METHOD

#### Design

According to Yin (2003), a research design as a rationale creates relationship between collected data and research questions and results of the study. In this study, quasi-experimental design was used because of randomization impossibility. Students' perception and attitude toward CMC and its usefulness are independent variables and cognitive existence, social existence, and teaching existence are dependent variables.

#### Participants

For the purpose of the study, 60 English Language Teaching students (B.A) of Zanjan Islamic Azad University were selected based on convenience sampling method. The students attended in two classes of Listening Comprehension and Speaking 1 course that were held by two different teachers. The statistical population included 70 students. The Cambridge Preliminary English Test (PET) was used to homogenize the participants. In order to select statistical population of the study, subjects ( $n= 60$ ) by scores  $\pm 1$  above and  $\pm 1$  below the standard deviation the were selected. Sampling population was randomly divided into one experimental ( $n= 30$ ) and one control group ( $n= 30$ ).

#### Instruments

First, the Cambridge Preliminary English Test (PET) was used to homogenize the participants. Then, including e-mail and telegram chat as CMC tools was installed on computers. Another instruments used in the study was the 34-item Community of Inquiry (CoI) to assess factors mentioned above. Finally, a scale measuring helpfulness, The 13-item Computer mediated communication (CMC) tool, was used.

#### Procedure

Tending to investigate the EFL learners' perceptions of online CMC tools usefulness and impact of tools on learners' cognitive, social and teaching existence, seventy Bachelors of art students of English Language Teaching were selected from Zanjan Islamic Azad University during 2015-2016 schooling year. The students attended in two classes of Listening Comprehension and Speaking 1 course that each class had different teachers. The Cambridge Preliminary English Test (PET) was used to homogenize the participants. In order to select statistical population of the study, subjects ( $n= 60$ ) by scores  $\pm 1$  above and  $\pm 1$  below the standard deviation the were selected. Sampling population was randomly divided into one experimental ( $n= 30$ ) and one control group ( $n= 30$ ). The study was conducted within one semester. The semester included 16 ninety-minute sessions. In order to explore learners' attitude before the treatment, participants were asked to fill in the Community of Inquiry (CoI) questionnaire. The questionnaire was based on Likert Scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree). The questionnaire was analyzed and the data was drawn to be compared with the result obtained after the treatment. During the study, the experimental group was taught using e-mail and chat. Each session, the teacher taught a unit of the course book "Listening Comprehension and Speaking 1". The task of the course book was then sent to the learners via E-mail. Learners were supposed to do the task and answer the questions and share their assignment in telegram group of the class. In the chat environment, all the students could send

assignments, voice message and even leave comment on others assignments. Doing so, all the students could participate in class activities and receive their teacher’s feedback on their assignments. In other words, CMC tools like e-mail is considered a time-saving method which makes classroom task management easier; on the other side, communication via telegram is interesting, motivating, and enjoyable for learners. In a traditionally handled classroom, it is almost not possible to evaluate all the learners’ assignments and involve them in classroom activities. On the contrary, participants of the control group received traditional method of teaching. In the classroom, learners were taught a unit each session. In addition, students discussed about a topic voluntarily of by selection of teacher, answered to the questions, took note of listening activity played in the class, etc. After conducting treatment, the same questionnaire of community of inquiry filled by participants at the start was distributed to the learners in the experimental and control groups. The questionnaires data were drawn and compared with the data obtained on the onset of the study to identify the impact of online CMC tools (e-mail and telegram chat) on the learners’ existence of teaching, social and cognitive.

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to examine the normal distribution the sample. Results of the test are provided in Table 1 and Table 2 which show distribution of answers to the questionnaire in pre-test and post-test, respectively.

TABLE 1  
ONE SAMPLE KOLMOGOROV-SMIRNOV TEST (PRE-TEST)

			pre-test in Control Group	pre-test in Experimental Group
N			30	30
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>		Mean	78.5	77.5
		SD	1.213	1.233
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Z		.367	.354
Asymp. Sig. (2-tled)			.216	.374

TABLE 2  
ONE SAMPLE KOLMOGOROV-SMIRNOV TEST (POST-TEST)

			post-test in Control Group	post-test in Experimental Group
N			30	30
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>		Mean	78	83
		SD	1.705	1.431
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Z		.411	.456
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)			.123	.423

a. Test distribution is Normal.  
b. Calculated from data.

Results from Tables 1 and 2, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov indices, confirmed normality of the data at the significant level of (p<.05). Therefore, it was seen that normality of sample confirmed and research questions can be tested by the parametric tests. So, parametric test are used to investigate the research question. To this end, the learners’ responses in both groups were based evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree. Then, their scores were determined and the obtained quantitative data was put into statistical analyses. Table 3 demonstrates the descriptive statistics of the two groups in the pretest and posttest for each of teaching present (TP), social present (SP) and cognitive presence (CP).

TABLE 3.  
GROUP STATISTICS

	Groups	N		Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean	Skewness
Pretest	Experimental	30	TP	1.575	.342	.624	-.154
			SP	1.327	.311	.618	-.127
			CP	1.476	.334	.622	-.135
	Control	30	TP	1.658	.331	.605	-.40
			SP	1.312	.316	.619	-.94
			CP	1.462	.342	.621	-.111
Posttest	Experimental	30	TP	3.85	.213	.039	-.908
			SP	3.91	.209	.036	-.595
			CP	3.73	.218	.043	-.704
	Control	30	TP	2.68	.293	.053	-.677
			SP	2.65	.305	.057	-.662
			CP	2.71	.271	.066	-.655

Table 4. signifies the t-test results of the two groups’ perceptions mean scores before and after the treatment.

TABLE 4.  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST RESULTS

			Leven's Test		t-test for Equality of Means					
			F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Standard Error Difference	
Pretest	TP	Equal	.212	.647	-	.958	58	.342	-.08333	.8696
	SP	Variances	.207	.641	-	.954	58	.342	-.08259	.8571
	CP	Assumed	.210	.644	-	.957	58	.342	-.83012	.8663
Posttest	TP	Equal	2.035	.159	17.614		58	.000	1.166	.066
	SP	Variances	2.046	.154	17.627		58	.000	1.199	.071
	CP	Assumed	2.031	.163	17.611		58	.000	1.148	.63

As Table 4. illustrates, the result of Levene's test,  $p = .647$  for TP,  $p = .641$  for SP and  $p = .644$  for CP signified the equality of the variances and the  $t$  observed ( $t = 0.958$ ,  $df = 58$ ,  $p = .342$  for TP;  $t = 0.954$ ,  $df = 58$ ,  $p = .342$  for SP, and  $t = 0.957$ ,  $df = 58$ ,  $p = .342$  for CP) showed no significant difference between the means of the two groups before the treatment. Nevertheless, according to the posttest results, the  $t$  observed ( $t = 17.614$ ,  $df = 58$ ,  $p = .000 < .05$  for TP;  $t = 17.627$ ,  $df = 58$ ,  $p = .000 < .05$  for SP, and  $t = 17.611$ ,  $df = 58$ ,  $p = .000 < .05$  for CP) indicates that after using telegram and e-mail for teaching, the experimental group show different perceptions in the items related to TP, SP and CP compared to the control group.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

To investigate the research question, the responses of the respondents in the experimental and control groups before and after the treatment were compared. In this regard, the learners' responses in both groups were evaluated based on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree. Then, their scores were determined and the obtained quantitative data was put into statistical analyses. As the independent sample t-test revealed, there was no significant difference between the means of the two groups before the treatment. Nevertheless, according to the posttest results, after using telegram and e-mail for teaching, the experimental group showed different perceptions in the items related to teaching presence, social presence and cognitive presence compared to the control group. The research findings indicated that the participants in the experimental group found the CMC tools (e-mail and telegram) they used in their courses were highly useful for teaching presence (TP), social presence (SP) and cognitive presence (CP) communications. Social presence provides support to the learning process by making group interactions enjoyable and inclusive. Providing the participants with the opportunity to communicate and interact with each other through online tools (in our case, telegram and e-mail) can lead to the increase of their social presence. Therefore, the learners in the experimental group gained higher mean scores after the treatment. Moreover, teaching presence means to what extent instruction of the teacher and learning process is facilitated effectively. As shown in the study, the learners received online communicative tools for teaching perceived greater teaching presence than the learners who received no synchronous tool. Further, cognitive presence refers to the conditions and processes that enable participants in a community of inquiry to build and apply knowledge through a collaborative and constructivist approach to learning (Salloum, 2011, p.130). Receiving instruction through e-mail and applying text-chat on telegram helped the learners to find more collaboration sense, more time for reflection, being more careful, and can think more critically.

As the research findings indicated, e-mail and text-chat on telegram are important CMC tools for promoting teaching presence. They considered e-mail and text-chat on telegram very useful to promote TP communications. The respondents also considered that sending personal messages using e-mail to individuals or to classmates helps develop their social presence. Altogether, using e-mail makes communications with other learners more convenient, private and flexible.

Consistent with the research findings, Skylar (2009) compared web-conferencing as one type of the online communication tools to asynchronous lecture notes. As he concluded, web-conferencing was very fruitful for the learners' understanding and enabled them to perform better on quizzes. Aria, & Izadpanah, (2016); Rezaee and Ahmadzade (2012); Izadpanah, & Alavi( 2016); and Shahrokhi Mehr, Zoghi and Asadi (2013) also reported similar results in other language skills. Unlikely, examining the effect of Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication (SCMC) on Iranian EFL learners' collaboration, Mozafarianpour and Tahriri (2016) and Chou (2001) reported inconsistent results. The practical significance of this research question was that gender had no significant effect on social, teaching, or cognitive presence of the respondents in the two groups of experimental and control.

#### V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

As found by the data analyses, it was proved that the online communication experience (text chat in telegram and e-mail) can be a positive component that can be integrated into language learning and teaching contexts. In general, the research findings provided useful, practical information for the field of language learning and teaching. The study also provides insights about how the learners' social, teaching and cognitive existences were influenced as a result of receiving synchronous online communicative tools. Social presence is indicators of participants' ability to explain their personal thoughts and feel that they belong to that learning community. Social presence makes learning procedure

interesting and involving by supporting learning process. One of the key issues in social presence is that learners feel themselves accepted and heard by other group members in order to involve in an effective communication (Salloum, 2011). As found, the mean differences among the two groups for social presence were statistically significant. In other words, using CMC tools can promote social presence. Providing the participants with the opportunity to communicate and interact with each other through online tools (in our case, telegram and e-mail) can lead to the increase of their social presence. Teaching presence includes effective designing and facilitation of learning procedures which instructor provides in classroom. As shown in the study, the learners received online communicative tools for teaching perceived greater teaching presence than the learners who received no synchronous tool. Using different types of CMC tools by teachers for various purposes might be considered a criterion to evaluate teaching presence perceptions (Salloum, 2011). Because online communication tools and here, telegram and e-mail require careful design, invite participation, and require instructor facilitation, the learners perceived greater teaching presence through these tools. Regarding cognitive presence, it can be said that it is capability of participants in creation of meaning via discussion and interaction activities. In other words, cognitive presence provides situations in which learners can collaboratively use information and build knowledge using discussions and inquiries. In the study, the learners in the experimental group also gained higher score in cognitive presence section, indicating the effect of synchronous online communicative tools can stimulate superior reflection and thoughts in order (Repman et al., 2005, as cited in Salloum, 2011). Furthermore, it has been stated that asynchronous discussion forums provide time for reflection, tend to be complex and explicit, and are associated with careful, critical thinking (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000, as cited in Salloum, 2011).

It can be implied from the results that online communicative tools such as text-chat on telegram and e-mail motivate learners to interact with the topics and play a key role in helping learners incorporate constructs, use information in various contexts, and find solutions for problems. As another implication of the study, it should be noted that teachers, curriculum designers, and instructors should study the ways for integration of CMC tools such as e-mail and discussion forums in order to influence cognitive, social, and teaching existence positively. Larger populations can be studied to determine possible differences in student perceptions about CMC tool helpfulness and relationships with social, teaching and cognitive presences. Future studies can examine which tools are most helpful for different communications and purposes. The effect of different combinations of CMC tools on learners' perceptions of social, teaching, and cognitive presence can be also explored by other researchers.

#### APPENDIX A

The Cambridge Preliminary English Test (PET)

<http://cambridgeesol.org/exams/general-english/pet.html>

#### APPENDIX B

The survey instrument consists of three parts: Community of Inquiry items, communication mode items, and demographics. The instrument employs a five point Likert scale as follows:

1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = undecided; 4 = agree; 5 = strongly agree

##### **Community of Inquiry Items**

√ Teaching presence.

√ Design and organization.

1. The instructor clearly communicates important course topics.

2. The instructor clearly communicates important course goals.

3. The instructor provides clear instructions on how to participate in course learning activities.

4. The instructor clearly communicates important due dates/time frames for learning activities.

√ Facilitation.

5. The instructor is helpful in identifying areas of agreement and disagreement on course topics that helped me to learn.

6. The instructor is helpful in guiding the class towards understanding course topics in a way that helped me clarify my thinking.

7. The instructor helps to keep course participants engaged and participating in productive dialogue.

8. The instructor helps keep the course participants on task in a way that helped me to learn.

9. The instructor encourages course participants to explore new concepts in this course.

10. Instructor actions reinforce the development of a sense of community among course participants.

√ Direct instruction.

11. The instructor helps to focus discussion on relevant issues in a way that helped me to learn.

12. The instructor provides feedback that helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses.

13. The instructor provides feedback in a timely fashion.

√ Social presence.

√ Affective expression.

14. Getting to know other course participants give me a sense of belonging in the course.

15. I is able to form distinct impressions of some course participants.
16. Online or web-based communication is an excellent medium for social interaction.  
√ Open communication.
17. I feel comfortable conversing through the online medium.
18. I feel comfortable participating in the course discussions.
19. I feel comfortable interacting with other course participants.  
√ Group cohesion.
20. I feel comfortable disagreeing with other course participants while still maintaining a sense of trust.
21. I feel that my point of view is acknowledged by other course participants.
22. Online discussions help me to develop a sense of collaboration.  
√ Cognitive presence.  
√ Triggering event.
23. Problems pose increased my interest in course issues.
24. Course activities pique my curiosity.
25. I feel motivated to explore content related questions.  
√ Exploration.
26. I utilize a variety of information sources to explore problems posed in this course.
27. Brainstorming and finding relevant information help me resolve content related questions.
28. Online discussions are valuable in helping me appreciate different perspectives.  
√ Integration.
29. Combining new information help me answer questions raised in course activities.
30. Learning activities help me construct explanations/solutions.
31. Reflection on course content and discussions help me understand fundamental concepts in this class.  
√ Resolution.
32. I can describe ways to test and apply the knowledge created in this course.
33. I have developed solutions to course problems that can be applied in practice.
34. I can apply the knowledge created in this course to my work or other non-class related activities.

#### **CMC Tool Helpfulness Items**

Participants are asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements about the CMC tools they used in their online courses. The same five –point Likert scale is used with an additional option of .did not use. Because not all tools are utilized by all participants.

√ Helpfulness for teaching presence items.

35. Using e-mail and text chat is helpful for receiving information from my instructor about course topics, goals and learning activities.

36. Using e-mail and text chat is for receiving directions or clarification from my instructor.

37. Using e-mail and text chat is helpful for receiving personal feedback from my instructor.

38. Using e-mail and text chat is helpful for communicating questions or concerns to my instructor.

√ Helpfulness for social presence items.

39. Using e-mail and text chat is helpful for getting to know other course participants.

40. Using e-mail and text chat is helpful for interacting and collaborating with other course participants.

√ Comfort level.

41. I am comfortable using e-mail and text chat.

#### **Demographic Items**

42. What is your gender?

. Male

. Female

43. Prior to the current semester, how many online courses have you taken?

. None

. One

. Two

. Three

. Four or more

44. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

Years of teaching experience

None

1 year or less

1 to 2 years

2 to 3 years

More than 3 years



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# Start Learning Chinese Words Fast: An Introduction

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**Abstract**—In order to cater to the needs of Chinese language lovers, 28 basic strokes of Chinese words are firstly introduced. It is pointed out that the difficulty for foreigners to learn Chinese words is their grotesque shapes written by brush (soft) pen and printed in books. The special writing method with a hard pen and 8 directions moving steps are invented and firstly shown, which is easy for foreigners to try. The size (length) of strokes will guide them to control the proportion of a word. It could be changed according to paper size and how large they want to write. Secondly, 48 common fragments derived from 28 basic strokes are listed and the writing method described. It could help foreigners to separate and re-write unknown Chinese words and even guess out the meanings. Lastly, many characteristics or regularities of Chinese words will have great attraction for foreign language learners. Some Chinese cultures or amusing stories are also exposed in fragments and example words.

**Index Terms**—stroke, fragment, writing order, Chinese words

## I. INTRODUCTION

With the society progress and the communication between countries, more and more people who live in non Chinese-Speaking countries are interested in learning Chinese language. For the purpose of fun, some people imitated Chinese pronunciation and were able to speak a few short sentences. Some want to learn more so as to tour China. Some are going to learn more and more in order to study in China. Nevertheless, most of them do not know how to start and they feel difficult to learn. It is well known that learning English begins with 26 alphabetic letters. Hence, it should be started from (28) strokes to learn Chinese as the words are composed of strokes.

Chinese strokes printed in books were generally written with a soft (or brush) pen. According to archaeological finding, Chinese people wrote with brush pens or similar to brush pens 5000-6000 years ago. A writing brush (soft pen) consists of a tapered tip (made of animal hairs) and a penholder (made of bamboo, wood or plastic materials). The common length of the tapered tip is 2.5cm. The length and diameter of the penholder is 18.5cm and 0.4cm respectively (Figure 1). Chinese strokes (Figure 2) and words have distinctive shapes because of soft and elastic tip, physical strength and speed to press the tip and raise the penholder (He Xin, 2012).



Figure 1 Holding and writing with a soft (brush) pen

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Figure 2 Chinese strokes written with a soft (brush) pen

American Wartman invented (hard) pen in early nineteenth century. It spread all over the world because it was easy to carry, fluent and rapid in writing (Chen Wei, 1993). Many Chinese people also began to write with (hard) pens (figure 3). Therefore, a good way for foreigners to get start quickly is firstly differentiating strokes and imitating with a hard pen (pencil) secondly.



Figure 3 Writing with a hard pen

## II. WRITING METHOD OF CHINESE STROKES

There are commonly 28 strokes in Chinese words (Fu Yonghe, 1992). The tone of words has totally 4 levels from low to high (simplified as TL1, 2, 3 and 4). The same tone has different words and different meanings.

*No.1*, sounding dian (TL3), writing from upper side, moving towards southeast and about 0.2cm long (figure 4).

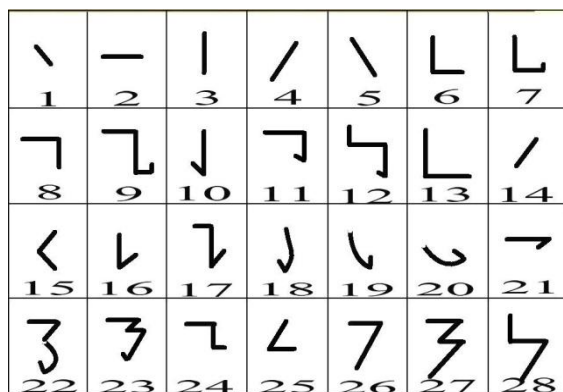


Figure 4 Chinese strokes written with a hard pen

**No.2**, sounding heng (TL2), writing from left side, moving towards east and about 0.4cm long.

**No.3**, sounding shu (TL4), writing from upper side, moving towards south and about 0.4cm long.

**No.4**, sounding pie (TL3), writing from upper side, moving towards southwest and about 0.4cm long.

**No.5**, sounding na (TL4), writing from upper side, moving towards southeast and about 0.4cm long.

**No.6**, sounding shu wan (TL4 and 1), writing from upper side, moving towards south, about 0.3cm long; turning towards east and about 0.3cm long.

**No.7**, sounding shu wan gou (TL4, 1 and 1), writing from upper side, moving towards south, about 0.4cm long; turning towards east, about 0.3cm long; turning towards north and about 0.1cm long. It looks like a fishhook.

**No.8**, sounding heng zhe (TL2 and 2), writing from left side, moving towards east, about 0.4cm long; turning towards south and about 0.3cm long.

**No.9**, sounding heng zhe wan gou (TL2, 2, 1 and 1), writing from left side, moving towards east, about 0.3cm long, turning towards south, about 0.4cm long; turning towards east, about 0.2cm long; turning towards north and about 0.1cm long. It is almost comprised of No.2 and No.7.

**No.10**, sounding shu gou (TL4 and 1), writing from upper side, moving towards south, about 0.4cm long; turning towards northwest and about 0.1cm long.

**No.11**, sounding heng zhe gou (TL2, 2 and 1), writing from left side, moving towards east, about 0.4cm long, turning towards south, about 0.2cm (0.4cm) long; turning towards northwest and about 0.1cm long.

**No.12**, sounding shu zhe zhe gou (TL4, 2, 2 and 1), writing from upper side, moving towards south, about 0.2cm long; turning towards east, about 0.4cm long; turning towards south, about 0.4cm long; turning towards northwest and about 0.1cm long.

**No.13**, sounding shu zhe (TL4 and 2), writing from upper side, moving towards south, about 0.4cm long; turning towards east and about 0.4cm long. It is a little larger than No.6.

**No.14**, sounding ti (TL 2), writing from southwest, moving towards northeast and about 0.3cm long.

**No.15**, sounding pie dian (TL3 and 3), writing from upper side, moving towards southwest, about 0.2cm long; turning towards southeast and about 0.2cm long.

**No.16**, sounding shu ti (TL4 and 2), writing from upper side, moving towards south, about 0.3cm long; turning towards northeast and about 0.3cm long.

**No.17**, sounding heng zhe ti (TL2, 2 and 2), writing from left side, moving towards east, about 0.3cm long; turning towards south, about 0.4cm long; turning towards northeast and about 0.3cm long.

**No.18**, sounding wan gou (TL1 and 1), writing from upper side, moving along an arc line towards south (the hypothetical center is at left side), about 0.5cm long; turning towards northwest and about 0.1cm long.

**No.19**, sounding xie gou (TL2 and 1), writing from upper side, moving along an arc line towards southeast (the hypothetical center is at right side), about 0.5cm long; turning towards north and about 0.1cm long.

**No.20**, sounding wo gou (TL4 and 1), writing from northwest, moving along an arc line towards southeast and east (the hypothetical center is at north side), about 0.5cm long; turning towards northwest and about 0.1cm long.

**No.21**, sounding heng gou (TL2 and 1), writing from left side, moving towards east, about 0.4cm long; turning towards southwest and about 0.1cm long.

**No.22**, sounding heng pie wan gou (TL2, 3, 1 and 1), writing from left side, moving towards east, about 0.3cm long; turning towards southwest, about 0.3cm long; turning along an arc line towards southeast (the hypothetical center is at left side), about 0.4cm long; turning towards northwest and about 0.1cm long.

**No.23**, sounding heng zhe zhe zhe gou (TL2, 2, 2, 2 and 1), writing from left side, moving towards east, about 0.4cm long; turning towards southwest, about 0.2cm long; turning towards east, about 0.3cm long; turning towards southwest, about 0.4cm long; turning towards northwest and about 0.1cm long.

**No.24**, sounding heng zhe wan (TL2, 2 and 1), writing from left side, moving towards east, about 0.3cm long; turning towards south, about 0.3cm long; turning towards east and about 0.2cm long.

**No.25**, sounding pie zhe (TL3 and 2), writing from upper side, moving towards southwest, about 0.3cm long; turning towards east and about 0.2cm long.

**No.26**, sounding heng pie (TL2 and 3), writing from left side, moving towards east, about 0.2cm long; turning towards southwest and about 0.4cm long.

**No.27**, sounding heng zhe zhe pie (TL2, 2, 2 and 3), writing from left side, moving towards east, about 0.4cm long; turning towards southwest, about 0.2cm long; turning towards east, about 0.2cm long; turning towards southwest and about 0.4cm long. It is almost equal to No.23 without the last step.

**No.28**, sounding shu zhe pie (TL4, 2 and 3), writing from upper side, moving towards south, about 0.2cm long; turning towards east, about 0.3cm long; turning towards southwest and about 0.4cm long.

III. COMMON FRAGMENTS OF CHINESE WORDS

It is found that some English alphabetic letters always get together. The example is ch-, de-, in-, -ment, -or, -tion and so on. The similar phenomenon also appears in Chinese words. Some strokes always get together, too.

**No.29**, equal to (No.1 + No.14), called as two drops of water; the example word is bing (TL1), meaning ice. There is a word shui (TL 3, meaning water) at the right side (Figure 5). Ancient Chinese people regarded the two drops of (liquid) water contacting with water as bin (ice) when the temperature was below zero.



Figure 5 Common fragments and example words written with a soft (brush) pen

**No.30**, equal to (No.1 + No.1 + No.14), called as three drops of water; the example word is jiang (TL1, meaning river). Another word he (TL2) also means river, but shorter or narrower than jiang. The word at the right of jiang is gong (TL 1, meaning work). When a lot of work was done and much water appeared, it called as jiang or river, which thought to be finished by digging manually.

**No.31**, equal to (No.1 + No.1 + No.1 + No.1), called as four drops of water; the example word is dian (TL3), meaning dot. There is kou (TL3, meaning mouth) inside the word, which suggested that much saliva (4 drops of water) fell down out of mouth when speaking.

**No.32**, equal to (No.1 + No.17), called as speaking fragment; the example word is ren (TL4), usually accompanied with another word such as ren shi (TL4 and 2, meaning know) and bian ren (TL4 and 4, meaning identify or recognize). The word at the right side of ren (TL 4) is ren (TL 2, meaning person). If a person could speak near another person, it could be judged that the person know him (another person).

**No.33**, equal to (shorter No.3 + longer No.10), the example word is li (TL4), usually accompanied with another word such as li yong (TL4 and 4, meaning utilize), li yi (TL4 and 4, meaning benefit) and bian li (TL4 and 4, meaning convenience).

**No.34**, equal to (No.4 + No.3), called as single person fragment; the example word is ni (TL3), meaning you. The word at the right side is er (TL 3) which also means you in ancient Chinese language.

**No.35**, equal to (No.4 + No.4 + No.3), called as double person fragment; the example word is xing (TL2), meaning (it's OK). Xing wei (TL2 and 2) means behavior and xing dong (TL2 and 4) means act or action.

**No.36**, equal to (No.8 + No.3), the example word is yin (TL4, means signet), yin shua (TL4 and 1, means print), yin xiang (TL4 and 4, means impression).

**No.37**, equal to (No.23 + No.3), the example word is yang (TL2), yang guang (TL2 and 1) means sunshine, tai yang (TL4 and 2) means sun.

**No.38**, equal to (No.1 + No.3 + No.1), the example word is kuai (TL4), meaning fast, quickly, rapidly or hurry up.

**No.39**, equal to (No.2 + No.4), the example word is ya (TL1, means press).

**No.40**, equal to (No.1 + No.2 + No.4) or (No.39 + No.1), the example word is qing (TL4), qing he (TL4 and 4, meaning congratulate), qing zhu (TL4 and 1, meaning celebrate).

**No.41**, equal to (No.1 + No.2 + No.4 + No.1 + No.14) or (No.40 + No.1 + No.14), the example word is bing (TL4), meaning illness or sickness.

**No.42**, equal to (No.27 + No.5), the example word is ting (TL2), jia ting (TL1 and 2, means family or home), ting yuan (TL2 and 4, means courtyard).

**No.43**, equal to (No.1 + No.27 + No.5) or (No.1 + No.42), the example word is bian (TL1), bian yuan (TL1 and 3, means remote or far from the centre), bian yuan (TL1 and 2, means edge or margin).

**No.44**, equal to (No.2 + No.3 + No.14), called as soil fragment; the example word is di (TL4), tu di (TL3 and 4, means land), di qiu (TL3 and 2, means the earth or the globe), di li (TL3 and 3, means geographical features of a place), di zhu (TL3 and 3, means landlord).

**No.45**, equal to (No.2 + No.1 + No.4), called as grass fragment; the example word is hua (TL1), meaning flower.

**No.46**, equal to (No.2 + No.10 + No.14), the example word is da (TL3), meaning beat.

**No.47**, equal to (No.3 + No.8 + No.2), called as mouth fragment; the example word is ye (TL4), shu ye (TL4 and 4, meaning tree leaf).

**No.48**, equal to (No.3 + No.8 + No.2), larger than No.47, called as country fragment; the example word is guo (TL2), guo jia (TL2 and 1, meaning country), zhong guo (TL1 and 2, meaning China).

**No.49**, equal to (No.1 + No.3 + No.11), called as door fragment; the example word is jian (TL1), shi jian (TL2 and 1, meaning time), fang jian (TL2 and 1, meaning room), jian duan (TL2 and 4, meaning be disconnected), jian xi (TL2 and 1, meaning gap).

**No.50**, equal to (No.4 + No.18 + No.4), the first No.4 is crossed with No.18, but the second only contacted. The example word is gou (TL3) and means dog.

**No.51**, equal to (No.4 + No.21 + No.16), the example word is fang (TL4), meaning cooked rice. A popular greeting sentence in China is 'ni chi fang mei you' (TL3, 1, 4, 2 and 3), directly meaning 'Have you finished eating cooked rice?' and indirectly meaning 'How are you?' or 'How do you do?'.

**No.52**, equal to (No.15 + No.2 + No.4), called as female fragment; the example word is ma (TL1) and meaning mother.

**No.53**, equal to (No.25 + No.25 + No.14), called as silk fragment; the example word is hong (TL2) and means red color.

**No.54**, equal to (No.8 + No.12 + No.14), called as horse fragment; the example word is lv (TL2) and means donkey.

**No.55**, equal to (No.4 + No.2 + No.4 + No.5), the example word is gu (TL4), gu shi (TL4 and 4) means story, gu xiang (TL4 and 1) means native place or hometown.

**No.56**, equal to (No.1 + No.4 + No.1 + No.1), called as fire fragment; the example word is deng (TL1) and means lamp.

**No.57**, equal to (No.1 + No.26 + No.3 + No.1), called as clothing fragment; the example word is zu (TL3), zu xian (TL3 and 1) means ancestor, zu guo (TL3 and 2) means mother country.

**No.58**, equal to (No.1 + No.26 + No.3 + No.15) or (No.57 + short No.4), the example word is bu (TL3), bu chong (TL3 and 1) means supplement, feng bu (TL2 and 3) means sew and mend.

**No.59**, equal to (No.2 + No.3 + No.4 + No.1), called as wood fragment; the example word is lin (TL2) and belongs to one of Chinese family names (or second names); sen lin (TL1 and 2) means forest.

**No.60** equal to (No.3 + No.8 + No.2 + No.2), called as sun fragment; the example word is shi (TL2), shi jian (TL2 and 1) means time, shi ji (TL2 and 1) means an opportune moment.

**No.61**, equal to (No.4 + No.2 + No.10 + No.2 + No.2), called as moon fragment; the example word is du (TL3) and means stomach.

**No.62**, equal to (short No.4 + No.21), the example word is xie (TL3) and means write.

**No.63**, equal to (No.1 + short No.4 + No.21) or (No.1 + No.62), the example word is shi (TL2), shi nei (TL2 and 4) means indoor, shi wai (TL2 and 4) means outdoor, jiao shi (TL4 and 2) means classroom.

**No.64**, equal to (No.1 + short No.4 + No.21 + short No.4 + No.1) or (No.63 + short No.4 + No.1), the example word is kong (TL1) and means empty, kong jian (TL1 and 1) means space, kong qi (TL1 and 4) means air.

**No.65**, equal to (No.2 + No.2 + No.3 + No.2 or No.14), called as king fragment; the example word is wan (TL2) and means play, wan you xi (TL2, 2 and 4) means playing game.

**No.66**, equal to (No.2 + No.4 + No.47), called as stone fragment; the example word is kuang (TL4) and means ore.

**No.67**, equal to (No.3 + No.8 + No.2 + No.2 + No.2) or (No.60 + No.2), called as eye fragment; the example word is yan (TL3) and means eye, yan guang (TL3 and 1) means eye light or foresight.

**No.68**, equal to (No.3 + No.8 + No.3 + No.3 + No.2), the example word is luo (TL2), which belongs to one of Chinese family names.

**No.69**, equal to (No.3 + No.8 + No.3 + No.3 + long No.2), called as utensil fragment; the example word is pen (TL2) and means basin.

**No.70**, equal to (No.4 + No.2 + No.2 + No.2 + No.16), called as metal fragment; the example word is *din* (TL1) and means (iron) nail.

**No.71**, equal to (No.4 + No.2 + No.3 + No.4 + No.1), the example word is *he* (TL2), meaning and.

**No.72**, equal to (short No.4 + No.60), called as white color fragment; the example word is *de* (TL1), *ni de* (TL3 and 1) means your, *wo de* (TL3 and 1) means mine, *ta de* (TL1 and 1) means his, her or its.

**No.73**, equal to (No.1 + short No.4 + No.2 + No.3 + No.4 + No.1), called as uncooked rice (sounding *mi*-TL3) fragment; the example word is *liang* (TL2) and means grain.

**No.74**, equal to (short No.3 + short No.2 + No.21 + No.4 + No.2 + No.7), called as tiger fragment; the example word is *fu* (TL3) and means tiger.

**No.75**, equal to (No.47 + No.3 + No.2 + No.1), called as insect fragment; the example word is *xia* (TL1) and means shrimp.

**No.76**, equal to (short No.4 + short No.2 + No.1 + repeating previous 3 steps), called as bamboo fragment; the example word is *bi* (TL3) and means (writing) pen.

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OR REGULARITIES OF CHINESE WORDS

Chinese digital expression (Figure 6) is simpler than that of English. There are obviously regularities from *shi* (TL2, meaning ten) onwards for Chinese (*shi* plus cardinal numbers or cardinal numbers plus *shi*) whereas from thirteen onwards (-teen, -ty) for English. Week and month expression (Figure 7) are much easier than that of English. The first two words (*xing qi*, week) or the last word (*yue*, month) is the same, which is similar to week in English (-day), but the months are different.

一	二	三	四	五	六	七
yi	er	san	si	wu	liu	qi
one	two	three	four	five	six	seven
八	九	十	百	千	万	亿
ba	jiu	shi	bai	qian	wan	yi
eight	nine	ten	hundred	thousand	0.01 million	0.1 billion

Figure 6 Writing/sounding/meaning of Chinese digital expression

*Yi* (TL 1, Stroke No.2) means one (3 alphabetic letters, simplified as 3AL). *Er* (TL 4, double stroke No.2, the second is a little bit longer) means two (3AL). *San* (TL 1, three stroke No.2, the second is a little bit shorter and the third longer) means three (5AL). *Si* (TL 4, fragment No.47 or 48 + mirrored stroke No.6 + stroke No.6) means four (4AL). *Wu* (TL 3, stroke No.2 + stroke No.3 + stroke No.8 + stroke No.2) means five (4AL). *Liu* (TL 4, stroke No.1 + stroke No.2 + stroke No.4 + stroke No.5) means six (3AL). *Qi* (TL 1, stroke No.2 + stroke No.6) means seven (5AL). *Ba* (TL 1, stroke No.4 + stroke No.5) means eight (5AL). *Jiu* (TL 3, stroke No.3 + stroke No.9) means nine (4AL). *Shi* (TL 2, stroke No.2 + stroke No.3) means ten (3AL). *Bai* (TL 2, stroke No.2 + fragment No.72) means hundred (7AL). *Qian* (TL 1, stroke No.4 + stroke No.2 + stroke No.3) means thousand (8AL). *Wan* (TL 4, stroke No.2 + stroke No.4 + stroke No.11) means ten thousand (11AL) or 0.01 million (7AL), the million is equal to Chinese *bai wan* (*bai* + *wan*). *Yi* (TL 4, fragment No.34 + stroke No.26 + stroke No.2) means 0.1 billion. *Xing* (TL 1, fragment No. 60 + stroke No.4 + stroke No.2 + fragment No. 44) means star (in the sky). *Qi* (TL 2, stroke No.2 + stroke No.3 + stroke No.3 + three times of stroke No.2 + stroke No.4 + stroke No.1 + fragment No.61) means period. *Yue* (TL 4, fragment No.61) means month.

星期一 xingqiyi Monday	星期二 xingqier Tuesday	星期三 xingqisan Wednesday	星期四 xingqisi Thursday	星期五 xingqiwu Friday	星期六 xingqiliu Saturday	星期日 xingqiri Sunday
一月 yiyue January	二月 eryue February	三月 sanyue March	四月 siyue April	五月 wuyue May	六月 liuyue June	
七月 qiyue July	八月 bayue August	九月 jiuyue September	十月 shiyue October	十一月 shiyiyue November	十二月 shieryue December	

Figure 7 Expression of week and month in Chinese

Compared with English words, Chinese words or vocabularies are easy to be guessed and remembered, for example, niu (TL 2) means cattle, gong niu (TL 1and 2) means bull, mu niu (TL 3and 2) means cow, xiao niu (TL 3and 2) means calf, niu jiao (TL 2 and 3) means horn, niu rou (TL 2 and 4) means beef and niu nai (TL 2 and 3) means milk. There is a common word (niu) which the meaning must be related with cattle and can be guessed when the accompanied word is read (Figure 8). But no regularities can be found in the seven English words and have to be memorized mechanically.

牛	公牛	母牛	小牛	牛角	牛肉	牛奶
niu	gongniu	muniu	xiaoniu	niujiao	niurou	niunai
cattle	bull	cow	calf	horn	beef	milk

Figure 8 Writing/sounding/meaning of Chinese words (A)

Chinese words initially evolved from pictures. Ren (TL 2, meaning person) and ma (TL 3, meaning horse) are two typical examples (Figure 9 and Figure 10). It reflected the ancient social form, social system or mode of production. For example, nan (TL 2, meaning man) is composed of tian (TL 2, meaning field) and li (TL 2, meaning physical strength). It consumed physical strength for ancient men to fell (trees), hunt and plant crops in a field. Fu (TL 4, meaning rich) and qiong (TL 2, meaning poor) showed that it was rich when there was a field in a family whereas poor when only physical strength in. Ren (TL 2, meaning person) was initially the shape of greeting someone and secondly the shape of two legs' when walking, which suggested that there was no bicycle or car and had to go on foot. Cong (TL 2, meaning follow) was one person following another or two persons getting together. Zhong (TL 4, meaning the masses) was three persons getting together and one person (as a leader) heading (on upper side). Qiu (TL 2, meaning prisoner) referred to a person being closed in a box or all around walls (Figure 11).

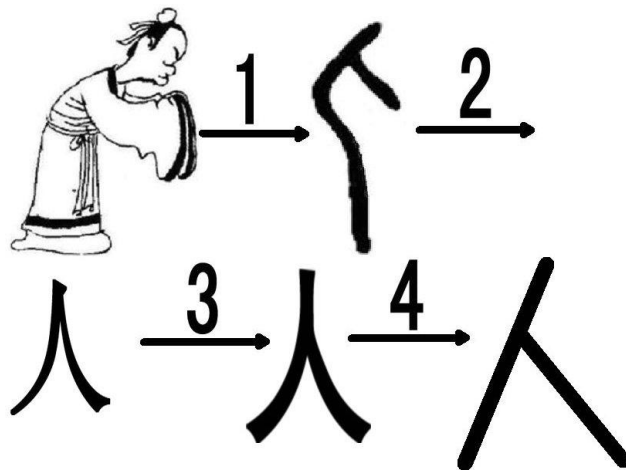


Figure 9 Evolution procedures of ren (TL 3, meaning person)





Figure 10 Evolution procedures of ma (TL 3, meaning horse)

男	富	穷	人	从	众	囚
nan	fu	qiong	ren	cong	zhong	qiu
man	rich	poor	person	follow	the masses	prisoner

Figure 11 Writing/sounding/meaning of Chinese words (B)

Each Chinese word has a voice, some of them have meanings but others have not and should accompany with another word (s). There is relevance in most Chinese words. For example, bi (TL 3, fragment No.76 + stroke No. 4 + stroke No. 2 + stroke No. 2 + stroke No. 7) means (brush) pen, which is composed of bamboo fragment and (animal) hair (Figure 12). Lei (TL 2, meaning thunder) has yu (TL 3, meaning rain) at the upper side and tian (TL 2, meaning field) at the below side, which the ancient Chinese people thought that the huge voice was lei (thunder) when it was raining in a field. Sha (TL 1, meaning sand) has three drops of water at the left and shao (TL 3, meaning lack) at the right, the matter was sha (sand) when much water gradually disappeared or lacked. Mu (TL 4, meaning grazing) has niu (TL 2, meaning cattle) at the left and fragment No.55, meaning two hands crossed together) at the right. A person with two hands crossed together was following a cattle, it reflected that the animal was grazing. Wen (TL 2, meaning hear or smell) has er (TL 3, meaning ear) in men (TL 2, meaning door). When a person with his ear hided in a door, he was hearing somebody outside saying. When his ear was near to a cooking place indoor, he smelled the food in the pot. Wen (TL 4, meaning ask) has kou (TL 3, meaning mouth) in men (TL 2, meaning door). When a person got in a door and (opened his) mouth, he wanted to ask something. Men (TL 4, meaning depressed) has xin (TL 1, meaning heart) in men (TL 2, meaning door). When a person with his heart was in a door, he (heart) never went out door and he could be depressed because of frustration.

笔	雷	沙	牧	闻	问	闷
bi	lei	sha	mu	wen	wen	men
pen	thunder	sand	grazing	hear smell	ask	depressed

Figure 12 Writing/sounding/meaning of Chinese words (C)

V. DISCUSSION

Chinese words teaching always lagged behind phonetic teaching when teaching Chinese language to foreigners. Many of them remained stagnant in learning because of wrong or difficult writing (Wan Yexin, 2004). Chinese Phonetics and words were two tasks faced by foreigners. It should begin with basic and simple strokes of Chinese words (Wan Yexin, 2009). Characteristics of Chinese words could only be found by comparing with other country language. Difficult to write and remember could only be solved by analyzing the characteristics of Chinese words (Li Yunfu, 2014).

In this article, 28 basic strokes of Chinese words are firstly introduced. It is pointed out that the difficulty for foreigners to learn Chinese words is their grotesque shapes written by brush (soft) pen and printed in books. The special writing method with a hard pen and 8 directions moving steps are invented and firstly shown, which is easy for foreigners to try. The size (length) of strokes will guide them to control the proportion of a word. It could be changed according to paper size and how large they want to write. Secondly, 48 common fragments derived from 28 basic strokes are listed and the writing method described. It could help foreigners to separate and re-write unknown Chinese words and even guess out the meanings. Lastly, many characteristics or regularities of Chinese words will have great attraction for foreign language learners. Some Chinese cultures or amusing stories are also exposed in fragments and example words.

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# The Role of Equilibration in Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development and Its Implication for Receptive Skills: A Theoretical Study

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**Abstract**—Piaget's theory, which is at the center of cognitive approaches to psychology and learning, gave a significant importance to the construct of equilibration. This construct plays a paramount role in cognitive adaptation. It is the unifying factor, and thus the sufficient condition of cognitive development. An attempt was made in this paper to revisit the construct of equilibrium in the realm of cognitive development and relate it to the two receptive language skills, namely; listening and reading comprehension. Topics analyzed included, overview of Piaget's theory of cognitive development, assimilation and accommodation in the process of equilibration and their role in cognitive adaptation, kinds of equilibration, schema theory, Rutherford's neo-Piagetian view of assimilation and accommodation. Then the process of equilibration was related to the practical contexts and its implications and contributions to the listening and reading comprehension was described. It's also described how critical thinking, schemata, assimilation, accommodation, and reading comprehension are interrelated to each other in implication section. Finally, Rutherford's neo-Piagetian view is contributed to reading comprehension from socio-cultural perspective.

**Index Terms**—Piaget's theory of cognitive development, assimilation and accommodation, equilibration, schemata, Rutherford's Neo-Piagetian view

## I. INTRODUCTION

The term development in its broadest psychological perspective denotes to definite transformations that happen in human beings (or animals) amid the outset and closing stages of their life. The term is not applied to all transformations, but rather those that emerge in systematic ways and hang about for a rationally long period of time. Psychologists also make a value judgment in determining which changes qualify as development. The changes, at least those that occur early in life, are generally assumed to be the better and to result in behavior that is more adaptive, more organized, more effective, and more complex (Mussen, Conger, & Kagan, 1984, as cited in Woolfolk, Winne and Perry 2003).

According to Woolfolk, Winne and Perry (2003), human development can be defined into a number of different perspectives. Physical development, which is associated with body, Personal development deals with the changes in individual's personality. Social development takes into account the relationship between people and tries to define change in this way. Cognitive development as the name infer, identifies change in thinking and cognitive realms of human being (p. 24).

Although there is disagreement about the way of the development or what is involved during the development, there are some general principles that theorists in this domain would agree with. These principles are; "1. People develop at different rate. 2. Development is relatively orderly. 3. Development takes place gradually" (Woolfolk, Winne & Perry, 2003, p. 25). Based on the first principle, we can see many students in our classrooms in which, some of them are tall and some of them are short or some of them are intellectually better than others and the others are slow at the rate of their learning or some students are social and make relationship with their fellow students but conversely the others are embarrassed and silent. To concretize the second principle, we can see that the children first sit before they can walk or babble before they can talk. The third principle states that, development is not happened at one time; instead it takes place gradually and for a long period of time, provided that some preconditions are shaped and constructed for the next time of the development.

Theories of development provide a framework for thinking about human growth, development, and learning. Understanding these theories can provide useful insight into both the individual and societal influences on early development (Armstrong et al 2014). Over the last decade's various theories of early child development have been proposed. Although these theories have been significant in their own right, they have also had some limitations. Armstrong et al (2014) enumerated and incorporated some of these theories precisely and highlighted them which help to explain how children learn and grow, by what means their behavior may be modified and improved, and why it is argued that their outcomes are shaped by both biology and experiences. These theories are; attachment theory which

emphasizes the development that is the result of the relationship between children and their parent. Cognitive theory that is concerned with children's cognitive development, attributed to psychologist Jean Piaget. The focal point of this theory is that, cognitive skills progress through a series of stages in which new information from experiences is taken in and understood. **Ecological Systems Theory** which helps to explain how children develop within the context of their world. In this theory, there are five systems that influence development; Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem, Macrosystem, and Chronosystem, and considered that the person's biology also contributed to these systems. **Prevention Model** which emphasizes multiple layers of supports and services aimed to decrease risk factors and reduce disorders, in order to promote better outcomes. **Parenting Styles**. It refers to the degree to which parents respond to their child's needs, disciplinary strategies they use, parental expectations for maturity and control, and the effects that this has on their child's development (p. 22-28).

As we saw, there are various models and theories which are influential and notable but researches have shown that Piaget's theory has been more influential than others. In this theory Piaget introduces the construct of equilibration. This construct or process has a paramount role in his theory and a necessary condition for cognitive adaptation which lead the child to the cognitive development. According to Piaget (1952, as cited in Aloqaili, A.S., 2011) equilibrium is a balance between two other processes namely; assimilation and accommodation. According to Woolfolk, Winne and Perry (2003), Piaget also introduces other important construct, named schema to the realm of psychology and education. In fact, schema or (pl. schemata) plays a significant role in the process of assimilation and accommodation. This article is dealt with Piaget's construct of equilibration, its role in cognitive development and its implication for two language receptive skills namely, listening and reading. In this article, I try to discuss and investigate this construct from educational perspective in order to associate it with listening and reading comprehension.

## II. PIAGET'S THEORY OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

The most influential theorist in the study of cognitive development was Jean Piaget, who was born in 1896 and died in 1980. His prolific career in psychology spanned an astonishing 7 decades. Jean Piaget was no ordinary child. From a very early age, he showed tremendous intellectual talent and even from the age 15 to age 18 published various influential articles. His insightful descriptions of children's thinking changed the way we understand cognitive development. (Cook & Cook, 2005).

According to Piaget (1954, as cited in Woolfolk, Winne and Perry 2003), certain ways of thinking that are quite simple for an adult are not simple for a child. Sometime all we need to do to teach a new concept is to give a student a few basic facts as background. At other times, however, all the background facts in the world are useless. The student is not simply ready to learn the concept. As we can infer, providing a few basic facts is not all the child need for his cognitive development. There are other factors that would interact to influence change in thinking. Piaget (1970, as cited in Woolfolk, Winne and Perry 2003), identified these factor and nominated them as; biological maturation, activity, social experiences, and equilibration. At first I concretize and characterize the first three factors and then I will return to the equilibrium factor in the next section and will discuss it precisely.

According to Woolfolk, Winne and Perry (2003) Maturation is the one of the important pre-requisite for the way that we make sense of the world. This factor is dealt with biological changes and unfolds these changes that are programmed in each human being at conception. Parents and teachers have little impact on this kind of change except in the case of the provision of healthier conditions which are necessary for maturation. Second factor, activity relate physical maturation to the environment and assumes that, over time whenever physical ability gains its maturation, its acts upon environment and learn from it. This factor deals with concepts such as observation, evaluation, and hypothesis formation. Children through these concepts, in other words through their physical maturation discover their milieu. The third factor is social experiences. Piaget identified this factor by taking the social context into consideration. According to this factor we cannot neglect social context, social transmissions and the relationship between people, which all influence cognitive development. We can learn from our context and culture by social transmissions and this learning is largely depended on the individual's current stage of cognitive development.

### A. *Two Basic Inclinations and Tendencies in Thinking*

According to Piaget's research on biology (as cited in Woolfolk, Winne and Perry 2003), human beings have two basic tendencies. The first one is the tendency toward organization which deals with the combining, arranging, recombining, and rearranging of the behavior and thought in the coherent system. The second tendency is toward adaptation which is concerned with adapting and adjusting with the environment.

#### **1. Organization**

This concept assumes that people have a tendency to organize their thinking processes into psychological structures. These psychological structures help us to understand and interact with the world. In this way, simple structure combined together to become more effective and sophisticated. Very young infants, for example, can either look at an object or grasp it when it comes in contact with their hands. They cannot coordinate looking and grasping at the same time. As they develop, however infants organize these two separate behavioral structures into a coordinated higher level structure of looking at, reading for, and grasping the object. They can of course, still use each structure separately (Ginsburg & Opper, 1998; Miller, 1993, as cited in Woolfolk, Winne and Perry 2003).

The important concept which requires special attention is *schema* (*pl. schemata*). In Piaget's theory this concept has its own place and for him, this concept is very important in the process of cognitive development. Schemata are the networks of structures in our mind and help us to encounter and make sense of the milieu around us. They are very specific, for example, from eating an ice cream schema to taking part in a party. So when we are encountered with the milieu and environments, related schemes are activated and allow us to make sense from our environment. According to Piaget (1970, as cited in Woolfolk, Winne and Perry 2003) as persons thinking processes become more organized and sophisticated, new schemes develop and behavior also become more sophisticated and better suited in the environment. Over the last years this concept has been extended to some disciplines related to education especially in the domain of language teaching and learning to include teaching and learning speaking and listening skills accordingly. I will return to this notion and its implication for the realm of language teaching and learning in implication section.

## 2. Adaptation

As the term suggests this concept refers to the human being's adjustment to the new environment. It can be defined as "changing one's cognitive structure or one's environment (or both to some degree) in order to better understand the environment" (Cook & Cook, 2005, p. 5-7). According to the Piaget, in the process of adaptation or adjustment two basic processes are involved, namely; assimilation and accommodation. These two basic processes or in other words, pre-requisites are important for adaptation to take place.

### B. Assimilation

According to Pritchard and Wollard (2010) assimilation is the collecting and classifying of new information. Schema has a paramount importance in this process and this is a notional representation of what an individual knows (or can do) and consists of discrete items of knowledge which are linked to each other by the common theme of the schema. When new information is encountered, for example, a car with no roof, a car painted with flowers, this is added to the existing schema; in other words, it is assimilated. However, it will only be assimilated if it does not contradict something already established as an integral part of what exists (p. 12). In this process, we may have to distort the new information to make it fit. For example; the first time many children see a skunk, they call it a "kitty." In this process they try to match the new experiences with an existing schema for identifying animals (Woolfolk, Winne, & Perry, 2003).

As we can infer from this example, scheme plays a paramount role in the process of assimilation and without which the process encounter with some of the problems. Sometimes the existing schemata are not in accordance with incoming information, so in this situation, the process will be changed to accommodate new information in the process of accommodation.

### C. Accommodation

"Accommodation refers to the process of changing internal structures of knowledge in order to have consistency with external reality" (Yang, 2010, p. 203). In the process of accommodation existing schemata should be changed to accommodate and include incoming and new information. In this process we modify old schemes or create new ones to better fit assimilated information. (Cook & Cook, 2005). For example, sucking through straw may require some accommodation if the straw is of different size or length than the type we are accustomed to. There are also times when neither assimilation nor accommodation is used. For example, when we encounter something that is very unfamiliar, we actually ignore it (Woolfolk, Winne, & Perry, 2003). For example, in listening to the conversation when we haven't had any experience and knowledge of the language of that conversation. So in this situation we probably ignore the conversation and prefer not to use the processes of assimilation and accommodation.

To make a distinction between assimilation and accommodation, Wadsworth (1996 as cited in Aloqaili, A.S., 2011), claims that accommodation deals with development (a qualitative change) and assimilation deals with growth (a quantitative change); together these processes account for intellectual adaptation and the development of intellectual structures. On the other hand, Rubin (1997 as cited in Aloqaili, A.S., 2011) asserts that, in spite of the importance of both assimilation and accommodation as a cognitive process development, children should be aware of making balance between these two processes. Therefore, balancing between assimilation and accommodation is the function of the third cognitive mechanism, which is equilibrium. A brief explanation of equilibrium is provided below.

### D. Equilibration

Equilibration is one of the hypothetical constructs used by Piaget to explain part of his theory of cognitive development. As the name suggest, the process of equilibration requires the balance between assimilation and accommodation. According to Gallagher (1977 as cited in Fajemidagra) equilibrium is the core of Piaget's theory of cognitive development which must be well perused. Piaget (1977 as cited in Fajemidagra) contends that equilibration should be regarded as a process, the search for a better state of equilibrium. The type of equilibrium state which Piaget refers to is not the physical type but a psychological equilibrium state. According to Flavel (1963 as cited in Fajemidagra) equilibrium states are composed or organized systems of actions (e.g. sensory motor, perceptual and concrete operations) whose attributes as systems are describable in equilibrium terms. The use of the term "equilibration" as self-regulation or auto regulation stems from Piaget's constant focus on the analogy between biological and cognitive adaptation. Admittedly, both of which require the two poles of assimilation and accommodation tending toward harmony through successive equilibrations (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969 as cited in

Fajemidagra). According to Piaget (1964 as cited in Fajemidagra) equilibration is an active and dynamic process. It is a process of self-regulation. It is a model of an equilibrated "system" where a transformation in one direction is compensated for by a transformation in the other direction. Kaiplus and his colleagues (1977 as cited in Fajemidagra) have attempted to operationally define equilibration within the realm of learning and instruction in science. They explain that reflection, restructuring of tasks, and learning from others contributes to the formation of new reasoning patterns.

### 1. *Kinds of equilibrium*

According to Piaget (1977 as cited in Fajemidagra) the first type of equilibrium pertains to the relationship between assimilation and accommodation. Before this type of equilibrium can be attained, there should be a balance between the cognitive structures of the subject and the objects. The subject's cognitive structures accommodate to the new object being presented and at the same time assimilate the object into his structures. The second kind of equilibrium is equilibrium among the subsystems of the subject's schema. In reality, the schemas of assimilation are coordinated into partial systems, which are referred to as subsystems in relation to the totality of the subject's knowledge. The subsystems can present conflicts among themselves. This type of conflict is illustrated by Piaget (1977, p. 11 as cited in Fajemidagra) by citing the logic mathematical operations. He claims that it is possible to have conflicts between a subsystem dealing with classifications, seriation, and number construction. The third kind of equilibrium in cognitive development is determined by the balance between the parts of the subject's knowledge and the totality of his knowledge at any given moment. Piaget labeled this type of equilibrium as "fundamental." He argues that often there is a constant differentiation of the totality of knowledge into parts and an integration of the parts back into the whole. Before knowledge can develop, there must be a sort of coordination between the two processes. In cognition, an attempt to integrate back what has been differentiated poses new problems. "These new problems lead to the construction of new actions upon the previous actions or new operations upon the previous actions or new operations upon the previous operations. The construction of operations upon operations presumably, may enhance transition from one stage to the next." (Piaget 1977, p. 12 as cited in Fajemidagra).

Regardless of the kinds of equilibrium that are spanned by the equilibration process, Flavell, (1977, p. 242 as cited in Fajemidagra) enumerated the following four things which a child needs the ability or disposition to do in sequence before equilibration can set in.

1. Attend to or notice both of the apparently conflicting elements of a situation.
2. Interpret and appreciate these elements as conflicting and, therefore problematic — a young child may not be able to do this,
3. Respond to the sensed conflict by progressing rather than regressing, e.g., by trying to explain it rather than by clinging defensively to his initial belief or refusing to have anything more to do with the problem.
4. Come up with a better conceptualization of the situation that can resolve the apparent conflict and thereby "reequilibrate" his mental structure at a higher development level.

### 2. *The process of equilibrium*

To concretize and put simply the whole discussion of the equilibration stated above, we can say that, the developing mind is constantly seeking an equilibration; the balance between what is known (the current schemata) and what is currently being experienced (the incoming information and new knowledge). This balance is accomplished by two sub-processes of assimilation and accommodation. Working in conjunction with each other, these two sub-processes construct the cognitive adaptation by the whole processes of equilibration. (Williams & Burden, 2000).

It is worth noting that sometimes schemata do not produce a satisfying result and this situation lead to the disequilibrium and we become uncomfortable. This motivate us to keep searching for a solution through assimilation and accommodation, and thus our thinking changes and move ahead until the incoming information accommodated and we make sense of the new information. (Woolfolk, Winne, & Perry, 2003). "To resolve the disequilibrium, we accommodate, or adjust, our schemes to provide a better fit for the new experience. If we are successful, we achieve *cognitive equilibrium*. **Equilibration** therefore is the dynamic process of moving between states of cognitive disequilibrium and equilibrium as we assimilate new experiences and accommodate schemes." (Cook & Cook, 2005, p. 5-8)

To delineate and concretize the whole process of the cognitive adaptation, let's have an example from (Cook & Cook, 2005):

"Lily, a 2-year-old who is learning to name animals, (the process shown in Figure 5.1). Lily has a dog at home, and according to her "doggie scheme," "doggies" are animals that have four feet and fur and that bark and fetch balls. One day, riding in the car with her mother, Lily points to a field with several cows and exclaims, "Look, Mommy, doggies!" She is excited to see so many "doggies," especially ones so large! We can see that Lily is trying to understand these new animals by thinking about them as something she already understands: "doggies." This is an example of **assimilation**, the process of bringing new objects or information into a scheme that already exists. Thinking of these new animals as "doggies," Lily fully expects that they will also bark and fetch balls. Her mother, however, comments, "No, those are cows. They are bigger than dogs. And see the udders underneath? Cows give us milk." These comments place Lily into cognitive disequilibrium—she is confused. Lily realizes that she has never seen udders under dogs and also has never seen dogs that large. To resolve her cognitive conflict, Lily adjusts her understanding of

animals. She adds new information about dogs (they are smaller and don't give us milk), and she learns a new animal (cows are like dogs but larger, and they give milk). These adjustments are examples of **accommodation**. Now Lily can properly identify dogs and cows, and her new success in naming the animals moves her into cognitive equilibrium" (Cook & Cook, 2005, p. 5-7).

The following diagrammatic representation at the next page delineates the example appropriately:

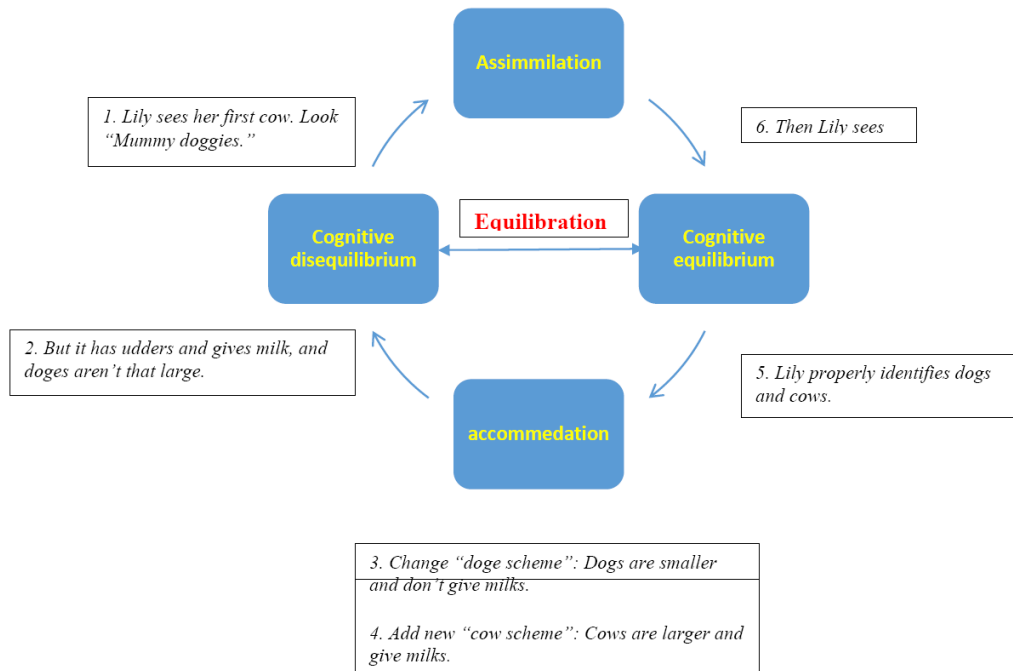


Figure 1. Adaptation and Equilibration

In the cycle of adaptation and equilibration, a new experience is first assimilated into an existing scheme. If it doesn't fit properly, cognitive disequilibrium results. Accommodating (adjusting) the scheme brings the child to cognitive equilibrium, until a new assimilation challenges the scheme again (Cook & Cook, 2005, p. 5-7).

### III. NEO-PIAGETIAN MODEL OF ASSIMILATION AND ACCOMMODATION IN THE COGNITIVE (STRUCTURAL) AND CULTURAL (BEHAVIORAL) REALMS

Since Piaget's theory of equilibrium, there has been a lot of interest about this basic concept and how to put this process into practice in educational institutions and especially in the process of teaching and learning. On the other hand, since one of the key requisites of this process was social relationship, so this construct or process has been extended to take into account the social cultural context. One of the researchers who have related the theory of equilibrium to the cultural context is Rutherford (2011). He has constructed the model of assimilation and accommodation in the cognitive and cultural realms. He has defined cognitive assimilation as construct growth for internal system's fit, and cognitive accommodation as construct change for external/environmental fit, cultural assimilation as prevailing culture growth as diverse cultural identities/groups adapt and adjust for contextual fit and cultural accommodation as prevailing culture change to fit plural cultural group's/identities' traditional practices and beliefs. In his new model, the "Me" - "I" cognitive and "Us" - "We" cultural dynamics are employed for grounding and delineating the model and neo-Piagetian developmental sequences are expounded separately for the "Me" (assimilatory cognitive), "I" (accommodatory cognitive), "Us" n (assimilatory cultural) and "We" (accommodatory cultural) realms (p. 1).

To ground the model, the writer has applied the systems-theoretic dimensions of "ego, system" and "cult, system", for example, in partnership with the contextual constructs of "environment, ego" and "environment, cult" (see the following figure for parallel system-context relations). Relative to these dimensions, he also argues that a "Me-pathway", and "I-pathway" are social-psychological products of the *cognitive* processes of assimilation and accommodation, respectively. Correspondingly and also relative to these dimensions, He also argues for an "Us-pathway", and "We-pathway" which are social-psychological products of the *cultural* processes of assimilation and accommodation, respectively. Following figure from Rutherford (2011) depicts these systems-based relationships:



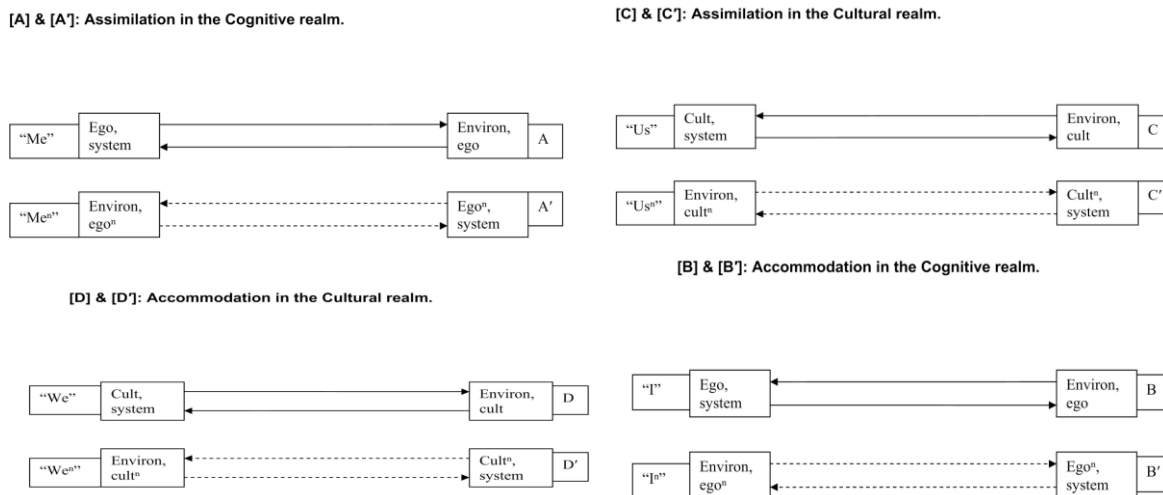


Figure 2. Neo-Piagetian model of Assimilation and Accommodation in the Cognitive (structural) and Cultural (behavioral) realms (Rutherford, 2011).

According to Rutherford, we can understand from the diagram that:

**Cognitive Assimilation** – entails the process whereby an individual’s constructs grow from interaction with the environment, for *internal fit*

**Cognitive Accommodation** – entails the process whereby an individual’s constructs change through interaction with an environment, for *external fit*

**Cultural Assimilation** – entails the process whereby a prevailing context/culture grows as diverse cultural identities/groups adapt (intelligently) and adjust (personally) to “fit in”, for *external fit* (& unity)

**Cultural Accommodation** – entails the process whereby a prevailing culture/context changes through plural cultural identities/groups living out their traditional beliefs and practices, for *internal fit* (& diversity)” (Rutherford, 2011, p. 2).

To delineate the above figure, Rutherford (2011) states that, [A] represents “Me” from a person’s own (self/ego) side of the self-other interrelationship and [A’] represents the “Me” (“Me”) from an other’s (ego) side. For instance, “Me” as a scientist and another “Me” as an artisan. [B] depicts the “I” from one’s own (self/ego) side of the self-other interrelationship and [B’] depicts the “I” (“I”) from an other’s (ego) side. For instance, “I” as an introvert and another “I” as an extrovert. [C] portrays the “Us” from one’s own cultural group/identity’s side of the sociocultural unit (*cult, system*) - culture (*environment, cult*) cross-cultural interrelationship and [C’] portrays the “Us” (“Us”) from another group’s/cultural identity’s side (*cult<sup>n</sup>, system – environ, cult<sup>n</sup>*). For example, from the context of Australian national culture “Us” may be the Anglo-Celtic Australian community and another “Us” the Chinese Australian (or Australian Chinese) community. [D] illustrates the “We” from one’s own cultural group/identity’s side of the socio-cultural unit (*cult, system*) - culture (*environment, cult*) cross-cultural interrelationship and [D’] illustrates the “We” (“We”) from another group’s/cultural identity’s side (*cult<sup>n</sup>, system – environ, cult<sup>n</sup>*). For example, from the context of world cities “We” may be Sydneysiders and another “We” Berliners (p. 3).

To conclude Rutherford’s Neo-Piagetian model of Assimilation and Accommodation, it is worth noting that, he takes into account the socio-cultural dimensions of cognitive development and as a matter of fact this is the positive aspect of his theory. However, his model should be tested empirically for the purpose of validation and practical implication.

#### IV. IMPLICATIONS OF PIAGET’S CONSTRUCT OF EQUILIBRIUM FOR RECEPTIVE SKILLS

##### A. Schema (Schemata)

Piaget’s construct of schema has been embraced by many of researchers in the realm of language teaching and learning over the last decades. In teaching the language skills, receptive skills, namely reading and listening have been related to this concept closely and schema plays an important role in teaching and learning of these two skills. One of the reasons of this relationship between schema and these skills is actually the practical inferences that can be drawn from the definition of this concept. Piaget (1977 as cited in Woolfolk, Winne, & Perry, 2003) himself defines scheme as mental systems or categories of perception and experience that can be called whenever we encounter new situation or incoming information. This concept has been defined variously between researchers in the realm of cognitive psychology; however, the whole concept is common among these definitions. For example, Rumelhart (1984 as cited in Aloqaili, A.S., 2011) defined schema as an organized knowledge that one has about people, objects, places, events, processes, concepts, and virtually everything that provides a basis for learning. Bos and Anders (1990 as cited in Aloqaili, A.S., 2011) claimed that, schema theory describes how knowledge is structured in memory and how these structures affect incoming information. Anderson and Wilson (1986 as cited in Aloqaili, A.S., 2011) asserted that schema theory explains how people’s existing knowledge affects comprehension. However, Over the last decades, this concept has been extended to include formal schema and content schema. According to Lynch (2006) “there are two

kinds of schemata; content schemata and formal schemata. Content schemata are networks of knowledge on different topics, for example, "cooking," comprising knowledge gained from a range of sources and also personal experience. Formal schemata are derived from our knowledge of the structure of discourse genres, e.g., an academic lecture, a sermon" (p. 89).

### *B. Schema and Listening Skill*

Schema has a paramount importance in listening skill. There are two types of processing related to the listening, namely bottom up and top down processing. The second one, top down processing is related to the theory of schema. In top-down processing we rely on what we already know to help make sense of what we hear; in other words, we rely on our schemata related to what we hear. In the case of content schemata as Lynch (2006) pointed out, when we hear someone talking about a topic that we are able to link to an existing content schema, then we find comprehension very much easier. On the other hand, in the case of formal schemata an awareness of what sort of discourse is being listened to, makes it easier to engage in top-down processing strategies, such as predicting and inferring (p. 89).

To make a relationship between top down processing and the process of equilibration, it can be said that schemata plays an important role in the process of equilibration, in other words it balances the complex process of assimilation and accommodation and avoid the process of disequilibrium. For example, when we hear a speech with which we have the schema related to the topic of that speech, we can use the related schema to make sense of what we hear, in other words schema in this situation avoid us from the process of disequilibrium and enable us to reach to the cognitive adaptation.

### *C. Schema and Reading Comprehension*

The theory of schema is tightly associated with reading comprehension. On applying this theory to reading, researchers (Grabe & Swaffar, 1988) found that reading was an *interactive* process, i.e., it was a dynamic interaction between the writer and the reader in which the reader creates meaning from the text by activating his stored knowledge and extending it with the new information supplied by the text (Grabe & Swaffar, 1988). This direction in reading research concentrated on the text-reader interaction. Indeed, that appears to be the current direction, with the added dimension of the social context, which came from the work of sociolinguists. This view to reading highlights the importance of sociocultural context for improving cognitive adaptation and avoiding cognitive disequilibrium. In my opinion, learners can rely on schemata in reading comprehension more than listening comprehension. The reason of this different dependence on schemata is laid down on the modality of these two skills. The modality of these skills is different. Modality of listening is sound; on the other hand, modality of reading is sight and visual motion. This modality makes speech transient, while this is not so matter in reading comprehension. Because reading is not transient, learners can rely on their schemata more than when they are listening to speech. So, this helps them to understand what they read and avoid them from disequilibrium. Readers also rely on the different kinds of schemata; namely content and formal schemata in their reading activity to better make sense of what they read and to reach the cognitive adaptation.

In the process of assimilation, Wadsworth (1996 as cited in Aloqaili, A. S. 2011) describes the assimilation process like adding air into a balloon and claims that, this process elaborates the size or growth of schemata, however, it does not alter them. He stated the following:

*Assimilation theoretically does not result in a change of schemata, but it does affect the growth of schemata and is thus a part of development. One might compare a schema to a balloon and assimilation to putting more air in the balloon. The balloon gets larger (assimilation growth), but it does not change its shape. Assimilation is a part of the process by which the individual cognitively adapts to and organizes the environment" (p. 17).*

We can infer that assimilation has a paramount effect on the growth of schemata by adding or taking in new information to old. In the process of reading comprehension, our schematic knowledge can be enlarged to include the variety of concepts and topics by reading the variety of topics and materials. We can say that normal and gradual reading facilitate this process. Over time when we read more and more material, our schematic knowledge grows and grows by assimilating more and more concepts and incoming information and in a final run it helps us in the process of equilibrium. However, the assimilation process itself does not change or create new schemata. Change and creation of schemata are the functions of another cognitive development process, which is accommodation. Whenever we read material and incoming stimuli which are unfamiliar for us, in this situation we cannot assimilate new stimuli and we have to accommodate them, so, in this way we rely on two ways; to construct new schemata in which to place the stimulus, or change or modify the existing ones to fit with new stimulus. Rubin (1997 as cited Aloqaili, A. S. 2011) explains that a child (or a student) with equilibrium process would be able to see similarities between stimuli (reading material) and thus assimilate them, and also would be able to determine when new schemata are needed for adequate accommodation of a surplus of categories or schemata. Therefore, we can see how well the theories of schemata, assimilation, accommodation and equilibration and reading comprehension are interrelated with each other.

According to Woolfolk & Winne and Perry (2003) Piaget has taught us that we can learn a great deal about children's thinking by listening carefully and paying close attention to their ways of solving their problems and encountering with new situations. By understanding children's or students thinking, we can better match teaching material to the children's and student's current abilities. Schemata have another utility for curriculum designers, administrators, teachers and researchers in the realm of second language acquisition, especially reading and listening.

For example, curriculum or course book designers by using need analysis technique, can include a variety of topics for students reading comprehension related to their existing schemata. Teachers when they teach a reading lesson can make a warm up by advance organizers and relate the incoming stimuli to the students existing schemata.

#### *D. Matching Strategies to Abilities*

An important implication of Piaget's theory for teaching is what J.M. Hunt years ago (1961, as cited in Woolfolk, Winne and Perry 2003) called "the problem of the match" Students must be neither bored by work that is too simple nor left behind by teaching they cannot understand. According to Hunt, disequilibrium must be kept "just right" to encourage growth. Setting up reading and listening activities that would lead students the error can generate disequilibrium. "When students experience some conflict between what they think should happen (a piece of wood should sink because it is big) and what actually happens (it floats), they may rethink their understanding, and new knowledge may develop" (Woolfolk, Winne & Perry, 2003, p. 38).

To evaluate their thinking in the process of equilibration and construction of meaning in a reading or listening activity, students need to interact with their teachers and peers to challenge their existing schemata, to receive feedback and to watch how other students work out the problems. In these situations, disequilibrium is often set in motion naturally when the teacher or another student suggests the new way of solving the problem. Concrete experiences provide the raw material for thinking. Communication and interaction make students use, evaluate and finally adapt their current thinking abilities. (Woolfolk, Winne & Perry, 2003). In other words, interaction and communication in reading classes with fellow students help students to reach to the cognitive equilibrium and show them how to avoid from cognitive disequilibrium and finally how to adapt their cognitive development.

#### *E. Interlanguage and Equilibration*

The process of interlanguage is closely related to the process of equilibration. As Williams & Burden (2000) pointed out, when we receive input of a language, for example, when we read a novel, we need to modify what we already know about the language by the process of accommodation, so as to fit the new information (reading material) into our existing knowledge by the process of assimilation. By these processes, we gradually develop our knowledge of how the system of new language operates. In other words, we develop our interlanguage. Interlanguage in the field of second language acquisition is defined as learner's knowledge of target language that is gradually re-shaped as it more closely approximate to that language by the process of assimilation, accommodation and finally equilibration (p. 23). So we can infer that if we read more and more material in the target language, our interlanguage by the process of assimilation and accommodation can be developed and approximated to the target language.

#### *F. Critical Thinking, Reading Comprehension and the Process of Equilibration*

The literature indicates that there is no consensus regarding the definition of critical thinking. A multiplicity and variation of definitions of critical thinking are reflective of the way in which educators and scholars define it (Aloqaili, 2001; Minter, 2010 as cited in Aloqaili, A. S. 2011). Romeo (2010 as cited in Aloqaili, A. S. 2011) explains that there is currently a lack of an accepted framework for critical thinking, so that there is not a widely acknowledged and accepted theoretical definition. Some educators and psychologists deal with critical thinking as a narrow concept, whereas others view critical thinking as a broad concept. For example, Beyer (1987 as cited in Aloqaili, A. S. 2011) defined critical thinking in a narrow sense as convergent thinking. He accounts for convergent critical thinking, in contrast to creative thinking which is divergent.

Beyer (1985 as cited in Aloqaili, A. S. 2011) has argued that critical thinking is not a process a unified operation consisting of a number of operations through which one proceeds in sequence. Mcpeck (1981 as cited in Aloqaili, A. S. 2011) has offered this broad definition for critical thinking, the propensity and skill to engage in an activity with reflective skepticism. Ennis (1962 as cited in Aloqaili, A. S. 2011) has dealt with critical thinking with a narrow sense. He stated that critical thinking is "the correct assessing of statements.

Another scholar who has provided a broad definition for critical thinking is Facione (1984 as cited in Aloqaili, A. S. 2011) who developed a definition of critical thinking that incorporates evaluation and problem solving. Facione indicates that it is possible to evaluate critical thinking by evaluating the adequacy of the arguments that express that thinking. He stated that critical thinking is the development and evaluation of arguments. According to Facione (1984) constructing arguments include the usual steps of problem solving which are: (1) determining background knowledge, (2) generating initially plausible hypotheses, (3) developing procedures to test these hypotheses, (4) articulating an argument from the results of these testing procedures, (5) evaluating the arguments, and (6), where appropriate, revising the initial hypotheses.

The relationship between critical thinking and reading is well established in the literature. For example, Norris and Phillips (1987 as cited in Aloqaili, A. S. 2011) point out that reading is more than just saying what is on the page; it is thinking. Moreover, Beck (1989 as cited in Aloqaili, A. S. 2011) asserts there is no reading without reasoning. Also, among those researchers and theoreticians who recognize that reading involves thinking is Ruggiero (1984 as cited in Aloqaili, A. S. 2011). He indicates that reading is reasoning. Yu-hui et al. (2010 as cited in Aloqaili, A. S. 2011) stated clearly that reading is a thinking process to construct meaning.

Utilizing and combining schema theory with principles of critical thinking are one of the effective ways of enhancing the concept of reading comprehension (Norris and Phillips, 1987 as cited in Aloqaili, A. S. 2011). Schema theory provides powerful rationales for making links between students' individual backgrounds, specific subject area knowledge, and critical thinking (Marzano et al., 1988; Aloqaili, 2005 as cited in Aloqaili, A. S. 2011). According to Anderson (1994 as cited in Aloqaili, A. S. 2011), there are six ways in which schemata function in thinking and in remembering text information. These six ways are:

(1) Most new knowledge is gained by assimilating new information into existing structure; therefore, subject matter learning should build on prior knowledge whenever possible.

(2) The students' existing schemata help to allocate attention by focusing on what is pertinent and important in newly presented materials.

(3) Schemata allow and direct the inferential elaboration of incoming information and experience.

(4) Schemata allow orderly searches of memory by providing learners with a guide to the types of information that should be recalled.

(5) Schemata facilitate the thinking skills of summarizing and editing.

(6) Schemata permit inferential reconstruction when there are gaps in memory, which means that they help the learner generate hypotheses about missing information.

The above discussions and claims show that there is a close relationship between schemata, critical thinking and comprehension processing. Prior knowledge operates as a bridge in establishing connections between thinking critically and text information processing. This connection finally makes the critical text comprehension possible. When this connection is established, the process of equilibrium can be facilitated, in other words, critical thinking by using schemata facilitate the processes of assimilation and accommodation and avoid the process of disequilibrium.

Critical thinking is also related to whole word approach. This approach is concerned with teaching and learning reading and assumes that the whole meaning goes beyond each of the words in the sentences. Critical thinking plays a significant role in this approach as a mechanism or strategy which students can rely on to comprehend text critically. Critical thinking in this approach is based on student's schemata and their speculations. In this approach students based on their own ideas and interpretations and schematic knowledge make sense of the text and make the processes of assimilation, accommodation and in the final run equilibrium possible.

#### *G. Neo-Piagetian View of Equilibration and Reading Comprehension*

As we saw, Rutherford in his modern view of accommodation and assimilation added a new dimension of socio-cultural realms which is concerned with social, cultural, and contextual factors that a person need in the process of equilibration culturally. So we can say that, although cognitive development is a necessity and prerequisite, contextual and socio cultural factors also play a paramount role in cognitive development too. Now days no person can neglect the implications and influences of socio cultural and contextual factors on second language acquisition. As far as reading comprehension is concerned, these factors play an important role in bottom up processing. The main reason is that, there are various genres with special characteristics related to the contextual and socio-cultural dimensions and factors. If a student wants to read a genre that is about England literature, he can comprehend the text well, provided that he is familiar with the contextual and socio- cultural characteristics of the text. In this situation, he can assimilate and accommodate the incoming information culturally and makes the cultural equilibrium possible. So these conditions generally facilitate the process of cognitive equilibrium, avoid cognitive disequilibrium and in a final run, make the overall cognitive development possible.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The literature reveals the significant importance of equilibration in Piaget's theory of cognitive development. Equilibration by two processes, namely; assimilation and accommodation leads the child or learner to the cognitive adaptation and makes the cognitive development possible. By incorporating Piaget's construct of equilibrium into educational contexts, (e.g. language learning and teaching), it has been indicated that there is a strong relationship between listening and reading comprehension and the process of equilibrium. In this relationship schemata play an important role and make a process of assimilation and accommodation possible and avoid the reader or listener from disequilibrium and lead him or her to the cognitive adaptation which is a necessary condition for cognitive development. The schemata also play a role as a bridge between individual backgrounds, specific subject area knowledge, and critical thinking and so, make a link between critical thinking and reading comprehension and lead the reader to the process of critical reading comprehension. In this process reader's schemata provides powerful rational for the processes of assimilation, accommodation and finally equilibration which lead the reader to comprehend the text critically. It has been also shown that Rutherford's neo-Piagetian view of assimilation and accommodation has influenced the process of equilibration culturally by taking into account the socio-cultural dimensions which now days have significance importance in the realm of language teaching and learning. Finally, it is worth noting that, in the realm of psychology, if a theory can't be implicated into settings such as educational institutions for various practical reasons, it may lose its values. But research and evidences have shown that, the theory under investigation have had its practical influences and

impacts on many educational settings specially language learning and teaching and even other settings and contexts. So, this theory has saved its utilities and values since decades ago because of these reasons.

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# The Role of Schema in Constructing Cross-cultural Minds for Students in Local Universities\*

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**Abstract**—Students studying and living in local universities find themselves failing in conducting fluent communication with people with different cultural backgrounds, due to the rare access to direct interactions with foreigners in person. Hence, to change that situation and help them construct cross-cultural minds is severely necessary. Abundant of achievements on cross-cultural communication have been reached, and a lot of rewards in the research have been granted to those studies analyzed, discussed and interpreted from the perspective of social-psychology, which can not propose an appropriate and efficient approach to constructing cross-cultural minds for students in the local universities. The studies from the perspective of cognitive process and more specifically the schema theory, however, can claim due attention to understand and construct the procedure of intercultural communication where multi-cultures are represented, processed and accommodated. This work is intended to address the issues of how students can efficiently obtain knowledge, how multicultural knowledge can be effectively acquired by students, and how beliefs can be shared and multicultural minds constructed finally.

**Index Terms**—cross-cultural communication, schema theory, local Universities

Nowadays there is no research of culture without the prefix multi- or cross-, since the world has become globalized and internationalized, and being a cosmopolitan is no longer a hypothesis in scholars' discussion. This is mostly true in the policy-opening, economy-developed and challenge-possible areas while the situation in the local areas presents another picture in spite of the convenience of the availability of internet, media and transportation. An important fact is that an individual's acquisition of knowledge is varied according to his/her accessibility to the intellectual world and society at large. Students living and studying in remotely located areas thus can not enjoy the convenience of international communication at hands as far as the foreigner's visits are concerned. What is worse is that they may become narrow-minded and incapable for the challenging culture-integrated society because of the limitation of the accessibility to experiencing an open internationalized environment, even though they can form some vague sense of the globalized pace of the world across a range of their social interactions online. Numerous researches about cross/inter-cultural communication have been done, abundant of achievements have been reached, and especially a lot of rewards in the research have been granted to those studies analyzed, discussed and interpreted from the perspective of social-psychology. The founding in the studies, obtained by means of observing and concluding the inter-culture participants' behaviors, to some extent addresses the questions of what intercultural-communication involves and how most individuals proceed in the course of communicating with people with different cultural backgrounds. It contributes a lot to the students with the accessibility of experiencing international communication at their convenience, the students living in first-tire cities for example. For students living in remotely located local universities, to help them construct cross-cultural minds is severely necessary and the efficient approach to that is to go through understanding the cognitive processes where culture is accommodated, represented, and processed.

## I. COGNITION AND CULTURE

Cross-culture acquisition calls for not just the knowledge informed in books and the awareness inspired by other mass media products, but more the accessibility of experiencing multi-cultural communication. To understand this point, the definition of culture needs to be reinforced. Many ways are used to express what culture is and how it is composed. It is thought that culture is the consequence of material and spiritual civilization, while another view emphasizes its connection with human being where culture, containing knowledge of the world, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, and customs, is integrated in man's capacity and convention. Anthropologist Ralph Linton regards culture as the whole lifestyle of a society. Some scholars classify culture into two distinct branches; one is the "CULTURE" which reflects the very aspects of civilization, including literature, art, music, architecture, philosophy, and science etc; the other one is "culture" which concretely expresses the conduction of the living world, including the traditional custom, mode of life, standard of behavior, social convention, code of conduct, social connection etc.

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The cognitive linguistics led by Lakoff and Langaker describe culture is where one language is shaped, and the connections within a language lay clues for mankind to discover the nature of the world through the step-by-step recognition of an individual's mental cognitive process. They believe that man's cognition of the world is gradually and dynamically formed in one's worldly experiment which is influenced by culture context. During the formation an individual goes through the developing cognitive process, from the actual experiment to abstraction, categorization, conceptualization, mapping, metaphor/metonymy, which meanwhile shapes the language system in a certain cultural context. The experimentalism derived from cognitive linguistics shed lights not only on the understanding of the relationships between language and culture, but more on the inspiration of man's description of the world, culture included, and on the direction of intercultural study.

Recent researches on intercultural communication are mainly focused on the nature and components of culture as well as the modes of cross-culture, all of which post cognitive issues in a core place. The study of culture is indispensable from the course of cognition. In terms of social psychology, the term "empathy" is picked to verify one's social and mental involvements in his/her cognitive activities. It includes cognitive component, affective component and communicative component, among which the cognitive component is the foundation. As for the literature of the competence of intercultural communication, one conclusion has been made by numbers of relevant scholars that cognition, affection and social performance are the three major elements, and that culture is acquired not only from cognition but also from affection. At the same time, it is restated that culture is formed upon the interactive consequence of cognition and action, although the meme theory in culture study emphasizes culture's mimic function. All the above make one clear phenomenon where cognition plays a decisive role in building one's language and culture sense, which in return develop one's process of cognition.

The connection between cognition and culture has been explained in many scholars' literatures, and some of the works are done on cognition from the perspective of culture while some other works are made to explain culture from the perspective of cognition. The two interact with each other: the development of culture depends on the process of cognition, which is strictly confined to culture. (Perez –Arce, 1997) With the interaction between culture and cognition, mankind forms a pattern of knowing, understanding and explaining the objective world. The diverse processes of the formation define that people in different cultures will have varieties of thinking models, ethic values, social behaviors and language forms, which constitute the main contents of the study of intercultural communication.

Culture is derived from experiment as language is, on the basis of which man formulates his/her cognition of the world. The essential difference among various cultures can be attributed to the disparate and distinct ideas, images, and schemas constructed in different living environment, and to the diverse means metaphors/metonymies take to express ideas and describe things. Their differences displayed in language are the varieties of words, writing, pronunciation, sentence structures and grammar systems. In other aspects of culture, the customs, social behaviors, value systems, ways of thinking are differentiated, and they can even be detailed to their building styles, art types and groups of religions. The roots for the kaleidoscope of cultures lie in that people in different groups take different approaches to knowing and exploring the world, in other words in the different cognitive processes. Many linguists believe that one's cognition of the world is cultivated on his/her personal experiment in the living world, based on which the sequential processing of cognition moves to categorization, concept, images, and further more the similar images are abstracted into schemas and schematic network. For the different schemas and images, different cultures take different language forms to express themselves. In spite of the overall diversities of cognitive processes and cultures, it is still possible for individuals to achieve intercultural communication, because the schema abstracted in one's mental space can be grounded and referred precisely through language down to the actual objects or things in the world. Intercultural communication is a dynamic process, during which individuals constantly accommodate their cognitive structures, and understand the differences of categorizations, images, schemas, metaphors and metonyms in other cultures because of the different cognitive processes, so as to come true the share of knowledge and beliefs. (Lee , B .P .H, 2007)

## II. SCHEMA THEORY

Schema, a kind of background knowledge about the world obtained by individual through experiment, is of great significance in one's comprehension of the world. In the course of cross-cultural communication, the absence and contradiction of schema in individuals with different cultural backgrounds post the most common and negative obstacles for mutual understanding, especially for those having difficulties in gaining access to build multicultural interactions and connections.

The concept of schema was put forward originally by Bartlett (1932), a follower of Gestalt psychology, to account for how information and events in stories and events are represented in memory for further recall. Bartlett (1932) believed that when the relevant information in memory is referred one can understand and recall the context of past experience. Then the term "schema" is used in the description and discussion of one's memory, especially in the representation of one's past experience. Bartlett, however, did not further explore the nature of the schema in this area. It is until the 1970s and 1980s that with responding to the advances in computer science and artificial intelligence at that time, researchers did not begin to raise interests in the discoveries of modeling human cognition in the field of artificial intelligence, and the schema theory was adopted again and developed as a theoretical framework to describe the structure and the role of knowledge in the mind (Minsky, 1975; Schank, 1982; Schank & Abelson, 1977).

The notion of Schema theory contributes a great deal to the study of cognitive psychology, by providing new and exciting ideas and ways in the description, explanation, and interpretation of the developments in one individual's cognitive process, such as inferencing, remembering, reasoning, and problem solving, and served as an impetus for a large volume of experimental research in learning, comprehension, and memory (Schallert, 1991).

The applications of schema theory have been further widely taken in every field of cognitive studies. In various domains, the concept of schema can find itself taking different forms to describe and explain the organization of knowledge and events, in the synonyms as "frames" (Minsky, 1975), "scripts" (Schank & Abelson, 1977), "plans" (Schank, 1982). It has also been broadly used in linguistics and metalinguistics to describe the structure and organization of one language, with the result that a number of specialized terms such as "story schemata" (Mandler, 1978), "sentence schemata" (Winograd, 1983), "textual schemata" (Swaffar, 1988), "formal/rhetorical schemata," "content schemata" (Carrell, 1984), and "symbolic schemata" (Oller, 1995) has appeared in the relevant literature. The overflow of the concept of schema has been taken as one of the major problems because of its frequency and diversity; However, through all of these fields of study, the theory develops its major strengths in the study of knowledge's cognitive process, more specific in the insights it provides to understand the structure of knowledge and the way knowledge is represented and used in learning, comprehension, and inferencing (Nassaji, 2007). The delivering of separate schema, the picture of a set of knowledge in an individual's mind, transfer the information in one event or one thing within and cross minds when the knowledge is presented, regressed, understood and even inferred.

For the prestigious specialty of the schema theory in explaining one's cognitive process, the theory can answer the overwhelming questions of inter-cultural study for the students in remotely located local universities: (a) how multicultural knowledge is represented for them in class: (b) how multicultural knowledge is understood by them in their mind: and (c) how beliefs are shared and multicultural minds constructed finally. In the following, I will discuss the role played by Schema in helping construct cross-cultural minds for students in local universities.

### III. THE ROLE OF SCHEMA IN CONSTRUCTING CROSS-CULTURAL MINDS FOR STUDENTS IN LOCAL UNIVERSITIES

Living in a place compelled with the denial of actual cross-cultural performance, students, more or less, feel segregated from the fast growing internationalized society and begin to lose confidence in building intercultural communication competence. The above three major issues are designed for helping them realize the current problems and work out practical ways to solve them; the first one is concerned with the initial step of cognitive process, that is how students can efficiently obtain knowledge; the second one is designed for the discussion of the role of affection played in cognitive process, which answers the question of how multicultural knowledge can be effectively acquired by students; and the third one is directed to the students' performance, the last step of cognitive process, on how beliefs can be shared and multicultural minds constructed finally.

#### A. *Mutual Knowledge*

Schema seems like magnets in that they connect many diverse elements of cultural knowledge. Like religious schema or linguistic schema, cultural schema is taken as images collected, selected or even created by an individual within his/her cognitive competence to evoke in observers a particular frame of thought or a particular frame of mind in a powerful and differentiated way. The potency and distinctiveness of schemas make the students without any experience of intercultural communication possible candidates to cultivate multi-cultural minds and spread activation in a network of cultural constructs. The construction of schema for students in that condition is supposed to start from knowledge processing and sharing followed. Knowledge is different from belief in ways as differentiated by B .P .H .Lee (2007) in his literature. He believes in establishing common ground, mutual knowledge will be developed into background knowledge with efficient clues of information and chances of interaction, and then further abstracted into shared beliefs which play a decisive role in realizing fluent conversation and communication of any kind. This idea is quite inspiring for the construction of intercultural minds for students in that special phenomenon.

B.P.H.Lee (2007) firstly distinguishes 'belief' and 'knowledge'. Even though they are often used interchangeably, in their use, they differ in terms of how securely the individual holds them. Lee and his team give examples to show the difference in the degree of certainty hold by individuals. Knowledge in some way is the information being able to be kept or memorized in mind while belief is the concept shaped like the schema in one's mind, as a result of summarizing all the relevant information consciously or unconsciously acquired. That accounts for why belief holds more conviction in mind compared with knowledge.

For an individual to share beliefs and knowledge, the basic structural component of man's cognition, can not be underestimated and neglected. For the students from the local universities, subjects or courses about the knowledge of other cultures are great attraction to them, especially the knowledge about the very detailed description of their daily life in a different culture, mostly because of the curiosity for the exploring the unknown world to find any other different possibilities. It is necessary and pragmatic for the students in those areas to get touch with knowledge of other culture in every aspect through all kinds of measures, by explaining, comparing, listing, reporting, discussing, and concluding, for example. By explanation and cooperation, intercultural communication learners can get the share of information in the common knowledge; by listing and reporting, they can analyze the information contained in certain knowledge; and by discussion and conclusion, they process and gain the knowledge required. When the knowledge relevant to intercultural



communication, including the two parts of culture and communication, is well presented to the students, they will successfully have the share of mutual knowledge and climb up at the first step in their schema construction for intercultural communication.

### *B. Shared Belief*

B.P.H.Lee(2007) believes that the notion of shared belief can answer the question of how people seem to be able to establish common understanding in apparently effortless day-to-day interactions in rapid conversation. Shared belief involves no more than a few number of steps and issues (such as conversation context, common sense in a particular culture, convention of a society,), and it is this psychologically viable notion that can explain how people are able to communicate effectively in daily rapid conversation. Across a range of statistic analysis, B.P.H.Lee (2007) reinforces his idea that it is shared belief that plays a more significant role than mutual knowledge does in successful communication. The truth of the idea can be proved by the fact that individuals commanding amount of knowledge of intercultural communication will fail in effectively communicating with other individuals with different cultural backgrounds. Shared belief is the consequence of subjective judgment on the world, which is originated from one's cognitive process. According to the views in linguistics, the concept in one's mind is processed on the perception and categorization of the world. At the moment when the concept is impressed or abstracted, a particular schema of the perception of the reality appears in one's brain. The construction of schema is influenced by varieties of social environmental factors, so the schemas of the same concept may be different among individuals with distinct cultural backgrounds. This explains the cross-culture shock commonly confronting intercultural communicators because of the deficiency and contradiction of schemas in different cultures. Any sort of schema is affected by culture, and any kind of schema is a cultural schema.

Both belief and schema are the comprehensive abstraction of the perception of the world, which makes it hardly practical for students in local universities to get a true-to-life picture of the world in other cultures. TV shows, movies, classic literature, and other traditional or modern media tools are used mainly for fun and entertainment not for presenting a real world of that culture(even though there are some that can demonstrate the world in a special way), which is misleading the way we percept other culture. On the contrary, the documentary, historic data, records and cases, or even the pictures twittered online, which keep one's life activities and true affections, are useful to some extent. All the details of description of the world and culture are essential in helping abstract reliable belief and schema of that alien culture, which is favorable for the students in that special condition to build correct connections with the outside world.

### *C. Common Ground*

Besides the issue of the 'mutual knowledge - shared belief' is essential in successful communication, the notion of common ground (B.P.H.Lee, 2007) needs further attention. The main concerns for the study of common ground are what its nature is, what its relation with mutual knowledge, shared belief, and what the role of this common ground is in successful communication. Various answers have been presented, and still as yet no general common sense has been reached amongst scholars who are studying in the diverse disciplines of psychology, linguistics, philosophy, and even Artificial Intelligence.

The term 'common ground' has been used in place of other related concepts by various scholars. Sometimes, common ground is equivalent to mutual knowledge. Clarke (1992) states that he uses the term 'common ground' in place of 'mutual knowledge' to avoid the confusion (i.e., the infinite regression debate) related with mutual knowledge.

The discussion above informs us of the accurate current situation with the use of the term 'common ground'. To be specific, the lack of precision in the use of the term reflects a fundamental confusion at the conceptual level between the notion of common ground and the other notions associated with it. This conceptual confusion lies in part in the lack of distinction made between knowledge and belief (B.P.H.Lee, 2007).

B.P.H.Lee (2007) and his team remain to support that 'common ground', if used as an all-embracing term, can be conceptualized in terms of progressive steps of attainment. In sum then, common ground which has been established in the discourse comprises beliefs and knowledge and establishes them as shared. Thus, it is clear to say that common ground is the result of interaction with presence of both shared beliefs and knowledge.

For the landing on a common ground in the discourse of intercultural communication, the interactive communication is indispensable. Students from the universities located in a remote region are supposed to creatively build interactive cross-cultural communication online, because it is hard for them to have that offline. Definitely they can volunteer and be volunteered to cosplay with partners, but the outcome may not go as pleasant as they think, for the partners offline in the real situations to a large extent share the same cultural knowledge and beliefs with themselves. Obviously only by conducting online or offline intercultural communication, can the students successfully land on the common ground and cultivate the cross-cultural minds.

## IV. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that it is a temporary state not an ever-lasting trait to think and behave like a member of other culture. This state will take place when schema of the host culture and the shared knowledge and beliefs are accessible.

I submit that students undergoing cultivation of cross-cultural minds and acculturation, to some extent, manage the process by controlling the accessibility of cultural constructs. Students desiring to promote their intercultural communication competence quickly surround themselves with knowledge, symbols, situations and beliefs that prime the meaning system of the host culture and build a precise and clear schema in their mind. Active processes of priming oneself and grounding in the cross-culture communication may help students in that special situation in their ongoing effort to promote their intercultural communication competence.

Future research should be investigated into the authentic data collected in the procedures when students navigate intercultural transitions, the study of which, I believe, will reveal what and how students from local universities actually do in real situations to obtain shared beliefs, establish common ground, and build cross-cultural minds.

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# A Study of English Translation of Colloquial Expressions in Two Translations of Jamalzadeh: Once Upon a Time and Isfahan Is Half the World

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**Abstract**—The purpose of this study was to explore the translation of one of the sub-categories of culture-bound items that is colloquial and slang expressions from Persian to English in two works by Jamalzadeh, *Yeki Bud, Yeki Nabud* translated by Moayyed & Sprachman and *Sar o Tah e Yek Karbas* translated by Heston. Applying Newmark's (1988b) framework, the type and frequency of translation procedures applied by translators as well as the effectiveness of the translators in preserving the level of colloquialism of source texts were determined. The results of this descriptive study revealed that the translators had applied 6 procedures: synonymy (%51), paraphrase (%26.5), literal (%8.5), descriptive equivalent (%2.5), couplet (%2), shift (%1), omission (%5) and mistranslation (%3.5). As for maintaining the informal style of the source texts, the co-translators of the book of *Yeki*, Sprachman (native English translator) and Moayyed (native Persian translator) have been more consistent and successful in preserving the tone of the original text than Heston (native English translator of *Sar*). This success can be partly justified by the acquaintance of Moayyed with Persian language and culture making the correct recognition and translation of expressions possible.

**Index Terms**—translation, colloquialism, Newmark, culture, equivalent

## I. INTRODUCTION

Colloquial expressions are among the cultural elements of a society that may get the translator into trouble while rendering them. How can he/she render them to redefine the author's intended meaning successfully? Sometimes, the researcher has faced some translated texts that their colloquial expressions could be rendered in a better way to be more comprehensible for the target audience and could transfer the author's intention in a more appropriate way.

Conveying what the source language writer or speaker means is a crucial matter in translation studies. Based on the nature of some writings or even style of writers, a number of colloquial expressions may be found in various texts that make them specific from the translation point of view. Unfortunately, misunderstanding of colloquial expressions in different texts has resulted in bad and sometimes awful translations that could not meet the expectations of the target language reader and fall short of expectations of the critics. The purpose of the present study is to study the way the selected Persian-English translators have treated colloquial expressions, the degree to which they used Newmark's procedures, and finally the effectiveness of the translators in transferring the colloquial/slang words and expression in terms of preserving both meaning and register that is the informal tone.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Language Varieties

Ratnan Ingrum (2009, pp.37-39) has divided the language varieties into the following sub-categories:

**a. Standard Language:** Standard language is mainly used for educational and governmental aims. Trudgill (1992, p.70 in Ratnan Ingrum, 2009) argues that "standard language is the variety of English which is usually used in printed form, is spoken by educated native speakers and which is normally taught in schools and to non-native speaker learning the language".

**b. Cant:** Cant is used for occupational and secretive purposes. Cant refers to the limited, technical words and expression of any specific group, commonly used by underworld group (criminal, tramps and beggar, etc). As a result, it is often called "thieves" or "underworld" slang. When the underworld wants to talk or to communicate among themselves secretly, they use a kind of language that is 'secret language'. These expressions are not found in the slang language.

**c. Jargon:** Jargon refers to a collection of expressions used by one social or occupational group that are not used and regularly not understood by the public. Hence, all professional terminologies, such as medical, law and engineering are

qualified as jargon because these terminologies offer terms, which are unfamiliar to general population, for instance, the terms “bilateral perorbital haematoma” in medical, “in absentia” in law, and “gasket” in engineering field.

**c. Glossolalia:** An example of using a language version for religious purposes is the choice of glossolalia of “speaking in tongue” used by certain charismatic Christian groups.

As far as the position of colloquialism in this classification is concerned, Dalzell (1998 in Weeks, 2010) claims that “there is a huge overlap between slang and colloquial and regional” so that “some would argue that cool is no longer slang but is so commonly used as to have lost the identity value and so is merely colloquial.”

Taking this into account, the colloquial expressions identified in the source books may include the slangs as well. However, it is worth mentioning that the colloquial expressions were checked in the Persian Dictionary of Colloquialism by Jamalzadeh (2003) and Najafi (2008).

### B. Definition of Colloquialism

The word “colloquialism” stems from the Latin colloquium that means “conference” or “conversation.” Colloquialism-as a literary device- implies using informal or everyday language in literature. Colloquialisms have generally a geographic nature, as a result, every colloquial expression belongs to a regional or local dialect (Literary Devices, n.d)

Leech and Svartvik (1975, p.24 in Sukspiroj, 2009) regard the colloquial language as the equivalent of the umbrella term of informal language calling it the first form of language that a native speaking child becomes familiar with. As they argue, since the comprehension of the informal or colloquial language is easier compared to formal language, it is now used for some certain public communications such as newspapers and advertisements.

In general, a colloquialism is any informal word or expression used aptly in conversation among ordinary or educated people (Nofalli, 2012).

A colloquialism is “a word, phrase, or other form used in informal language. Dictionaries often display colloquial words and phrases with the abbreviation colloq. as an identifier” (Colloquialism, n.d).

In the same vein, Trask (1999 in colloquialism, n.d.) argues that:

“colloquial language, colloquial dialect, or informal language is a variety of language commonly employed in conversation or other communication in informal situations. The word colloquial by its etymology originally referred to speech as distinguished from writing, but colloquial register is fundamentally about the degree of informality or casualness rather than the medium, and some usage commentators thus prefer the term casualism”.

According to McCrimmon (1963, p.169), the word “colloquial” has been defined by the American College Dictionary as “characteristic of or appropriate to ordinary or familiar conversation rather than formal speech or writing.” In his opinion, this definition does not mean that a colloquial word is improper or inappropriate or careless. McCrimmon (1963) himself calls colloquialism any word or expression that may accurately be used in conversation among educated persons. He maintains that such definition of colloquial word transforms it to a wider term than popular words or idioms covering the popular words and idiomatic constructions as well. They also include constructions that are not strictly idioms, particularly abbreviated or clipped versions of more formal words, such as 'ad' for 'advertisement (in Barzegar, 2008).

### C. Usage of Colloquialism

Colloquial language is different from formal speech or formal writing (Colloquialism, n.d.). It is a category of language that speakers normally use when they are stress-free and not especially self-conscious (Trask, 1999 in Colloquialism, n.d.).

Some colloquial speech includes a large amount of slang while some has no slang at all. Slang is allowable in colloquial language without being a necessary constituent. Other examples of colloquial usage in English are contractions or swearword. In the philosophy of language, the term "colloquial language" refers to ordinary natural language that is distinct from specialized forms applied in logic or other areas of philosophy (Davidson, 1997 in Colloquialism, n.d.). In the field of logical atomism, meaning is appraised in a different way than with more formal propositions (Colloquialism, n.d.).

### D. Features of Colloquialism

According to Barzegar (2008) in terms of the scale of formality, colloquial language is a higher style than slang being different from the formal standard language in terms of pronunciation, choice of word, and sentence structure.

Holmes (1992, p. 265 in Barzegar, 2008) enumerates pronunciation and grammatical features as two linguistic features of colloquial style in English:

#### √ Pronunciation Features

[h]- dropping, e.g. Oh well, 'e said, 'I suppose you can 'ave it.

[in] (vs. formal [ing]), e.g. We was up there cuttin'.

#### √ Grammatical Features

Was with plural subject we, e.g. we was up there cutting.

Come (vs. came): Frazer come on to us.

### E. Classification of Colloquialism in English Language

Colloquialism is classified into three sub-categories that are words, phrases, and aphorisms. If the words reflect the regional dialect of the speaker, they can be qualified as colloquialism examples, or if they are contractions or examples of swearword. Phrases and aphorisms are colloquialisms if they are not used in literal sense, nevertheless, are broadly understandable within a geographical region (Literary Devices, n.d.).

### 1. Words:

- **Regional differences:** One well-known colloquial variance in the United States is the way an individual refers to a carbonated beverage. There are regional boundaries that isolates the usage of the words “soda”, “pop”, “soft drink”, and “Coke” (used as a generic term and not just to refer to the brand). There are many differences between American English and British English, such as “truck”/“lorry”, “soccer”/“football”, and “parakeet”/“budgie”.

- **Contractions:** Words such as “ain’t” and “gonna” that are not used widely throughout English-speaking communities are some notable illustrations of colloquialism.

- **Profanity:** A set of words are deemed irreverent in some dialects of English where they are not at all immoral or swearword in other dialects. For example, the word “bloody” is a simple adjective in American English, but is a swearword in British English.

### 2. Phrases:

The following phrases all are qualified as colloquialism:

- Old as the hills
- Penny-pincher
- She’ll be right (Australian English, meaning everything will be all right)
- Pass the buck
- Eat my dust

### 3. Aphorisms:

The following aphorisms all are qualified as colloquialism:

- I wasn’t born yesterday.
- There’s more than one way to skin a cat.
- Put your money where your mouth is.
- You’re driving me up the wall (Literary Devices, n.d.).

McCrimmon (1963, pp.32 in Nofalli, 2012) has categorized the colloquial English in the following way:

1. Relatively short simple sentences, often grammatically incomplete, with few rhetorical devices;
2. An extravagant usage of contractions (I’ll, we’ve, didn’t, can’t), clipped words (cab, exam, phone), and the omission of relative pronouns (who, which, that) which would be preserved in a formal style;
3. A vocabulary marked by general prevention of learned words and by inclusion of some less offensive slang terms;
4. A simplified syntactic structure that leans heavily on idiomatic units and occasionally neglects the fine differences of formal grammar and;
5. A personal or familiar tone, which intends to create the impression of talking warmly and friendly to the readers.

### F. Jamalzadeh as a Pioneer in Using Colloquialism in Persian Literature

According to Kamshad and Mozaffari (2008, in Encyclopedia Iranica), Jamalzadeh has a singular position in the history of modern Persian literature. As an innovator of the modern literary language, he was the first person who introduced the techniques of European short-story writing in Persian literature. According to them,

“the particular and conscious employment of language in the stories is a departure from the traditional styles of prose writing in Persian. The language of the narrative is direct, simple, and colloquial, and the selection of words varies based on the class and educational level of the characters.” (Kamshad and Mozaffari, 2008, in Encyclopedia Iranica)

Researchers properly trace the origin of this kind of language to the newspapers of the constitutional epoch, principally to ironic essays and poetry of Dehkhoda in the *Charand parand* column in *Sur-e Esrafil* and the poetry of Sayyed Ashraf-al-Din in *Nasim-e shemal*. To highigh the importance of the colloquial language, Jamalzadeh has brought a dictionary of colloquial Persian words and phrases in the end of his books- *Yeki bud, Yeki nabud*. He continued collecting and documenting the colloquial words and expressions throughout his life. The collection obtained from his efforts was later published as a book in 470 pages entitled *Farhang-e loghat-e amiana* (Dictionary of Colloquial Words) (ibid).

### G. Previous Works on the Translation of Colloquial Expressions

Reviewing the relevant literature using library and online sources, the researcher found some national and foreign studies conducted on the translation of colloquial expressions in general and the translation of Jamalzadeh’s works in terms of different aspects, in particular.

For the former, the following theses and studies were identified:

Mahdavi Zafarghandi and Falahatdoost (2013) conducted a comparative study of English colloquial language utterances in novel translation from English to Persian employed by the translators. In addition to some cases of mistranslated items and translating into a higher degree of formality, they found that different strategies have been applied by the translators.

In his M.A. thesis, Nofalli (2012) analyzed the translation of the slang words and jargon found in “*Transformers*” movie. According to the results of this study, to produce a good translation, the translator should have sufficient knowledge about slang, jargon and colloquial expressions and also understand the method in translating the source language into the target language to get a good translation. In this way, the target readers will comprehend and get the idea and meaning of the original text.

Shadrah (2010) for his M.A thesis analyzed the colloquial expressions in one children’s story book named “*The Secret Life of MS WIZ*” written by Terence Blacker. The main purposes of this study were to identify the types of colloquial expression, and to discover the translation techniques applied by the translator for translating the colloquial expression.

Nikroo (2004) in her M.A paper explored the English translation of Persian colloquial language in “*Modier e Madreseh*” by Jalal Al Ahmad so as to identify the translation procedures applied by the translator for the transference of the colloquial expressions into English language.

The last but not the least, Bakhtiari (2001) in one comparative study, explored the translation strategies applied for the translation of the colloquial expressions in the English subtitles of the post-revolutionary Iranian films and found that “translation by synonymy” and “omission” were the most frequent strategies used by the translator of the films in question.

For the latter group that is studies conducted on the Jamalzadeh’s works from the viewpoint of translation, two theses were identified:

1. Aminzadeh (2011) analyzed the strategies in two English translations of *Yeki Bud, Yeki Nabud* by Moayyad and Sprachman and Bashiri and reported that the translators have applied all strategies proposed by Newmark. In addition, it was found that the first strategy, reproducing the same image in the target language, and second strategy that was reproducing the source image using a standard target language image conforming with the target language and culture, had been used more than others.

2. Pishbin (2011) explored the strategies used by the translators for the transference of the idioms and proverbs in two works by Jamalzadeh that is *Yeki Bud, Yeki Nabud* and *Sar o Tah e Yek Karbas* based on Baker’s theoretical model and found that using an idiom with similar form and meaning and an idiom with similar meaning but different form were the most frequent strategies applied.

However, to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, no similar research has been conducted on Jamalzadeh’s works from the viewpoint of the translation of the colloquial expressions.

Based on the aforementioned issues, this research tried to find the procedures applied by the translators and their frequency in the first place and to find which translator that is native Persian translator or native English translator has been more successful in the correct transference of the colloquial expressions of the source texts.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Research Design

The present study was based on the descriptive framework building on the theory of descriptive translation studies(DTS). According to Holmes (1988, p. 71), DTS mainly deals with "describing the phenomenon of translating and translation as they manifest themselves in the world of our experiences". DTS has three aspects which include: 1) the examination of the product of translation, 2) the function of translation, 3) the process of translation. Accordingly, the focus of the present research is on the product of the translation which is limited to the colloquial expressions.

The unit of analysis in this research was every sentence which was identified to be colloquial or slang in full form or contain colloquial expressions/slang words by referring to the Persian were Persian and English, respectively.

#### B. Materials

The data of this research are taken from two works by Jamalzadeh (1892-1997) entitled *Yeki Bud, Yeki Nabud* (1921) and *Sar o Tah e Yek Karbas* (1956) translated by Moayyed and Sprachman (1985) and Heston (1983), respectively.

#### C. Theoretical Framework

Colloquial expressions belong to the culture-bound concepts category since they have root in the culture of their users. The following are the different translation procedures that Newmark (1988b pp. 82-91 in Ordudari, 2007) proposes for this category of language items:

- *Transference*: transference of an SL item to the TL text. It also includes transliteration. (e.g. online: آنلاين online ; Pop culture: فرهنگ پاپ farhang e pop)
- *Naturalization*: adapting the SL word firstly to the normal pronunciation, then to the normal morphology of the TL. (e.g. doctor: دکتر doctor ; decoration: دکوراسيون decoration)
- *Cultural equivalent*: replacing a cultural word in the SL with a TL equivalent. However, "they are not accurate". (e.g. church: مسجد Masjed ; وضو Vozu: Ablution)
- *Functional equivalent*: using a culture-neutral word. (e.g. "lean beef" : گوشت کم چربی goosht e kam charbi)
- *Descriptive equivalent*: explaining the meaning of the culture-bound terms in several words. (e.g. مسح Mash: to pull your wet hand on the surface)

• *Componential analysis*: comparing an SL word with a TL word which has a similar meaning but is not a clear one-to-one equivalent, by illustrating their similar sense components in the first place and their different ones in the second place."

• *Synonymy*: using "near TL equivalent." In this case, economy outplays accuracy. (e.g. فشقره برپا کردن Gheshghereh barpa kardan : to holler)

• *Through-translation*: using the literal common translations of collocations, names of organizations and institutions and components of compounds. It is also can be called: calque or loan translation. (e.g. سرت را درد آوردم Sarat ra dard avardam: I made your head ache)

• *Shifts or transpositions*: changing the grammar from of the SL, for example, (1) changing the singular to plural, (2) changing the SL structure where a it does not exist in the TL, (3) changing the SL verb to a TL word, changing an SL noun group to a TL noun and etc.. (e.g. shoes (plural): کفش Kafsh (singular)

• *Modulation*: reproducing the meaning of the source text by complying with the present norms of the target language,

• *Recognized translation*: using the formal or the normally accepted translation of the institutional words and terms."(e.g. NASA :e.g. ناسا NASA)

• *Compensation*: compensating for the loss of meaning in one section of a sentence in another section.

• *Paraphrase*: Explaining the meaning of the culture-bound terms that is much more comprehensive compared to descriptive equivalent.(e.g. بر و بیا داشتن Bor o bia dashtan: made a name for oneself)

• *Notes*: Providing the additional information required can be done using 'footnotes.' Though some stylists believe that adding footnotes makes the appearance of the translation unpleasant, however, they can produce a better reproduction of the content of the source text. According to Nida (1964, pp.237-39 in Ordudari, 2007 footnotes are commonly used for two purposes: (1) providing complementary information, and (2) highlighting the original's discrepancies.

#### D. Procedures

This study was conducted based on the following steps:

1. Perusing the source texts for finding and extracting the colloquial expressions including the slang expression;
2. Perusing the target texts for identifying and extracting the equivalents applied by the translators for the items under study;
3. Finding the kind of procedures applied by the translators based on the theoretical framework used in the study;
4. Tabulating the data in order to have a more coherent and comprehensive picture of them and facilitate the process of data analysis;
5. Calculating the frequency of the applied procedures as well as their percentages and presenting them in tables.

It's worth mentioning that after giving a number of examples for elucidating the way of analyzing, the remaining data were tabulated. The colloquial expressions were also categorized based on the translation procedure applied in order to have a more coherent and unified picture of them.

## IV. RESULTS

### A) Translation by Synonymy

**Definition**: using the "near TL equivalent." In this case, economy outplays accuracy. (Newmark, 1988b, p.84 in Orduradri, 2007)

**ST**: (41. فارسی راستا حسینی باش حرف بز نم (ص.41) (Farsi e rasta hosseini bash harf ebzanam)

**TT**: That I was even speaking honest-to-God Persian with him (p.41).

### B) Translation by Paraphrase

**Definition**: In this procedure the meaning of the culture-bound term is explained. Here the explanation is much more detailed than that of descriptive equivalent. (Newmark, 1988b, p.91)

**ST**: (120. انسان هر شب خدا، خانه غیر کیه مرگ بگذارد (ص.120). (Ensan har shab e khoda khane e gheyr kapeye marg bogozarad)

**TT**: For one to spend every blessed night in someone else's home (p.103)

According to Jamalzadeh's Dictionary of Colloquial Expressions (2003, p. 165), /rasta hoseini/ is a Persian colloquial expression which is used it is desired to emphasize that something is really true. The equivalent used by the translators for this expression is /honest-to-God/ which according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005, p. 623) is an informal expression used to emphasize that saying is true. By a comparison of two equivalents considering Newmark's model, it can be infer that the procedure is synonymy.

### C) Translation by Couplet

**Definition**: It occurs when the translator combines two different procedures. (Newmark, 1988b, p.91 in Ordudari, 2007)

**ST**: (74. از بس پر فیس و افاده بود و اخ و تف می انداخت (ص.74). (Az bas por az fis o efadeh bood va akh o tof mindakht)

**TT**: who fussed and primped, spat "akh" in disgust (p.69).

The Persian colloquial expression of /akh o tof andakhtan/ means "to spat" which is used for showing disgust (Jamalzadeh, 2003, p. 49) An examination of the English translation shows that the translators have used a combination of literal translation plus paraphrase that has been referred to as "Couplet" procedure in Newmark's model.

#### D) Literal (Through) Translation

**Definition:** using the literal common translations of collocations, names of organizations and institutions and components of compounds. Its other names are “calque or loan translation”. (Newmark, 1988b, p.84 in Ordudari, 2007)

ST:(25) (ص. 25) (zahre ash az hol o haras ab mishavad)

TT: Ramazan’s resolve was about to melt away (p. 36).

/zahre ab shodan/ is a Persian colloquial expression showing “great fear” (Jamalzadeh, 2003, p. 185). Looking at the English equivalent, it gets clear that the translators have opted for literal translation for this item.

#### E) Translation by Shift or Transposition

**Definition:** changing the grammar from of the SL, for example, (1) changing the singular to plural, (2) changing the SL structure where a it does not exist in the TL, (3) changing the SL verb to a TL word, changing an SL noun group to a TL noun and etc..

ST:(55) (ص. 55) (Mardom hey miporsidand)

TT: The people kept asking me ... (p.54).

#### F) Translation by Omission

**Definition:** According to Ivacovoni (2000), omission means dropping a word or words from the SLT while translating that may occur due to culture clashes between the SL and TL.

ST: (60) (ص. 60) (pool mooli dar dastgahat peyda mishavad?)

TT: And a bit of change has come your way (p.57).

#### G) Descriptive equivalent

ST: (61) (ص. 61) (yek sooldani bood ke esmesh ra matbakh gozashte bood)

TT: A dark little place they called a kitchen. (p.30)

As per Jamalzadeh (2003, p. 189), /suldani/ is a colloquial word that means “a very dark and dirty place”. As it is obvious, the translator has rendered this word using descriptive equivalent of course without keeping its informal tone.

#### H) Mistranslation

**Definition:** Lung (1998 in Rahekhoda, 2010) has defined mistranslation as “any distortion of meaning as a result of misunderstanding the text or a conscious decision to skip translating at all. Mistranslation occurs as a result of various factors such as unfamiliarity with the source culture.

ST: (49) (ص. 49) (Mardom kip ta kip rooye sandal neshahste boodand)

TT: There were more stuffed shirts that you couldn’t shake a stick at (p.49).

According to Jamalzadeh (2003, p. 432), /kip ta kip/ is a colloquial expression which means “full of, completely occupied without any free space”. The equivalent used by the translators is “stuffed shirt” which is an informal noun meaning “a person who is very serious, formal, boring or old-fashioned” (Oxford, 2005, p. 1293) which is a wrong equivalent for this item.

As a colloquial expression, /hey/ in this sentence acts as an adverb for showing the continuity of the action. However, to transfer its meaning, it has been replaced by “kept” in the verb form that is accompanied by a shift in the grammatical category. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the procedure used here is shift.

In this section, statistical results gained from data analysis will be presented in the form of tables and diagrams. To do so, the frequency of the applied translation procedures was counted separately for the each and every procedure. The frequency refers to the total number of items translated by using each procedure and the percentage indicates the percentage proportion of each procedure. However, discussing and elaborating on them in more details will come in the next sub-section. The results have been categorized separately for each book.

As it is clear, the first table represented in this section has been devoted to the frequency and percentage of the procedures identified for the data extracted from the book of *Yeki* which were 87 cases in total:

TABLE 4-9  
FREQUENCY OF THE PROCEDURES APPLIED TO THE TRANSLATION OF COLLOQUIAL EXPRESSIONS EXTRACTED FROM *YEKI BUD, YEKI NABUD*

Translation Procedure	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Synonymy	45	51.72
Paraphrase	27	31.03
Omission	5	5.74
Mistranslation	4	4.59
Couplet	2	2.29
Literal	2	2.29
Shift	2	2.29
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100</b>

To obtain a more clear-cut picture of the results, the bar diagram related to the frequency table obtained for *Yeki* presented in Table no.1 has also been depicted which has been shown in figure no.1 as it follows:



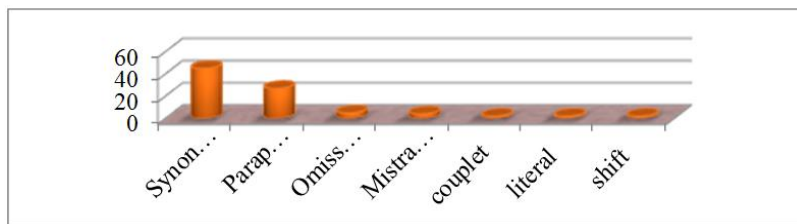


Figure 1-Frequency of the Procedures Applied to the Translation of Colloquial Expressions Extracted from *Yeki Bud , Yeki Nabud*

Following steps similar to those used for the book of *Yeki*, the frequency as well as the percentage of the procedures obtained for the transference of the total 113 colloquial/slang words and expression related to the book of *Sar* have been calculated and summarized in Table no.2:

TABLE 2  
FREQUENCY OF PROCEDURES APPLIED TO THE TRANSLATION OF COLLOQUIAL EXPRESSIONS EXTRACTED FROM SAR O TAH E YEK KARBAS

Translation Procedure	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Synonymy	57	65.51
Paraphrase	26	29.88
Literal	15	17.24
Descriptive Equivalent	5	5.74
Omission	5	5.74
Mistranslation	3	3.44
Couplet	2	2.29
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100</b>

The bar diagram related to the frequency table of the book of *Sar* has been depicted below, as well:

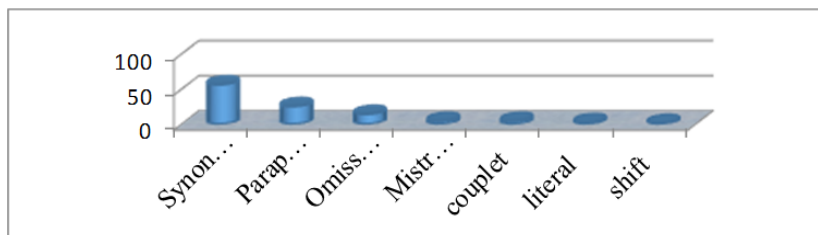


Figure 2- Frequency of Procedures Applied to the Translation of Colloquial Expressions Extracted from *Sar o Tah e Yek Karbas*

To have an overall picture of the performance of the translators of the two books allowing drawing general conclusions, Table no.3 was created. To create this table, the sum value for the frequency of every single procedure-common and uncommon in both translations - besides the respective percentage values were calculated by the researcher:

TABLE 3  
FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE OF PROCEDURES APPLIED TO THE TRANSLATION OF COLLOQUIAL EXPRESSIONS EXTRACTED FROM THE TWO BOOKS

Translation Procedure	Yeki	Sar	Percentage%
Synonymy	45	57	51
Paraphrase	27	26	26.5
Literal	2	15	8.5
Descriptive Equivalent	0	5	2.5
Omission	5	5	5
Mistranslation	4	3	3.5
Couplet	2	2	2
Shift	2	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure no.3 which shows a pie diagram of the data represented in Table no.3 makes it possible to come to a general inference about the translation conditions governing the translation of colloquial/slang expressions in terms of the procedures applied and their proportion.

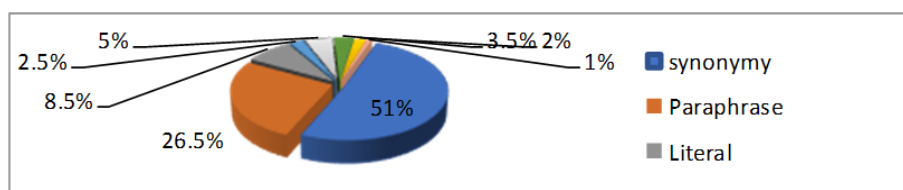


Figure 3- Frequency percentage of Procedures Applied to the Translation of Colloquial Expressions Extracted from the two Books

Considering the research questions outlined in this paper, it was also necessary to determine the ratio of formal to informal English equivalents used in the TTs in question. The results for two books have been represented in the following table:

TABLE 4  
FREQUENCY OF FORMAL VS. INFORMAL TRANSLATION EQUIVALENTS IN BOTH TRANSLATIONS

Book	Degree of Formality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yeki Bud , Yeki Nabud	Formal	26	%32
	Informal	56	%68
	Total	82	%100
Sar o Tah e Yek Karbas	Formal	90	%83
	Informal	18	%17
	Total	108	%100

Figure no.4 represents the bar diagram related to Table no.4. This facilitates the comparison process of the translators with regard to their success in preserving the original tone of the STs.

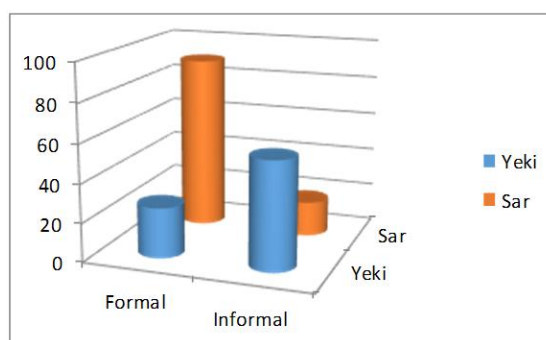


Figure 4- Frequency of Formal vs. Informal Translation Equivalents in both Translations

In Table no.5, the frequency and percentage of formal vs. informal equivalents have been shown for each book, separately. To draw general conclusion on the translation quality in terms of preserving the informal style of the STs, it was also necessary to obtain the total ratio of formal to informal English equivalents by calculating their sum. The respective results have been presented in the following table:

TABLE 5  
OVERALL FREQUENCY PERCENTAGE OF FORMAL VS. INFORMAL EQUIVALENTS IN BOTH TRANSLATIONS

Degree of Formality	Yeki	Sar	Total	(%)
Formal	26	90	116	61
Informal	56	18	74	39
Total	82	108	190	100

Finally, in no.5, a pie diagram has been depicted facilitating the process of comparison.

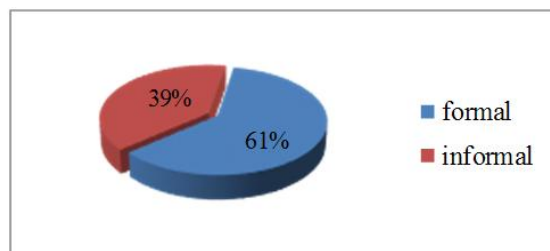


Figure 5- Overall Frequency Percentage of Formal vs. Informal Equivalents in both Translations

## V. DISCUSSION

### A. Addressing Research Question One

As stated earlier, the first question is as follows: *What translation procedures have been applied by translators for the transference of colloquialism of Jamalzadeh's works?*

As per Table no.1, the procedures applied by the translators for the transference of colloquial expressions in the book of Yeki were: a) *Synonymy* b) *Paraphrase*, c) *Couplet*, d) *Literal translation* and e) *Shift or transposition* c) *Omission* and d) *Mistranslation*.

In the same vein, as it is evident from Table no.2, the following procedures have been used by the translator for rendering the colloquial items in the book of Sar: a) *Synonymy*, b) *Paraphrase*, c) *Literal translation*, d) *Descriptive equivalent* and e) *Couplet*, f) *Omission*, and *Mistranslation*.

It is worth mentioning that all these procedures are among the procedures suggested by Newmark except two ones that is omission and mistranslation. According to Ivacovoni (2000), omission means dropping a word or words from the SLT while translating that may occur due to culture clashes between the SL and TL. Lung (1998) defines mistranslation as any distortion of meaning as a result of misunderstanding the text or a conscious decision to skip translating at all. It is noteworthy that mistranslation occurs as a result of various factors such as unfamiliarity with the source culture.

### B. Addressing Research Question Two

The second question this paper tried to answer was as follows: “Which procedure/procedures has/have been used more frequently and why?”

Similar to the first question, this question was answerable by looking at Tables no.1 and 2 where the identified procedures together with their frequencies and percentages have been represented.

As for the book of *Yeki*, use of a synonymy (%51.72) occupied the first rank followed by paraphrase procedure (%31.03). The other procedures in terms of frequency were as follows: omission (%5.74), mistranslation (%4.59), couplet (%2.25), literal (%2.29) and shift (%2.29).

On the contrary, the most frequently used procedures for the book of *Sar* were synonymy (%65.51), paraphrase (%29.88), literal (%17.24), descriptive equivalent (%5.74) and omission (%3.34), mistranslation (%3.44) and couplet (%2.29), respectively.

As the most frequent procedure identified in both translations, synonymy is a kind of semantic relation. It is used when there is a TL equivalent or near equivalent for a SL word or concept. This can be regarded as an ideal situation by itself reflecting the success of the translators in correct transference of the SL concepts. However, according to Quine (1951 in Shiyab, 2007), synonymy can be subdivided into two categories: “complete synonymy and partial synonymy”. Complete synonymy refers to the words whose all components are the same while partial synonymy refers to the words that only some of main components are similar to each other. It is noteworthy that not all the synonymies used by the translators in the target texts in question are of complete synonymy type due to the difference in their register that is level of formality. In detail, in some cases of the synonymies, the translators have decided to sacrifice the connotational meaning for transferring the semantic meaning not preserving the informal tone of the SL words.

Enjoying a relatively similar frequency for both translations (that is %31.03 vs %29.88), paraphrase procedure ranked second. Paraphrase aims at preserving the essential meaning of the material that is being translated. Some cases of paraphrasing observed in this study have been inevitable because of the lack of a TL equivalent for a SL term (e.g. /khak bar saram/ paraphrased as “what can I do?”). However, some other cases appeared in the translation have been used only by the free choice of the translators. For example, /haj o vaj budam/ has been translated into /I didn't know what to make of.../ using paraphrase procedure, although it could be replaced by a near synonym that is /stunned/.

The remaining identified procedures were of a much lower frequency compared to the two foregoing elaborated procedures in both translations.

Mistranslated cases observed in this study mainly have been resulted from the lack of a correct understanding of the source concept for the mistranslated ones (e.g. /daste gol be ab dadan/ translated as “throwing that handful of mud we knew about into the water”). The other remaining procedures including literal translation, couplet, shift and descriptive equivalent have occurred either due to a lack of an appropriate equivalent for the source colloquial expressions or merely on the basis of the personal taste and choice of the translators. Absent in the English language and culture, /chador chaqchur/ is a very ideal and prototype example for the former reason that has been rendered literally. It is worth mentioning that literal translation allows the target audience to understand the direct sense of the SL making it possible for the translator to keep close to the original as much as possible and to preserve the meaning without any additional interpretation on the part of the translator (Ulvydienè and Abramovaitè, 2012, p. 105). As a final point, an example that can be counted for the latter reason is /cheshm e bad dur/ translated literally as/may the evil eye keep away/. Although there is an informal synonymy for it in English that is /touch the wood/, the translator has opted for literal translation merely on the basis of his personal preference and taste.

### C. Addressing Research Question Three

Finally, the third question was as follows: “Which translator, that is native Persian translator or native English translator has been effective in the correct transference of the colloquial expressions of the source texts into the target language?”

Considering the fact that the samples examined in this study were colloquial or informal in tone, this question mainly was related to the degree of the success of the translators in preserving the informal tone or register of the original text. To provide a convincing response to this question, the researcher decided to determine the formality of the translation equivalents used by the translators.

As per the results summarized in Table no.4 and diagram no. 4, it can easily be inferred that as co-translators of the book of *Yeki*, Sprachman (native English translator) and Moayyed (native Persian Translator) have been more

consistent in preserving the tone of the original text than Heston (native English translator of *Sar*). To put it differently, the ratio of informal to formal equivalents was %68 to %32 and %17 to %83 for the book of *Yeki* and *Sar*, respectively. This showed that Heston was less successful or effective in reflecting the colloquial or informal tone in most of his selected TL equivalents translating most of them with a higher degree of formality. As a result of this, the intimate tone of the original text has been damaged producing a text with a different tone.

The success of Sparchman and Moayyed (1985) in this regard may be attributed to the familiarity of Moayyed with Persian language and culture which has allowed the recognition of the colloquial expressions available in the source text on the one hand and finding equivalents with similar level of formality for them on the other.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

Taking an overall look into the whole set of data, the researcher can draw the following final conclusions:

First, no specific criterion was found dominating the use of certain translation procedure for translating the colloquial expressions. The procedures used, were, to some extent, dependent on translators' taste, their knowledge and their faithfulness to the source text.

Second, from among the procedures suggested by Newmark (1988), 6 procedures have been used by the translators for the transference of colloquial expressions from the source texts into the target texts which are as follows, in order of frequency: Synonymy (%51), paraphrase (%26.5), literal (%8.5), descriptive equivalent (%2.5), couplet (%2) shift (%1).

Third, besides the above-mentioned procedures, some cases of omission (%5) and mistranslation (%3.5) have also been detected (see Table no. 4.11 and figure no. 4.3.)

Fourth, As far as the preservation of the degree of formality of the source texts that is their informal style is concerned, Table no. 4.13 and figure no.4.5 show that the formal equivalents overweigh the informal ones to a considerably higher extent (%61 vs. %39). This finding provides strong evidence on the failure of the translators in reflecting the informal style of the original texts perfectly.

Fifth, regarding the previous note, the researcher would like to assert that translation is just like "painting". As Tverberg (2014) attractively argues, the product of every translation will reflect the overall scene to the audience, however, it won't fully capture the atmosphere of the original text. When another translator re-translates the same text, different nuances will appear. Definitely, some translations will perform better than others while a very bad job is also possible. But, it simply is impossible to completely duplicate this painting using a different palette and different brushes. In the same vein, there are no specific rules regarding how to translate the colloquial words and expressions, hence, it is the task of the translator to make decisions about the priorities at first and select the most appropriate translation procedure (Ulvydienė and Abramovaitė, 2012).

## VII. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are several groups of target audiences who can benefit from this study.

At first, these results can provide novice translators with some general guidance on how to treat and render the colloquial language in the materials being translated. In fact, procedures used by the experienced translators and their strengths and weaknesses in this regard can guide them through their way of translation.

Secondly, the present study has pedagogical values for the lecturers. Both lecturers and language teachers can use the data collection and the outcomes of the study as an input in their classes for the purpose of teaching the translation procedures in a more practical way.

Thirdly, language learners can also take advantage of this research in terms of getting some information regarding the colloquial expressions including their types, their translation-related challenges and the procedures used for their translation. This information may add to their language knowledge.

Finally, the result of this research is expected to open new windows for further future research on colloquialism.

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