

# The Effect of Native Model Writing on the Vocabulary Richness of Iranian EFL Learners' Written Text in a Four-stage Writing Task

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**Abstract**—Vocabulary is a main part of English language teaching because without sufficient vocabulary students cannot understand others or express their own thoughts. “A repeating inquiry in the historical backdrop of language teaching research has been that of how vocabulary can be best organized for learning “(see McArthur 1998; Howatt and Widdowson 2004 for historical reviews). The present study investigated a group of Iranian EFL students' knowledge for vocabulary learning and their vocabulary size. This study aimed at investigating the role of native-like writing in enhancing learners' writing ability by sensitizing them to select more native-like terms and expressions through improving their vocabulary knowledge. For this purpose the researcher used native models in two revisions of story in four-stage writing task that consisted of output, comparison, and two revisions. The question that researchers asked was whether giving native models later turns into better performance. At the end it is concluded that the 4-stage native model of writing helps L2 learners to write a well-formed English narrative and make use of better terms and expressions as well as helping teachers understand the formulation problems of EFL writers and what the students notice. That is, the gap between the way that they write and the native models to which they compare themselves.

**Index Terms**—vocabulary size, vocabulary knowledge, output, vocabulary errors

## I. INTRODUCTION

The notion of language abilities is grounded based on the idea that language comprises of four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Cook, 2001). Out of these four skills, listening and reading are regarded as receptive skills whereas speaking and writing are considered as productive skills. Writing is a fundamental skill on advancing learners' knowledge. This is mainly due to that writing involves the structure of new meaning from new ideas and existing facts in which sentences have notable relationships to each other (Dietsch, 2000).

Axelrod and Cooper (1988) emphasize that writing in a straight line linked to the way one learns. This is mostly because this skill supports students to be dynamic thinkers and learners through direct envelopment in the creation of new meaning. Hughey et al. (1983) argued that the skill of writing helps students to strengthen vocabulary skills as they look up for the suitable words required in their writing task. Correspondingly, grammar forms are also enriched by writing as when learners write, they ought to make correct choices on the proper syntactic forms, discourse markers and registers to be exploited so as to transfer their opinions and ideas successfully. In terms of Iranian context, writing has gained importance because of the particular stress given to it together with reading in most ESP programs at tertiary levels (Saffarzadeh, 1988; Tajadini, 2002). Intrinsically, it is compulsory on language teachers especially TEFL trainers to master the frequent and often complex patterns that underpin the writing module so that they can convey such knowledge efficiently to prospective students of the language (Tajadini, 2002). However, the overall mastery of intricate syntactic patterns by Iranian learners in English is open to debate as numerous previous studies (Tajadini, 2006; Keshavarz, 2003) emphasized that most learners apply a diversity of communications strategies to overcome the implementation of challenging patterns.

It is incontrovertible that native speakers have intuitive knowledge of idiomatic expressions (Coulmas, 1981), linguistic competence (Davies, 1991), appropriate vocabulary size, collocations, and even nonverbal cultural features (Coulmas, 1981; Davies, 1991). Moreover, there is evidence that presenting an appropriate model of native-like writing is more facilitative in the learners' learning process than explicit error correction and feedback (Qi & Lapkin, 2001). Recognizing this, this study aimed at investigating the role of native-like writing in enhancing learners' writing ability by sensitizing them to select more native-like terms and expressions through improving their vocabulary knowledge.

For the present study, a writing task was designed to provide the participants with the opportunity to (1) in order to find out how reach is their vocabulary size (Appendix A) (Stage 1), (2) notice gaps between their inter language forms and target forms based on a comparison of their original draft with two native-speaker models (Appendix B) (Stage 2), (3) revise their original text based on what they knew (Stage 3), and (4) revise their original text again after an interval

of over two months (Stage 4). Two models were used in this study to reduce the chance of the participants' mindless copying from a single model text, and to increase the chance of providing solutions to the problems that the participants incidentally noticed (Hanaoka, 2007). As we know Iranian learners of English at tertiary level often encounter difficulties in writing, hence, the research questions posed in this study included the following:

1. How well L2 learners use English terms and words while composing a narrative? (stage1)
2. How do sample texts of native speaker models of writing affect L2 learners' composition? (stage 2)

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing is a complex linguistic capability that needs years of practice in order to be mastered. As a matter of fact, it is an ability that can never be fully acquired. By and large, writing has been considered as a support skill which was previously done to reinforce the grammar acquisition, support the memorization of language structures and emphasize, lately, on even oral proficiency as in grammar-translation, audio-lingual and communicative methods respectively (Homstad & Thorston, 1994).

"An understudy's writing is not just used to assess her/his English capability, but also to assess her/his comprehension of different subjects such as social studies, law, economics, and physical and natural sciences. Writing is additionally viewed as significant piece of all college level courses" (Rezaei & Lovorn, 2010, p.2).

Kellogg (1996) states the writing procedure in terms of an interaction of three processing systems in which each processing system is made up of two sub-systems comprising formulation, which is made up of planning and translating; execution, which is comprised of programming and execution; and monitoring, which consists of reading and editing and provides detailed data about what goes on in every system and how the systems interact with each other. In this model, ideas and languages are already determined at the detailing stage. Then the ideas and languages become the input to the execution system where most straightforward decisions for author how to execute them. Once they are executed, the monitoring system looks for a discrepancy and an answer in conjunction with the formulation system. The formulation system starts again for new ideas or language to determine the discrepancy detected in the previous system.

Ferris (2002) maintains that notwithstanding the fact that issues and skills related to writing process are important, we must be aware that problems and also disorders of grammar can have negative impact and impression on the general quality of student's writing. Because of this, writing teachers need to help students expand their editing as well as their composing skills.

### A. Theories Related to ESL Writing

In the investigation of ESL composing history, Silva (1990, as cited in Mu, 2005) approximately partitioned ESL writing guideline into four stages stamped by the four most compelling approaches: the controlled approach, the current-traditional rhetoric approach, the process approach and the social approach. The primary stage was overwhelmed by the controlled or guided methodology which was affected by structural linguistics and behaviorist psychology. This approach specifies learning to write as an exercise in habit formation. Understudies were prepared to practice sentence designs and vocabulary by method for composing. The major approach in the second stage of ESL writing guideline was the current-traditional rhetoric approach with the effect of Kaplan's theory of constructive rhetoric. It viewed figuring out how to make as stage of ESL composing instructing was the procedure approach. According this approach, learning to write was developing efficient effective writing strategies.

The social approach in the fourth stage announced that instruction to write was a part of becoming socialized to the discourse community finding out what is expected and trying to approximate it.

In continue in relation to the writing area, learning vocabulary is also an area that should not be neglected .The increasing awareness of vocabulary's significant contribution to language acquisition has given birth to the growing development of vocabulary testing in writing. Vocabulary is fundamental to English language teaching because without sufficient vocabulary students cannot understand others or express their own thoughts.

### B. Vocabulary

Vocabulary learning by far plays a very important role in learning another language. Learning a second or foreign language mostly includes learning the sound system, grammar, and vocabulary of that language.

According to Seal (1990), to the non-language specialist, the practical judgment skills perspective for how languages are learned is that you substitute the words in your first language for relating expression in the second language. . In reality, there is usually a positive correlation the middle of one's information about vocabulary and his/her level of language proficiency.

Words are recognized as the building blocks upon which knowledge of the second language can be built. "Simply put, Individuals with huge vocabularies are more proficient readers than those with restricted vocabularies. There are many features to vocabulary learning and acquisition. Although some teachers may think that vocabulary learning is not difficult but learning new vocabulary items has always been challenging for the learners. "Language trainees are searching productive ways of increasing the chance of storing new words into their long-term memory but forgetting is a common and big problem among them. They often worried that they can't remember words soon after learning them."(Rahimi & Shojaee, 2008, p.1).

Learning vocabulary from context or 'incidental learning' versus 'direct intentional learning' need two distinctive approaches of learning vocabulary which identify with short-term and long-term memory. In Iranian high schools, even university most English teachers try to teach vocabulary items using L1equivalents; however, a few others criticize translation-based learning and they try to teach English words in context. The knowledge of vocabulary is tested in regard to their ability to use such knowledge in context, although they focus on translation while teaching. It should be mentioned that most English vocabulary items used in both midterm and final exams request the students either to finalize the sentences using given words or they are required to complete the sentences using their own vocabulary knowledge.

### C. Vocabulary Learning

A frequent topic in the study of language and specially writing skill teaching "has been that of how vocabulary can be best structured for learning in better writing" (see McArthur 1998; Howatt and Widdowson, 2004).

The justification for this line of query back to three possible notions: first, learners want to pay attention to vocabulary learning explicitly. Second, the massive number of the vocabulary means that most students will never learn more than a small part of the words in the language. Third, some vocabularies are possibly to be more emphasized for communicative purposes than others. The chief goal of study in this area is to prioritize words to be learned to guarantee that learners have the maximum possible communicative achievement with the inexorably limited set of words they obtain.

Awareness in outlining a targeted word list is chiefly "strong in the field of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), where inadequate vocabulary competence is recurrently cited as a major source of problems" (Evans and Green, 2007; Berman and Cheng, 2010; Evans and Morrison, 2011; Wu and Hammond, 2011). Studies on vocabulary frequently stated that it should not be the role of EAP classes to teach technical words, which is argued to be both outside of EAP teachers' knowledge and somewhat unproblematic for learners (e.g. Cowan, 1974; Farrell, 1990).

Studies into vocabulary competence consistently showed that the productive connection from meaning to form is more problematic to create than the receptive link from form to meaning (Schmitt, 2008); furthermore, "while knowledge of a form-meaning connection is satisfactory to empower active reading, actual implementation of words in context is also dependent on a more affluent knowledge of register and the grammatical and collocational links of words. For this reason, productive vocabulary may need more explicit investigation than receptive. Additionally, strategies, such as dictionary usage, concluding meaning from context, and avoiding unknown words, are more possible to allow learners to deal efficiently with deficiencies of knowledge in receptive than in productive vocabulary. Thus, it is essential to spread out our knowledge of academic vocabulary further than receptive requirements"

## III. METHODOLOGY

### A. Participants

The participants were 14 Iranian students in two ability-based sophomore classes at Arastu institute. One class was the most advanced class in one department, and the other class was an intermediate level class in another department. For convenience, the former class will be referred to as Class A and the latter class as Class B. The data to be analyzed for this study come from a total of 14 students (7 students from Class A and 7 students from Class B) who completed all the stages of the writing task.

### B. Procedure

Following the procedures of Hanaoka (2007), at first, the students wrote a story in response to a picture prompt (see Appendix A) in order to find out how reach is their vocabulary size. The advantage of picture prompt was that the propositional content of the story that the students wrote could be controlled. Throughout the task, instruction was given in Persian and the students also took notes in Persian. The students were provided with Sheet 1, Sheet 2, and the pictures in the Stage 1 writing task. On Sheet 1, they wrote a narrative and on Sheet 2, they took notes on whatever problems they noticed as they wrote on Sheet 1. The directions were written at the top of Sheet 2 with the following specific examples of note-taking in Persian: 'I don't know how to say X in English', 'I wrote X, but I'm not sure if this is correct', 'what is the past tense of X?' and 'I'm not sure whether the picture is describing X'. This stage took 15 minutes in Class A, and 18 minutes in Class B. At the end of the Stage 1 task, the students were told that they would now receive native speaker models. They were then asked to indicate at the top of Sheet 2 how eager they were to read them on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being 'Not at all' and 5 'Very much'). Then, Sheet 2 was collected. The students kept their original text (Sheet 1) and the pictures for the Stage 2 task. In the Stage 2 task, which immediately followed the Stage 1 task, the students received Sheet 3 and two native-speaker models (see Appendix B). One of the models was written by an American person, and the other was written by a Canadian person. For ease of reference, the two models were titled (A) and (B) respectively. The students were required to perform an immediate revision of the story on Sheet 3 based on the vocabulary they remember of what they had understood.

This task took around 10 minutes in every class. Toward the Stage 2, the native-speaker models and Sheet 3 were gathered. The students kept their original content (Sheet 1) and the pictures to be used in the Stage 3 revision task. In the Stage 3 task, the students were asked to rewrite their original text on Sheet 4. This task took 15 minutes in Class A,

and 13 minutes in Class B. The Stage 4 task was conducted more than two months later after the summer break. The students had not been informed of the task in advance. For this task, they received their first draft (Sheet 1) and were asked to rewrite it on Sheet 5 to understand how well they learn to use native vocabulary and specific expressions. This task took about 15 minutes in each class. In addition to a qualitative investigation of the data, a one-way within-subjects analysis of variance was used to compare the students' vocabulary knowledge at different stages.

#### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study examined the effect of native model writing on the students' vocabulary richness. A one-way repeated measure ANOVA (table 1) was conducted to determine whether the students' vocabulary knowledge changes significantly in different stages.

TABLE 1.  
TESTS OF WITHIN-SUBJECTS EFFECTS

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Stage	Sphericity Assumed	138.857	3	46.286	33.035	.000	.718
	Greenhouse-Geisser	138.857	1.448	95.886	33.035	.000	.718
	Huynh-Feldt	138.857	1.582	87.778	33.035	.000	.718
	Lower-bound	138.857	1.000	138.857	33.035	.000	.718
Error(stage)	Sphericity Assumed	54.643	39	1.401			
	Greenhouse-Geisser	54.643	18.826	2.903			
	Huynh-Feldt	54.643	20.565	2.657			
	Lower-bound	54.643	13.000	4.203			

The factor (stage) had four levels (1, 2, 3, and 4), and the dependent variable was scores on vocabulary knowledge. The results for the 14 individuals showed that the scores between the first stage ( $M = 13.57$ ,  $SD = 1.3$ ), the second stage ( $M = 15.42$ ,  $SD = 1.5$ ), the third stage ( $M = 16.57$ ,  $SD = 1.2$ ), and the fourth stage ( $M = 17.85$ ,  $SD = .94$ ) were statistically different [ $F(3, 39) = 33.35$ ,  $p < .05$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .718$ ].

Follow-up post hoc analyses (table 2) were conducted using Bonferroni. The results indicate that the scores at stage one ( $M = 13.5$ ,  $SD = .374$ ) are significantly lower than average at ages two ( $M = 15.42$ ,  $SD = .416$ ), three ( $M = 16.57$ ,  $SD = .34$ ), and four ( $M = 17.85$ ,  $SD = .254$ ). In addition the post hoc tests indicated that the students' performance in stage one and two was not statistically different ( $p = .056$ ); however, the students' performance in stages three and four had improved and the results were significant.

TABLE 2.  
POST-HOC PAIR WISE COMPARISONS

Measure: MEASURE_1		Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. <sup>b</sup>	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
(I) stage	(J) stage				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	-1.857	.610	.056	-3.752	.038
	3	-3.000*	.602	.002	-4.871	-1.129
	4	-4.286*	.539	.000	-5.960	-2.611
2	1	1.857	.610	.056	-.038	3.752
	3	-1.143*	.275	.007	-1.996	-.290
	4	-2.429*	.291	.000	-3.333	-1.524
3	1	3.000*	.602	.002	1.129	4.871
	2	1.143*	.275	.007	.290	1.996
	4	-1.286*	.125	.000	-1.675	-.896
4	1	4.286*	.539	.000	2.611	5.960
	2	2.429*	.291	.000	1.524	3.333
	3	1.286*	.125	.000	.896	1.675

Based on estimated marginal means

\*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

The difference between stage one and two was not statistically significant ( $p = .056$ ).

In continue of this part and first stage some samples of tabulated data are sorted out in Table 3.

TABLE 3  
THE PROBLEMATIC AREAS AND CORRECT VOCABULARIES USED BY LEARNERS

Problematic	Correct vocabulary
Go to work by bike	Ride the bike to work
Go to her work	Go work
Moved early	Wake up early
Vehicle	Car or bike or bus
Some of the people	Some people
The air was fresh	Nice day
Nice weather	Nice day
Heavy traffic	Huge traffic jam
causes me to be active	motivates me to be active
Stuck	Be stuck or get stuck
In time	On time
Full breakfast	Balanced breakfast
Crowded day	Busy day
Stressful	Stressed
Continue to riding	Keep on riding
Move hand	Wave hand
arrange your suitcase	pack your suitcase
in an off day	on an off day
regular people	ordinary people
On hurry, hurriedly	In hurry
Bike	Ride a bike
It's a topic of girls	It's a girl thing
Border	Board
a lot of efficient	a lot of effective
Speech room	Presentation room
Some else	Someone else, another one
early hours	Extra early
in an off day	on an off day
Accuse for	Accuse of
Anxious for	Anxious about
Travel with the train	Travel by train

Most of the students have problems identifying the right tense, the following examples illustrates their mistakes:

Most of the students has problem identifying the correct grammatical tense and they started their writing using past tense and continue using present tense, so the sentences in their paragraphs do not seem connected:

I was supposed to get there so I *decide* to go.....

It was a really nice weather and bright sun *shines*

It was going to take place an important meeting and jack was *supposed to have*.....

Everybody *get* angry

At stage 1 the students were asked to write the problems they face while writing and most of them are listed below:

I don't know how to say "گیر کردن در ترافیک"  
 I don't know how to say ساعات اولیه صبح  
 I don't know how to say فروش ماهیانه  
 I don't know how to say یکی از همکاران جان  
 I don't know how to say تاخیر  
 I don't know how to say احساس شرمندگی  
 I don't know how to say ترافیک سنگین  
 I don't know how to say اتاق جلسه  
 I don't know how to say یک مسیر  
 I don't know how to say ورزش صبحگاهی  
 I don't know how to say ماشینهای چسبیده بهم  
 I don't know how to say دوچرخه سوار  
 I don't know how to say صورت پر از خشم

For the next stage the students were then immediately given two native-speaker models to read and were asked to write on a new sheet of paper to find out how well they make use of the vocabulary and if they correct their mistakes in this sheet of paper and reply to see if the given text help them to write better. By analyzing the students' second writing it was concluded that they significantly use the words and the terms of the given texts and their paragraphs were well-formed. The terms that were use more are listed in Table 4.

TABLE 4.  
THE TERMS USED BY LEARNERS DURING SECOND WRITING

Terms
Extra early
Brilliant day
Ride bike
Be stuck
Wave cheerful
Annoyed as she passed by
No sign of Adams
Made it with plenty of time to spare
Mumbled an apology
Stickler for time keeping
He looked frustrated
The traffic was at a standstill
Got the room for set up
Different from
Full of
Glad about
Good at
Leave for a place
Proud of
Prefer to
Similar to

For final stage students performed another version two months later, for this task, they received their first draft (sheet 1) and were asked to rewrite it on a new sheet. The researcher speculated that having the respondents take notes while writing allowed them to engage in metalinguistic reflection and thereby enhanced the vocabulary size. I felt it may have amplified the positive effects of what they wrote while writing and in turn may have improved retention of the written features.

The first research question posed in this study was: How well 12 learners use English terms and words “while composing a narrative? On their own, the answer to this question was that the students perceived overwhelmingly lexical problems. The second research question was: How do sample texts of native speaker models of writing affect 12 learners’ composition? (The answer to this question was also that a large majority of student perceiving was lexical. It should be pointed out as well that in this stage the participants knew more features than in Stage 1 and that content features accounted for nearly 35% of the participants’ perceiving. This amplifies the role of native-speaker models in promoting learners’ level of perception and specifically in drawing their attention to the content of what they wrote.

It was found that in Stage 1 and 2 of writing process participants perceived lexical deficiency in their interlanguages through output. Moreover, it was shown that this perceived need for vocabulary was conducive to a lexically oriented search for solutions in the two models presented later (Swain, 1998). Overall, these results indicated that ‘learners focus, above all things, on words’ (Williams, 2001, p.338). The following possibilities also need to be recognized, however.

The first possibility is that lexical features were simply easier to express and report than grammatical ones. The physically demanding note-taking may have caused this. Second, the directions given to the participants *when* they took notes may also have inflated the proportion of lexical problematic features perceived from stage 1. With respect to the perceiving function of output (Swain, 1995; Swain and Lapkin, 1995), it should be noted that during the Stage 2 task, the participants noticed some new problems with their original output while studying the TL models” (Hanaoka, 2007). After analyzing the learners’ initial output, that is, before presenting them to the native-like writing sample, the researchers found some linguistic problems recognized and reported by the learners, especially in the application of the vocabulary. Then, after exposing them to native model, they could recognize their problematic areas better and sought to improve them in their second writing which was the chief finding of this study.

These two types of problem recognition may be distinguished from each other. In the case of the former, the learner typically wonders, ‘How can I write (say) this?’ while in the latter case, the learner may say, ‘I should have written (said) it this way.’ In this regard, those problems that the participants encounter during output, or ‘holes’ (Swain, 1998) may represent proactive recognition of problems, whereas those problems that they know for the first time during the comparison stage without being preceded by perceiving of holes may be characterized by reactive recognition of problems (Hanaoka, 2007).

## V. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicated an important progress of Iranian EFL learners in their writing ability to choose more native-like terms and expressions. The participants, regardless of their proficiency level, noticed their respective linguistic deficiency, autonomously found solutions in the models in their writing, and integrated them in subsequent revisions. Lexical features of the models pertinent to the participants had faced through output were integrated at a higher rate and were also retained longer than unrelated features. This means that output had a positive domino effect on learning. This supports the idea that output plays a main part in both helping learners identify the linguistic features they need and facilitating subsequent learning of these features. Focus-on-form activity in L2 writing, which permits

learners to choose target forms based on their own respective needs, might have a strong motivational advantage (Hanaoka, 2007) in learning. When L2 learners were asked to write on their own at stage 1, they couldn't find and use adequate terms and expressions and also they make some grammatical mistakes such as tense-ignorance.

Nevertheless, when they were equipped by native models at stage 2 significant improvements were expected on their composed sheets and as a result, the amount of mistakes was reported less than what they did before. In conclusion the 4-stage native model of writing helps L2 learners to write a well-formed English narrative and make use of better terms and expressions. In summary, in spite of the fact that vocabulary is basically important to comprehension, there has been very little experimental research in the previous 25 years that researches the development of vocabulary in language minority students acquiring English as a societal language. Besides, there is a need to test the effectiveness of specific methods of vocabulary education with this population. We hope that this article will help guide and stimulate additional research on vocabulary development further, this is our hope that, with sound involvements to expand vocabulary and comprehension in ELLs, more students will be recognized as learning disabled, based on less production in this scope.

#### APPENDIX A. THE PICTURE PROMPT



#### APPENDIX B. THE TWO NATIVE SPEAKER MODELS

A) Alyssa woke up extra early and decided today would be a brilliant day to ride her bike to work. She made herself a balanced breakfast and proceeded to get ready. The weather was superb. Alyssa got a pleasant head start to work. She took in all the gorgeous scenery and enjoyed every sight. On her way she saw a huge traffic jam. Cars were not going anywhere anytime soon. Alyssa kept on riding so she would not be late and giggled at the sight of one of her co-worker's car. It was Adam Hayes.. He was stuck among all the other cars. Alyssa smiled and waved cheerfully to Adam as she passed. Adam was completely shocked and looked a little annoyed as she passed by. Alyssa proceeded to work and made it with plenty of time to spare. Was she ever so pleased she rode her bike to work. Alyssa walked into the presentation room where an important meeting was to take place. Alyssa checked her watch, "No sign of Adam.", she thought. The meeting started to take place without Adam. About an hour later Adam burst through the door and was clearly out of breath. Everyone was not very amused with such a loud disruption. Adam mumbled an apology and proceeded to take his place. Alyssa couldn't help but smile.

B) I decided to buy a bike and ride to work each day. It isn't too far from my house to the office, only about half and hours ride. Cyclists have their own lanes and so it makes it a lot easier and a lot safer. In my office where I work, they are sticklers for time keeping! And my, to be late is like a criminal offence! Gary my colleague too is very good at time keeping, but one day he didn't do so well. Sometimes he rides to work with me, but last Friday he wasn't there at our usual meeting place to ride together, I wondered if he was all right. But when I was in the cycle lane, the traffic was at a standstill and I saw him in his lovely black car, he looked totally frustrated and stressed. Our office had a special meeting on that day and all the Board were there for a 9 am presentation. I was happy to get there early and got the room set up for the meeting. Gary was supposed to present the latest sales charts to the Board, but at a few minutes to

nine, his colleague Mark, decided to do the presentation for him. Wow it was a good job that Gary had left all the presentation material in the office the night before! At 9.40am Gary charged through the door making an unceremonious entrance! He was so stressed, the poor guy. The Board, who are grumpy at the best of times showed their disapproval and annoyance by scowls on their faces, looking at their watches and just generally creating an atmosphere that you could have cut with a knife! I felt sorry for Gary, but Mark had things in hand and when the Board meeting finished, and after Gary apologised profusely. The Board were apologetic too about their actions when they found out that he had to take his wife to hospital for an operation and had forfeited being with her for the Board's report. And to top it off there had been an accident on the road! Poor Gary!

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