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# Learning English through Movies: Adult English Language Learners' Perceptions

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**Abstract**—The use of media in English teaching and learning has received much attention from educators and second/foreign language educators. The use of media includes the use of movies, music, films, and other types of entertainment-related learning resources. However, little has been done to understand the adult language learners' perceptions toward the benefits and challenges of using English movies to learn English. This qualitative research study explored English learners' perceptions regarding the use of movies as English teaching and learning tools. The study focused on what language learners believe are the benefits and challenges of relying on English movies to develop their language competency. The study's results indicated that language learners believed that movies are authentic sources of language learning and can be used effectively to improve language skills including speaking, listening, reading, vocabulary, and writing. Findings also revealed that according to language learners, movies are beneficial in terms of increasing students' cultural awareness.

**Index Terms**—ELLs, movies in education, authentic learning, media in language learning, ESL teaching

## I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, English language has become the most significant and dominant language over the globe (Crystal, 2012). For language learners, learning a new language can be a complex process which requires a huge amount of time and effort. Second language educators have been using different types of English resources to find the most appealing and effective way of learning the language (Cook, 2016). One way that has been used effectively is encouraging language learners to develop their language competencies through English movies. In fact, much attention has been given regarding the effectiveness of using media, specifically English movies, in language teaching and learning. Proponents of using this type of media believe that movies allow for more interactive and appealing ways of teaching and learning English (Tafari, 2009). Other researchers (Kusumaningrum, 2016; Sari & Sugandi, 2015) have argued that watching movies for learning English has some drawbacks because these movies lack instructional and pedagogical intentions.

According to Tafari (2009), the use of English movies as an English learning tool should be encouraged and implemented by language teachers. Many researchers (Ismaili, 2013; Khoshniyat & Dowlatabadi, 2014; Li & Wang, 2015; Qiu, 2017) have claimed that there are several advantages inherent in the use of English movies as means to develop language competency. These benefits include increasing students' motivation, enhancing students' oral and communication skills, and developing their cultural awareness thereby allowing for a more authentic language learning experience.

Accordingly, Khoshniyat and Dowlatabadi (2014) believe that using English movies can empower ELLs with extensive vocabulary lists, syntax, and other language skills that enable them to improve their English proficiency. Even though much research has been done to understand the importance of integrating media into the language classroom and the language learning experience, little work has been done regarding the effectiveness of watching movies specifically for educational purposes. Moreover, little attention was given to explore the perceptions of adult language learners toward using movies to develop language skills. Adult language learners should have a voice in terms of how they perceive watching movies as a learning tool. Thus, the fundamental goal of the present study was to explore adult language learners' feelings and perceptions about why and how English movies should be used to develop English language skills.

### A. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine how adult English language learners in the United States perceive the effectiveness of watching movies to enhance and develop their language proficiencies. Moreover, this study explored

the benefits as well as the challenges that are usually associated with relying on English movies as English learning and teaching tools. Understanding and exploring these opinions is essential to inform educators and second/foreign language teachers whether movies can and should be used to learn English. Particularly, the study aimed to provide valuable information for adult language learners to start watching movies, not only for entertainment but also for English learning purposes.

### *B. Research Questions*

The research questions that guided the study were:

1. How do language learners describe their experiences using English movies as tools to learn English?
2. To what extent do adult language learners believe that watching movies to learn English is beneficial?

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Previous studies concerning the use of movies as English teaching and learning tools shed light on the effectiveness, benefits, and challenges that are associated with using English to learn or teach English. Researchers have looked at English movies as effective and interactive ways of learning English.

Li and Wang (2015) investigated the impact of using English movies to enhance the English oral skills of Chinese college learners. The researchers used English movies as a part of English course to improve students' speaking and listening skills. After exposing college students to English movies during English course, the researchers provided students with written or oral activities in which they had to summarize or retell the plotlines of the movies. Li and Wang (2015) found that not only students' oral skills but also their cultural awareness have improved. The researchers continued to say that watching movies for educational purposes "enable students to learn the language in a real language environment and find out the cultural differences between Chinese and Western, then students' motivation can be aroused, and flexibility in real occasions will be cultivated, therefore, enhancing the ability of foreign language communication and application." (p. 1100).

Similarly, Ismaili (2013) examined the effect of using movies in English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms among South East European University students and EFL teachers. With three months period of time, the study tends to examine the effects of using movies to teach and learn English. The participants of the study included two major groups: teachers and undergraduate students. The first group consists of six teachers who were willing to participate in the study. The second group consists of 60 male and female students with age ranging from 18-25. The participants, pre-intermediate and intermediate EFL learners, were assigned to experimental and control groups. The researcher integrated English movies as teaching materials with the treatment group. The control group received more traditional ways of teaching without being exposed to English movies during class time. The results of the study indicated that there were significant differences between the two groups with regard to their language proficiency. In other words, the researcher found that using movies as teaching materials increased students' motivation and improved their language skills. Moreover, Ismaili (2013) investigated FL teachers' perceptions regarding the use of movies as teaching tools. The participant teachers believed that movies can be used effectively to facilitate the learning process, enhance the learning atmosphere, and encourage more student-teacher and student-student discussions, and that helps in developing ELLs language skills.

Kusumaningrum (2016) explored the use and potential benefits of incorporating English movies into English as Foreign Language classes. The study was conducted in Indonesia where the EFL class is a mandatory learning subject in senior high school. The main goal of the EFL classes was to raise the academic level of language literacy. The researcher used English movies as teaching tools because of the fact that some students did not likely enjoy learning a new language with poor learning style and classroom environment. Therefore, Kusumaningrum's study was adopted to answer the questions: How and why English movies can be implemented to teach English as a foreign language to senior high school students? Kusumaningrum (2016) found that using English movies facilitated the learning process and allowed language learners to develop their language skills, like speaking, writing, and listening in more appealing and interactive ways. The researcher concluded that English movies do indeed provide more opportunity to teach and learn English in authentic learning environment.

Khoshniyat and Dowlatabadi (2014) examined the use of Disney movies to teach English idioms to young Iranian EFL learners. The purpose of using Disney movies was to facilitate learning the English idioms and to provide an enjoyable and interesting learning environment. The study included 40 young EFL learners who were divided into experimental and control group. The experimental group was exposed to Disney movies to learn English idioms, while the control group was exposed to traditional ways of teaching English idioms. Both groups were pre and post-tested to examine the effects of Disney movies on their acquisition of English idioms. The researchers found that students in the experimental groups scored significantly higher than the control groups. The study revealed that exposure to movies allowed students to be much more successful at comprehending and retention of idioms. The researcher concluded by saying that using movies to teach English could bring imagination to the world of language learning, and that makes language classes more enjoyable and motivating.

Qiu (2017) studied the effects of utilizing English movies on listening skills of college language learners. The study found that English movies are an effective and beneficial way for improving listening skills of adult language learners.

The study also indicated that English movies increase the authenticity of the learning process and help in decreasing students' learning anxiety. The researcher suggested that English teachers have to consider using English movies to develop learners' speaking and listening skills. The researcher concluded by stating that English movies can provide significant educational reward that make English learning and teaching more authentic and appealing to all language learners.

To sum up, the review of the literature revealed some academic and social benefits of using English movies to teach and learn English. The researchers indicate that using English movies during language classes is an effective exposure English learning strategy.

### III. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research method was used to collect and analyze data for this research study. Qualitative research methods allow researchers to explore the participants' perceptions and opinions regarding the use of American movies to learn English. Moreover, the primary methods of data collection and analysis were interviews. Face-to-face and online semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants to understand their opinions and thoughts regarding the use of movies to learn English. The semi-structured interviews allowed the researchers to deeply understand the participant's perceptions and provide more opportunity to ask questions based on the participants' responses. The semi-structured interview with the participating language learners lasted between 30 to 60 minutes. These interviews were recorded and then transcribed in a word file. The Interview transcriptions were sent to Dedoose to start the coding process.

#### A. Study Participants

To understand the benefits and challenges of using movies as an English learning tool, 25 adult language learners were chosen purposefully. The participants were studying at different intensive language programs located in different states in the United States. These intensive English programs serve the academic and cultural needs of international students who were learning English for academic purposes. The participants were studying at different language levels ranging from low-intermediate to advanced language learning. Table 1 provides demographic information about the participants and their English proficiency levels:

TABLE 1  
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Participants language levels	Number
Low-intermediate	7
High-intermediate	9
Advanced	9

Language learners involved in the study differed in their educational background; some of whom were pursuing their bachelors' degree while other were starting their master's studies. The ages of the participants ranged from 18-33 and they came from different ethnic backgrounds, including Hispanic, Arab, and Asian. The study included a mixed gender group with ten females and fifteen males.

#### B. Data Analysis

For the data analysis, the researchers used Dedoose (<https://www.dedoose.com>) site to organize and analyze the collected data. Dedoose is an online-based software that helps in coding and analyzing qualitative data. Talanquer (2014) mentioned that Dedoose is a "web-based application that is easily accessible via the Internet and includes the major analytical tools present in modern CAQDAS packages." (p. 85). Talanquer added that the user-friendly interface facilitates collaboration among the research team. Ongoing conversations throughout the analysis process helped the researchers identify initial and final codes and categories that helped in generating themes. Figure 1 represents the analysis process including the first and second cycle coding as well as the generated themes.

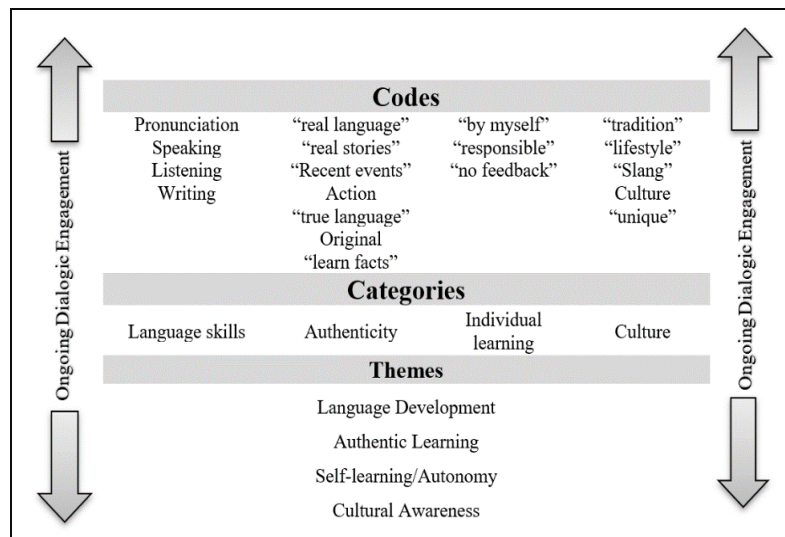


Figure 1. The analysis process including the first and second coding cycle with the generated themes.

#### IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Analysis of data revealed four themes related to adult English language learners' perceptions toward the use of English movies as tools to learn English. These themes reflect the participants' opinions and thoughts of how and why movies are beneficial in terms of language learning. The following sections will unpack each of these themes in detail.

##### A. Language Development

Previous research on the use of English movies indicated that movies can be used effectively to improve English learners' language. Similarly, the language learners participated in this study believed that their language was developed as a result of watching movies regularly. This was mentioned by almost all the participants and is, thus, presented as a theme. This theme suggests that watching movies to learn English played a critical role in developing and improving the participants' English. In particular, participants described four main language skills that can be developed as a result of watching movies. These four language skills are: speaking, listening, pronunciation, and vocabulary acquisitions.

First, speaking and listening were inextricably connected by participants as an example of their language development. Most of the participants believed that watching movies allowed them to improve their speaking and listening skills. As one learner mentioned, "Since I have been watching movies for a long time, my English language has really been improved in speaking and listening." Another participant mentioned, "I feel that because I have been watching movies for a long time, my speaking and listening abilities have really improved."

Second, pronunciation is another language skill that was mentioned consistently by the participants when describing their experiences of using movies as learning tools. For instance, one participant stated, "I watch movies, so I can learn some new vocabulary and their pronunciation. That helps me a lot improving my own pronunciation." Another participant felt strongly that movies are the most important source for his pronunciation practice:

*Besides having fun, I usually watch movies to improve my own pronunciation. I found a really beneficial way to practice my speaking and more importantly my pronunciation skills. I listen to actors and actress pronouncing words and then I immediately say the words aloud twice or three times. My pronunciation has improved significantly because of this method.*

Third, the participants were more apt to connect between watching movies and acquiring more vocabulary as evidenced by one participant who mentioned, "Watching movies regularly allows me to know many words that I didn't have the chance to learn in classes. In movies, these words were used by real people. I saw how these words should be used." The participants believed that watching movies helps them increase their vocabulary bank, which is an important aspect of language learning. Interestingly, one participant described movies as "vocabulary gold mine" which includes many new words from which he can learn. This participant indicated:

*Movies are the sources of my English learning. Every time I watch a movie, I learn new words which I can use later. I believe that movies are a gold mine that has so many new words which we can use in everyday life. I also think that movies should be used in all English classes. They are real and full of new words.*

Surprisingly, some participants believed that watching movies helps them improve not only their oral but also their written skills through reading subtitles as explained by one of the participants, "watching movies not only improves my speaking and listening in English, but also my writing has been developed as I was looking at the subtitles that were on movies." The following dialogue between one participant and the interviewer explain how watching movies help in improving the writing skills:

[Participant 1] *I believe that my writing has improved as a result of watching movies.*

[Researcher] *How?*

[Participant 1] *When I watch movies, I rely on subtitle to read and understand what is happening. Reading these subtitles allowed me to know the spelling of many words. Also, reading the subtitles allowed me to know the structure of the sentence.*

All in all, almost all the participant shared the beliefs that watching movies led to their language development. The participants reported that various language skills, such as speaking, listening, vocabulary acquisition, and writing, were improved thanks to watching English movies.

### *B. Authentic Learning*

Almost all the adult language learners shared the belief that watching English movies to learn English is beneficial because these movies represent real-life language used by native speakers of the language. The participants tended to agree that the language used in movies is life, real, and current, and that makes movies authentic sources of language. According to the language learners, listening to real language represented in the movies makes language learning more enjoyable and interesting. As stated by one participant, "Movies represents real life situations and events. That's why I have learned many words, idioms, and phrases by watching movies." Another participant mentioned: "I watch movies in my spare time to develop my English. That is because the language used is natural and real. I can see how normal people talk and used the word and their expressions." Another student stated:

*Movies provide learners of English with real situations and the language used in those situations. Learning English through movies not only provide opportunities to learn from native speakers but also exposes learners to language, which thus contribute to the acquisition of language.*

Moreover, learning authenticity was expressed by the participants as an advantage of using movies to learn English. The participants believed that exposure to real language increased their motivation to listen carefully and develop their language. For instance, one participant mentioned:

*I like watching English movies because they represent real language spoken by real people. It is interesting that you hear language is usually different from what you learn in classes. Real language makes me want to learn more and listen more to new words and expressions.*

These findings resonate with Tafani's (2009) research which emphasizes the ideas of using movies to bring more authentic, reality and flexible way of teaching a foreign language. Tafani noted that "While using a film in the classroom to help our English we have paid attention to the accent, voice, body language, choosing of the words, training ear and the eye, lifestyle, plot idea, summary..." (p.88).

Ultimately, the participating adult language learners seemed to agree that authenticity of language learning is one of the most significant advantages to be gained from using movies as English learning tools.

### *C. Self-learning/Autonomy*

Another emerging theme that explains why adult language learners believe that watching movies helps in learning English is the idea of self-learning. In other words, watching movies helps a student to individualize the language learning and making the learning process more appealing and entertaining. The participants mentioned that by watching movies, they rely on themselves in understanding and making connections, and that is an important aspect of language learning. As one participant stated, "I watch movies every other day, so I can learn English outside my English classes. I can depend on myself to develop my English."

Moreover, some participants saw a connection between watching movies and their abilities to recall or understand new words. As one participant stated:

*Sometimes, when my teacher gives us a new vocabulary to study. I found myself knowing the word because of a movie that I watched, especially, if the word is related to Science because I like to watch Si-Fi movies a lot.*

Interestingly, one participant described learning English through movies as "watching without psychological pressure". These movies, according to the participant, allowed for a more convenient and motivating way of learning. This was clear through some of the participant responses. For instance, one learner mentioned:

*One thing that I like about watching movies is that I can depend on myself while learning new words or improving my language skills. I do not need someone to explain to me or teach me these skills. I think that movies are great sources of English learning. I am responsible for my own learning.*

Ultimately, the participants thought that movies increased their autonomy and allowed learning English to be a more self-oriented process.

### *D. Cultural Awareness*

One of the most surprising findings that emerged from the data was cultural awareness. The participants shared the beliefs that watching movies increased their cultural awareness and gave them insights on American culture. The participants agreed that culture is an important aspect of English Learning. According to the participating language learners, movies serve as a gateway that helps them understand and appreciate the American culture. As one participant stated:

*when I came to the United States, I had some knowledge about America and the lifestyle here because of the movies. Watching movies was a good way for me to know and understand how people talk, how people interact with each other,*

*how people live, and what people usually eat. This, in my opinion, was one of the reasons why I did not have any problem adapting to the American culture.*

Other participants mentioned that by watching Westerns, they were able to get an idea of the Western culture of America, which is an important part of American history. For example, one student indicated, "I love watching movies about the Cowboys. They gave me some historical lessons about America." Noticeably, one of the participants gave an example of how being a fan of a Hollywood actress helped her increase her cultural knowledge of the role of women as productive citizens in the United States. The participants stated:

*I am a fan of Julia Roberts, my favorite movie of her was the one when she played the character as a lawyer. I learned a lot of law terms as well as the role of law here in the US. Also, I had the chance to have clear ideas about the role of women in the American society. This movie was an eye-opening for me in terms of Western culture.*

All in all, there was an agreement among the participants that learning about American culture is what motivated them to watch movies. These movies provide insight into different aspects of culture such as food, traditions, and lifestyle. As one student indicated, "I can say that I learned about American food, clothes, and lifestyle through watching movies."

## V. DISCUSSION

According to the interview results, the participants showed positive opinions toward watching movies to learn English. The results revealed that there seemed to be an agreement on the effectiveness among the participating language learners regarding watching movies. Significantly, several benefits related to language learning were identified by the participants.

First, data from this study suggest that movies can be used effectively to develop different language skills such as speaking, listening, vocabulary acquisition, and writing. The participating language learners were extremely positive regarding connections between watching movies and their language development. In fact, speaking and listening were mentioned by almost all the participants who believed that movies are beneficial sources of developing oral skills. This resonates with previous research concerning the importance of using native-like sources to develop oral skills. Horwitz (2008), for instance, argues that listening to English native speakers is one way to develop oral fluency.

Another skill that was developed as a result of watching movies is pronunciation, and that is an important aspect of the language. In the present study, participants tended to believe that movies helped the learner improve their pronunciation skills. Gilakjani (2012) points out that pronunciation is one of the most significant aspects of language to be taught and learned. Learners with good English pronunciation are likely to be understood even if they make errors in other areas, whereas learners with bad pronunciation will not be understood, even if their grammar is perfect. Hence, the participants reported that movies are beneficial in terms of developing their language proficiency.

Furthermore, the participating language learners seemed to share the idea that movies offer a more realistic representation of the world than traditional language-learning materials, such as textbooks. Hence, watching movies increases the authenticity of the learning process. The participants mentioned that learning through authentic situations increases their motivation and made watching movies more effective and beneficial with regard to learning English. The research concerning authentic learning revealed several advantages of using authentic sources to learn language. For instance, Huang, Tindall and Nisbet (2011) assert that the use of authentic learning materials such as media and movies has become essential as these materials provide real-life exposure to language for learners. The researchers add that these materials enhance the learning environment and make EFL classes engaging and appealing to all students. Likewise, Gilmore (2007) points out that authentic learning helps in decreasing the gap between real language used in real world and classroom language, and that will ensure more effective language learning.

Additionally, besides language development, the study revealed that watching movies increases the cultural awareness of the learners. Culture and language are interrelated skills. Brown (2007) points out that language and culture are parallel and should not be separated when learning English. Brown continues to say: "Language is a part of a culture, and culture is a part of the language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture." (pp. 189-190). In terms of using movies or films in English learning, King (200) indicated that the use of films as tools to teach or learn English allow increase students motivation and cultural awareness. King adds that "as far as student motivation and interest are concerned, entertaining films are sometimes enjoyable and relevant to learners' appreciation of popular culture." (p. 515).

Surprisingly, the participants seemed to be aware of the fact that movies cannot be always reliable and effective tools to learn English. That is because these movies are not designed for learning purposes. The intended audiences of these movies are not language learners. This is the main challenge reported by the participants. This lack of pedagogical intentions also led to some difficulties in understanding some of the vocabulary used in the movies.

The participants suggest that in English classes, there should be more time and flexibility to allow movies to be part of the learning and teaching process. When used during language classes, movies increase the authenticity of the classes and make the learning process more enjoyable and motivating.

## VI. CONCLUSION



This research explored the perceptions of adult language learners toward the use of movies to learn English. Qualitative research methods were used to explore these perceptions. The interviews allowed the researchers to understand these beliefs and opinions from a deeper perspective. The study found that language learners perceive movies to be an effective and beneficial way of learning English. Furthermore, the interviews revealed that movies can be used to develop not only language skills but also learners' autonomy and cultural awareness. Movies are fun, authentic, and enjoyable, and that makes the learning process more appealing to the language learners.

Significantly, the use of English movies to learn and teach English is always welcomed as they might have a positive effect on students' language learning. Movies are authentic and engaging, and these are likewise some of the important characteristics of effective language learning. Also, because language learners showed positive attitude towards movies, language teachers are encouraged to provide more time to integrate media and movies into their teaching practices. English movies should be used as teaching and learning tools rather than for entertainment. Used appropriately, English movies will help language learners develop their language in enjoyable and appealing ways (King 2002).

The study is important because it shed light on some creative and innovative teaching strategies that can be used to teach and learn English. With respect to future research, the results of this study provided only insight into adult English language learners' opinions toward using movies to develop their language skills. The research did not answer questions that are related to types of movies that can be used effectively for educational purposes. Therefore, additional research is needed--research that explores types of movies that adults language learners can rely on to develop their language. Moreover, additional research is also needed to understand how movies can be implemented as educational tools in FL classrooms.

Ultimately, there were some limitations associated with the study. The most prominent limitation lies on the small sample size: 20 adult language learners who were studying English in two intensive English programs in the US. Hence, the findings of the study may not be generalizable. Also, the researchers had a limited time frame to conduct the study due to the participants' limited schedules. Regarding future research, the present study did not examine the relationship learners' positive perceptions toward using movies and actual learning outcomes. Much research remains to be done that investigates the correlation between the learners' perceptions and positive learning outcomes.

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# The Residential School Experiences in Drew Hayden Taylor's *Motorcycles & Sweetgrass* and Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen*

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**Abstract**—In Canada, the residential school system established in the nineteenth century remains a dark chapter in the nation's history. The schools operated under that system were one of the major instruments used by the government to assimilate Aboriginal people into mainstream Canadian society. Based on the assumption that children were easier to manipulate and control than adults, the residential school system targeted Aboriginal children. As a common theme in Canadian Aboriginal literature, residential school experiences are represented in Drew Hayden Taylor's *Motorcycles & Sweetgrass* and Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. The present paper focuses on the traumatic residential school experiences depicted in the two novels as well as their long-term effects. Healing the wounds of history remains a daunting task for the Canadian government.

**Index Terms**—aboriginal children, Canada, residential schools, destruction of identity, language loss, abuse

## I. INTRODUCTION

First published in 2010, *Motorcycles & Sweetgrass* is Taylor's first adult novel. Although the novel is mainly concerned with aspects of contemporary life in the Anishnawbe community of Otter Lake, it also offers the reader an insight into the traumatic past experienced by a vanishing generation of people who attended residential school. The legacy of the residential school continues to haunt the small First Nations reserve. In his first and only novel, *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, Highway deals with the residential school life and its detrimental effects on students in a much more detailed way. Based on the personal experiences of Highway and his brother René the novel was first published in 1998 and provoked a stir among both Native and non-Native readers. It revolves around two Cree brothers, Jeremiah and Gabriel Okimasis, who manage to heal from the trauma inflicted upon them by an abusive residential school and fulfill their artistic potentials. By forcibly stripping Aboriginal children of their language, spirituality, and any other connections to their own culture, residential schools committed an act of cultural genocide, which was destructive to the transmission of Aboriginal culture to future generations. Due to a lack of government oversight, children were vulnerable to various forms of abuse in residential schools. For many of them, their traumatic residential school experiences radically changed their future lives.

## II. A HISTORY OF CANADA'S RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM

The origins of Canada's residential schools can be traced back to the time of French colonial regime in the 17th century. After arriving with French settlers in New France, Roman Catholic missionaries constantly attempted to "civilize" First Nations people by having them adopt Christianity and the settled agricultural lifestyle (TRC, *The History. Part 1*, p.40).

In order to better assimilate Aboriginal children into white society, the missionaries opened boarding schools which offered them basic literacy and religious instruction. These boarding schools can be viewed as the earliest prototype of residential schools. The first known boarding school for Aboriginal youths in Canada was set up in 1620 by the Récollets near what is now Québec City, to which only boys were admitted. Besides, the clergy sent a number of their Native pupils back to France with the hope that they would later help to convert others in their communities. Despite these efforts, no remarkable success was achieved in westernizing First Nations children during the 17th century. In fact, the European-oriented education was widely resisted by Native children and their parents, since they did not believe at all in the superiority of European civilization (TRC, *The History. Part 1*, p.41-42). Consequently, all of the boarding schools of the French regime did not exist for a long time.

After the British conquest of New France in 1763, residential schooling was suspended until the early 19th century. During the first few decades of that century, religious orders from Britain gradually revived the idea of residential schooling. For instance, the New England Company, a British-based missionary society, began to operate the Mohawk Institute in Brantford as a boarding school for Native children in 1834. Unlike the previous boarding schools, this school was quite long-lived, remaining in operation until 1970 (p.66).

In 1847, the establishment of residential schools was recommended by Egerton Ryerson, the superintendent of schools for Upper Canada. Ryerson termed the new schools industrial schools, expecting students to engage in both the mental and physical labour during their school life. According to his suggestions, the new industrial schools provided "a plain

English education adapted to the working farmer and mechanic” (qtd. in TRC, *The History. Part 1*, p.77). Aboriginal students attended classes in “English language, arithmetic, elementary geometry, or knowledge of forms, geography and the elements of general history, natural history and agricultural chemistry, writing, drawing and vocal music, book-keeping (especially in reference to farmers’ accounts), religion, and morals”. Meanwhile they were trained in “agriculture, kitchen gardening, and mechanics, so far as mechanics is connected with making and repairing the most useful agricultural implements” (qtd. in TRC, *The History. Part 1*, p.77). Correspondingly, this kind of residential schooling was based on the half-day system: students spent a half day studying in the classroom and a half day doing manual work under the supervision of instructors. It was assumed that instructive labour would enable students to acquire the skills necessary to earn a living and make the schools self-sufficient. However, it deserves to be noted that the half-day system soon led to the exploitation of child labour (Miller, 1996, p.157). Holding that “[t]he animating and controlling spirit of each industrial school should ... be a religious one” (qtd. in TRC, *The History. Part 1*, p.78), Ryerson emphasized religious instruction and insisted that the schools should be operated by religious organizations with government support.

With Confederation in 1867, the federal government assumed responsibility for Indian education under the British North America Act, which clearly defined Indians as wards of the federal government. In the 1870s, given the increasingly serious famine among the First Nations on the prairies caused by the failure of buffalo hunt and the decline of fur trade, it became urgent to develop a school system that would train Native people to achieve agricultural self-reliance. Viewing the US boarding-school system as an available model, the federal government appointed Nicholas Flood Davin to conduct an evaluation of American Indian boarding schools in 1879. In his report, Davin agreed with the American authorities that “Indian children were best prepared for assimilation into the dominant society if they were removed from the influences of home, family, and community” (Barman et al., 1986, p.6). Approving of the American model, he recommended that the Canadian government expand its support for existing boarding schools and establish four church-run industrial schools in Western Canada.

The proposals made in the Davin report were accepted by the federal government in 1883, with three industrial schools authorized to be built in the North-West. From then on, the government took a leading role in the establishment of Canada’s residential school system. Although the new schools were still administered by the churches, they received full funding from the government and strove to meet government policy goals rather than those of the churches. The last two decades of the 19th century witnessed a rapid development of the residential school system. By 1900, there were 22 industrial and 39 boarding schools operating in Canada (TRC, *The History. Part 1*, p.161). To ensure a stable and sufficient supply of students in the context of Aboriginal resistance to residential schooling, the federal government amended the Indian Act in 1920 to make residential school attendance compulsory for Indian children aged seven to fifteen (p.278). Aboriginal parents who refused to send their children to residential schools were subject to legal penalties, which actually denied them the basic right to foster and to educate their offspring. In 1923, the division between industrial and boarding schools was formally abandoned. In official parlance, they were all called residential schools (Miller, 1996, p.141).

The residential school system began to be challenged in the 1940s. Given the lack of government funding for Indian education during the Second World War and the expensive operational costs for residential schools, the Department of Indian Affairs shifted its focus to establishing day schools for Native children (TRC, *A Knock*, p.42). Besides, there was also rising opposition to the segregationist nature of residential schooling. In 1949, the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on the Indian Act recommended that “wherever and whenever possible Indian children should be educated in association with other children” (qtd. in TRC, *A Knock*, p.43), which started the process of integrating First Nations students into the regular public school system. By 1960, the students staying in residential schools were outnumbered by those attending non-Indian schools. However, the pattern of integrated schooling was strongly resisted by some church organizations (p.43).

In 1969, when the government terminated its partnership with the churches and took over full responsibility for residential schools, the decline of the residential school system accelerated. In the 1970s, the remaining residential schools were gradually transferred to the control of Indian bands. The trend toward Aboriginal autonomy over their own education became increasingly irreversible. Also in the same period, the churches came to realize the negative impact of the residential school system. From 1986 to 1994, the United Church, the Roman Catholic Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the Anglican Church, and the Presbyterian Church successively issued apologies to Aboriginal people (TRC, *The History. Part 2*, p.555).

In the 1990s, Aboriginal people began to publicly disclose their experiences of abuse in residential schools, which drove the residential school system toward its final collapse. In 1996, the last federally run residential school in Canada, the Gordon Residential School, closed its door in Saskatchewan (Daly, 2014, p.40-41). After the end of the residential school system, the healing movement for residential school survivors continued until today.

### III. FORCED SEPARATION FROM HOME AND FAMILY

Early in both novels, the compulsory nature of residential schooling is clearly revealed to the reader. There are vivid portrayals of emotional blows experienced by Aboriginal children who are forced to attend distant residential schools as well as their family members. It is inevitable that the geographical dislocation of the children breaks family ties and severs their connections with their home communities.

In the prologue of *Motorcycles & Sweetgrass*, Lillian tells Nanabush, the trickster from Ojibway mythology who emerges as a young Native boy, that she has no choice but to go to a residential school far away from home. According to Lillian, this will be her “first trip anywhere,” for she has never been “more than a few hours’ walk from home”. It is obvious that she feels sad and helpless about her imminent departure as she wipes her eyes, “I don’t want to go...” (Taylor, 2011, p.7). Despite her parents’ previous efforts to prevent her removal from home, nothing can be changed, since “[White people] don’t take no for an answer” (p.4). The belief in Manifest Destiny, the narrator states, leads the Canadian government to remove school-aged Aboriginal children like Lillian from their families and place them into residential schools to receive Western education. Given the low quality of instruction in local on-Reserve schools, the federal government justifies the building of residential schools, believing that “[Native children’s] welfare would be better maintained [at residential schools] than on a Reserve” (p.5).

The residential school system made many Native parents feel sad rather than happy about their children’s growth, as evidenced in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. When Jeremiah is about to reach the age of seven, his mother Mariesis begins to sink into sadness since she knows her son will soon leave home to attend residential school. Unwilling to send her son out to school alone, she asks her husband Abraham if it is possible for Jeremiah to wait two years until his younger brother Gabriel could go with him. In this scene the mandatory nature of school attendance is reflected in Abraham’s response: “‘Soonie-eye-gimow’s [Indian Agent] orders, Father Bouchard says. It is the law’” (Highway, 2000, p.40). Obviously, the Okimasis parents have no voice in determining the educational matters of their children. If they delay sending Jeremiah to the church operated residential school, they would be subject to legal punishment. The novel also touches upon Native parents’ suspicion about the benefit of a residential school education, as Abraham “wondered out loud, to other long-faced parents on the priest’s old dock, what on earth their son was going to get ‘down there’” (p.47).

In contrast to Lillian, Jeremiah is too young and naïve to realize what his departure to the residential school really means. With the childish belief that he would return home the next day, Jeremiah only feels excited about his first flight. The fact, however, is that he is forcibly taken away from his beloved parents and siblings. Although his two sisters Josephine and Chugweesees are with him in the same school, he is completely separated from them. In the fictional Birch Lake Indian Residential School, the strict gender segregation makes it almost impossible for boys and girls, even brothers and sisters, to communicate with each other. Girls are “on the other side of the giant building, out of sight, away from the view of lusty lads who might savour their company” (Highway, 2000, p.63). Normal interaction between Aboriginal boys and girls, which occurs daily in their home communities, is irrationally sexualized by school authorities. The separation of boys and girls is also referred to in *Motorcycles & Sweetgrass*: “The boys, situated at the opposite end of the building, were not allowed to talk to the girls. Brothers weren’t allowed to interact with sisters, cousins and so on” (Taylor, 2011, p.9). It is undoubted that the gender divisions in the residential schools severely damage the bonds between siblings. In fact, even for siblings of the same sex, their interaction is constantly monitored and restricted in the schools. In *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, Jeremiah and Gabriel are given beds far away from each other, which effectively discourages them from having close bedtime talks. When Jeremiah goes over to Gabriel’s bed in the night to comfort his crying younger brother, he is eventually ordered by Father Lafleur to return to his own bed. Despite being together, the Okimasis brothers can no longer be as close as they used to be.

Forced to leave home for residential school, most Aboriginal children felt very lonely and homesick. There were often attempts made by some of them to run away from school. But if they were caught and brought back, they would be severely punished. The residential school system resulted in an irreparable disconnect between Aboriginal students and their families at home, which can be observed in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. When Jeremiah and Gabriel return home after finishing school, they face a communication gap with their parents. Being thoroughly unaware of their children’s abusive experiences at school, the Okimasis parents sometimes say something that annoys the two brothers who are nevertheless not prepared to share the painful truth. For instance, Gabriel gets inwardly angry when his father asks him if he will miss the Birch Lake School. After suffering many years of abuse in the Catholic residential school, Gabriel is disgusted with Christianity. Thus, his feelings of estrangement from his father naturally intensify when Abraham speaks highly of the Catholic Church in front of him, which even leads him to the conclusion that “there was no place for him in Eemanapiteepitat or the north” (Highway, 2000, p.109). Besides, due to cultural differences, it is not easy for the returning brothers to find parallel words in Cree to explain certain Western terms such as “concert pianist” and “university” to their parents.

#### IV. LOSS OF IDENTITY

A common feature shared by all residential schools is that they stripped students of their identity. Upon arriving at the schools, Aboriginal children were forced to have their hair cut. As depicted in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, all the boys get their heads shaved bald and all the girls get a short bob. Like haircutting in the army and prison, the compulsory haircuts removed the children’s individuality. By imposing European-style haircuts on the children, school administrators intended to erode their Native identity.

In Aboriginal culture, hair represented a special spiritual significance of one’s life and spirit. Associated with pure thoughts, long hair was revered and considered sacred. The threefold braid, which was a traditional hairstyle for Native people, symbolizes the unity of body, mind, and spirit (Florence, 2015, p.17). Therefore, the act of cutting one’s hair was generally viewed as insulting. In *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, the experience of having their hair cut is very traumatic and

humiliating for Aboriginal children. In Jeremiah's case, the forced haircut is like a cruel "slaughter". To avoid crying in front of other boys, he "straightened his back and called forth every ounce of courage" (Highway, 2000, p.52). With his hair falling, Jeremiah gets into a state of powerlessness. When his hair is completely cut off, he feels he has no strength left and cannot help bawling. During the painful process of losing his hair, Jeremiah wishes he could go back to his family. Under great emotional stress he feels that he "was being skinned alive, in public; the centre of his nakedness shrivelled to the size and texture of a raisin, the whole world staring, pointing, laughing" (p.53). Unlike Jeremiah, Sammy Aandeg in *Motorcycles & Sweetgrass* vigorously resists the haircut by biting a nun who attempts to shave his head.

Besides, children were required to wear European-style school uniforms in place of their Aboriginal clothing. In *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, Aboriginal boys at the Birch Lake School are all dressed in "sky-blue denim shirts and navy denim coveralls" (p.55). The imposition of school uniforms is also described in *Motorcycles & Sweetgrass*. On the first day at school Lillian is made to wear the same clothes as other girls. Unfortunately the uniform is of a poor quality; the clothes are "hot and itchy" and do not "fit well at all" (Taylor, 2011, p.9). The children's loss of their own clothes signifies their loss of personal identity. Like the forced haircut, the school uniform makes them resemble White children in appearance, thus further destroying their sense of belonging to their own people.

Another identity-stripping tactic employed by the school authority was to replace children's Native names with white Christian names. In *Motorcycles & Sweetgrass*, Lillian undergoes the loss of her own name in the residential school. Christened Lillian by Sister Agnes, she is not allowed to use her Anishnawbe name "Mizhakwan" anymore, which was given to her by her grandmother. Similarly, in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, Jeremiah's Native name "Champion" is considered invalid by Father Lafleur. The boy is told that his name should be Jeremiah according to the baptismal registry. Defeated in his attempt to shield his name, Jeremiah cannot help but shed painful tears. For Jeremiah's sister Chugweesees, the replacement of her illustrious name with the plain Christian name "Jane" is rather annoying, since it leads the others to identify her with "the unfortunate halitosis-stricken Jane Kaka McCrae, the most slovenly woman in Eemanapiteepitat" (Highway, 2000, p.71). It is apparent that in the re-naming process the school administrators take no account of the children's feelings.

Furthermore, the unique Aboriginal identity of children was erased through forced Christian indoctrination. Upon entering residential schools, as evidenced by the two selected novels, children were forced to learn Christianity and perform Christian rituals. As a result, they lost their connection with Native spirituality. From *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, the reader learns that many children just blindly followed the Christian rules and customs without a real understanding of the religion. It is also worth noting that the Christian curriculum was designed to make children feel ashamed of their Aboriginal identity. In one lesson, Father Lafleur shows the children a large chart illustrating heaven and hell. On the chart, heaven is populated by "beautiful blond men with feathery wings and flowing white dresses" (p.59), in which Jeremiah can nevertheless not find a single Aboriginal person. By contrast, hell is pictured as the only place where Aboriginal people belong. Obviously, the curriculum is marked by racist derogation of Aboriginal people. The association of Aboriginal people with punishment-deserving sinners is bound to lead some of the children to reject their Aboriginal identity and dream of becoming as white as possible.

The loss of identity directly caused many Aboriginal children to experience an identity crisis later in life, as reflected in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. The assimilation process at the residential school makes Jeremiah desire to become a white man. To enter the white world, he strives to become the first Cree concert pianist. However, despite having won a major piano competition, he still cannot integrate into white society. In fact, Jeremiah is only regarded by the public as an exception. Meanwhile, unfortunately, his musical achievement is not valued by many of his own people. Consequently, he is confused about his identity. He cannot truly fit in either the dominant society or his own Aboriginal society. In this sense, he has to face discrimination from both sides.

## V. LOSS OF LANGUAGE

The prohibition of Native language use is clearly illustrated in *Motorcycles & Sweetgrass*. At the residential school Lillian attends, "words other than English or Latin were unchristian and those who used them were punished severely" (Taylor, 2011, p.10). Due to his refusal to give up his Native tongue, Lillian's cousin Sammy Aandeg suffers constant physical abuse from school staff, as John/Nanabush recounts Sammy's miserable experiences: "They beat him practically every day. I think to the point it made him kinda crazy" (p.172). When Sammy translates the plays of Shakespeare into Anishnawbe, his own Native language, he greatly irritates Father McKenzie. For the teacher who strives to "civilize the Native people," it is completely intolerable that "this young Indian boy would dare to corrupt what he considered the most beautiful words ever written, by speaking them in a filthy bastard language" (p.171-72). This mirrors the widespread colonialist view which sees Native languages as inferior to English. For fear of punishment, other students only dare to speak their Native language when there are no teachers in earshot. While Lillian secretly visits Sammy, who was locked into a shed by Father McKenzie, she is afraid of being caught speaking Anishnawbe with him, and thus switches several times quickly back to English.

Similarly, Aboriginal children in *Kiss of the Fur Queen* are not permitted to speak their own language once they leave home and enter residential school. When Jeremiah tries to comfort Gabriel, who is terrified on his arrival at the school, by speaking to him in their Native tongue, he is immediately instructed by Father Lafleur to stop doing that. Submitting to the language ban, Jeremiah "felt a choke breaking against his throat" (Highway, 2000, p.70). The two brothers have no

alternative but to walk together to school in silence. The proscription of Native languages disempowered Aboriginal children in that it hindered them from fully expressing themselves, as reflected in the following dialogue between Jeremiah and Father Lafleur:

‘So, Jeremiah,’ chortled the priest as he set Gabriel lightly down on the dock, “you’ve brought your little brother this time.”

‘Yes,’ piped Jeremiah in a tiny, humble voice. We didn’t have much choice, he would have added, if the language had been his. (p.70)

Stripped of his own language, Jeremiah is unable to speak out his mind clearly. As a result, he appears complicit with the school authority.

The novel also presents the use of physical punishment for those who continue to speak their Native tongue. After being caught singing the Cree song “Kimoosoom Chimasoo,” Gabriel is ferociously lashed by Father Lafleur. In order to effectively stop children from speaking their own language, the school authority in the novel implements a contest in which “the boy who acquired the greatest number of tokens from other boys by catching them speaking Cree was awarded a toy at month’s end” (p.63). Such a contest causes students to monitor and compete with each other, which destroys their mutual trust and solidarity.

During their long period of stay in the English-speaking school environment, many Aboriginal students gradually forgot their Native language. The loss of Native language is explicitly evidenced in the character of Jeremiah in *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. When he returns home after his first year at residential school, he loses his ability to speak Cree for a brief time. The loss of the Cree language alienates him from his family. Fortunately, he unexpectedly recovers his Native tongue shortly afterwards. Many years later, after Jeremiah finishes residential school and moves to Winnipeg, he can nevertheless not even understand the basics of Cree. It can be imagined that the loss of Native languages caused by the residential schools will continue into future generations. In several places in *Motorcycles & Sweetgrass*, Taylor mentions that most of the younger generations in Lillian’s community do not speak their traditional Anishnawbe language. Lillian’s grandson Virgil, for example, belongs to a generation “whose knowledge of Anishnawbe was weak or non-existent” (Taylor, 2011, p.150). Given that Aboriginal culture is usually passed on orally, the loss of language is destined to cause enormous cultural losses to Aboriginal communities.

## VI. ABUSE AT RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

As can already be seen above, physical abuse was rampant in residential schools. Corporal punishment was frequently dished out to children to ensure their obedience and compliance. In *Motorcycles & Sweetgrass* and *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, the forms of physical abuse include beating, lashing, and close confinement. Since beating and lashing are obvious forms of physical abuse, attention will be paid here only to close confinement, which occurs as a disguised form of physical abuse in *Motorcycles & Sweetgrass*.

At the residential school in the novel, a special shed is used like a jail for locking up “Indian boys and girls who misbehaved” (Taylor, 2011, p.11). Among them, Sammy Aandeg is the most frequent visitor to the shed. Once, when he is locked there by Father McKenzie, he is forced to recite all the monologues in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* to obtain his release. The shed is cold, dark, and dirty, in which there is neither bed nor food. Only by placing the book just right is Sammy able to read it in the moonlight. It can be easily imagined that he endures boredom and loneliness during his confinement. Locking children in such a place for a long period of time is actually an indirect way of abusing them.

For Aboriginal children who are as naturally rebellious as Sammy, continued physical abuse provoked their resentment and prompted them to think about running away. For other children, frequent physical punishment, experienced or witnessed by them, caused them to become numb to violent acts and lose empathy for their victimized peers. In *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, the violent recreation of the crucifixion scene reflects the children’s indifference toward brutality. Empowered to take a dominant position in the fictional abusive situation, Jeremiah and his friends become abusers themselves. After “crucifying” the almost naked Gabriel, they rush off to supper, leaving him alone in the schoolyard. Feeling deeply hurt, Gabriel vows to revenge himself on Jeremiah. The formerly close bond between the two brothers is greatly undermined.

While both of the selected novels address the topic of physical abuse, another horrific type of abuse, namely sexual abuse, is portrayed only in Highway’s *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. The foreshadowing of sexual abuse can be seen in Jeremiah’s first encounter with Father Lafleur. Placing a hand on the boy’s thigh, the principal says, “‘There, there. You’ll be happy here with us’” (Highway, 2000, p.54). His words and behavior seem to carry a deep sexual undertone. Later in the novel, Highway gives a detailed account of Gabriel’s sexual abuse at the hands of Father Lafleur. When the boy becomes conscious of the priest’s molestation, his reaction reveals his fear, innocence, and confusion: “He didn’t dare open his eyes fully for fear the priest would get angry; he simply assumed, after a few seconds of confusion, that this was what happened at schools, merely another reason why he had been brought here, that this was the right of holy men” (p.78). In this scene, Gabriel is assaulted not only by the lascivious priest, but also by the seemingly “living, breathing” Christ. At this point, I agree with McKegney that the scene offers “an almost clichéd illustration of the symbolic rape of Indigenous cultures by evangelical Christianity” (2005, p.89-90). As McKegney points out, “Christ endeavors to force himself into the sanctified space of the boy’s mouth, presumably preparing him to pay lip-service to the ‘true’ religion while renouncing the legitimacy of Cree spirituality” (2005, p.90).

Happening to witness Gabriel's rape by Father Lafleur, Jeremiah associates the sexual abuser with the cannibalistic Weetigo, a terrifying monster in Cree mythology. He is so powerless that he cannot speak or react to protect his younger brother. Deeply traumatized, Jeremiah feels that "some chamber deep inside his mind slammed permanently shut". Indeed, he struggles to deny the cruel reality: "It had happened to nobody. He had not seen what he was seeing" (Highway, 2000, p.80). Near the end of the novel, the reader finds out that Jeremiah is also a victim of sexual abuse when his repressed memory of the traumatic experience returns in a reverie. Like Gabriel, he is brutally raped by Father Lafleur on one night, who only gives him a chocolate bar as payment for the abuse. It is nevertheless a sad fact that many students were unwilling to disclose their abuse, as also shown in the novel. Believing that their parents will not help them and even "side with Father Lafleur," Jeremiah and Gabriel choose to keep silent about their abuse.

The abuse suffered by residential school students had some devastating effects on their future lives. A good number of former students had to cope with symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder such as insomnia, eating disorders, panic attacks, uncontrollable anger, alcohol and drug abuse, sexual inadequacy or addiction, and the inability to form intimate relationships (Steckley and Cummins, 2001, p.193). Such is the case in both of the selected novels.

For Sammy in *Motorcycles & Sweetgrass*, his repeated experiences of abuse at residential school make him suffer from "a form of shell-shock" for the rest of his life. Decades after he leaves, he is still tortured every night by nightmares about life in the school. As Taylor writes, he is "locked in a bygone era, unable to process or cage the memories" (2011, p.254). In the futile process of erasing memories of his abusive experiences, Sammy has become strongly dependent on alcohol, which confirms a direct correlation between alcoholism and residential school abuse.

In *Kiss of the Fur Queen*, the Okimasis brothers' violation by Father Lafleur causes them to deviate from normative sexuality as they enter young adulthood. Associating sexual activity with sin and shame, Jeremiah initially chooses to lead an asexual ascetic life. He uses classical music as a coping strategy to deal with his abuse and immerses himself in playing the piano. Due to the sexual abuse he suffered at residential school, Jeremiah has a strong aversion to homosexuality and cannot understand his brother's homosexual lifestyle at all. Later while engaging in heterosexual intimacy, Jeremiah can only derive sexual gratification from pain and violence. His abusive past directly results in his sadomasochistic tendencies.

By contrast, Gabriel embraces promiscuous homosexuality. According to Buzny, "Gabriel's abuse is the genesis for the affective states of his future sexual encounters" (2011, p.8). Having been raped by the head priest of the residential school, Gabriel associates sex with power and control. Refusing to be a passive victim of sexual abuse, he tries to regain his lost power and control over his own sexuality by actively participating in sexual encounters with different men. In this process, he actually re-enacts his abuse. Deeply influenced by his abusive past, Gabriel even chooses a priest and a priestly mentor as his lovers. His promiscuity eventually leads to his contracting AIDS. Even after discovering his HIV-positive status, he cannot stop repeating his abuse. There is no denying that Gabriel's sexual abuse profoundly shapes his perverse adult sexuality. For him, sex is a mere coping mechanism for his memories of abuse, which enables him to feel that "[his] body is still alive" (Highway, 2000, p.207).

## VII. CONCLUSION

This paper explores how residential school experiences find their expression in Drew Hayden Taylor's *Motorcycles & Sweetgrass* and Tomson Highway's *Kiss of the Fur Queen*. The residential schools depicted in the above works of fiction severely estrange the characters from their Native roots and inflict tremendous anguish on them. It is remarkable that the traumatic experiences of the characters have lifelong repercussions on them.

By forcibly removing Aboriginal children from their families, the residential school system effectively broke their family ties. In both novels, such a separation is an experience of sadness and helplessness. It is noteworthy that the removal of Aboriginal children from their homes impedes their later reentry into their families and communities. Both Taylor and Highway address Aboriginal children's loss of identity in the residential schools. Subject to a regime of forced assimilation, Aboriginal children in the selected novels undergo the process of losing their individuality and Aboriginal identity. The residential schools' complete denial of their culture inevitably influences them to reject their Native heritage.

The loss of one's Native language is another painful aspect of the residential school experience. In both novels, children are forbidden to use their Native language and only allowed to speak English. Any violation of the language ban would result in brutal corporal punishment. Stripped of their own language, children become unable to communicate and express themselves effectively. In the long term, they lose another important connection with their family and heritage. The loss of language caused by the schools usually has a multigenerational effect on Aboriginal communities.

In the fictional residential schools, child abuse is a commonplace phenomenon. Aboriginal students are constantly at risk of falling victim to physical and sexual abuse. They are so brutalized, humiliated, and isolated that they refuse to speak openly about their sufferings. The painful memories of abuse usually haunt residential school survivors for the rest of their lives and lead them to adopt destructive coping methods.

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# Tim O'Brien's "Bad" Vietnam War: *In the Lake of the Woods* & Its Historical Perspective

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**Abstract**—Award-winning author Tim O'Brien was sent to Vietnam as a foot soldier in 1969, when American combat troops were gradually withdrawn from the country. A closer look at his Vietnam war stories reveals that he indeed touched upon almost all issues or problems of American soldiers in this "bad" war; yet not many peer-reviewed authors or online literary analysis websites could identify and discuss them all. The purpose of this article is to address the war details in O'Brien's *In the Lake of the Woods* and its historical perspective, so that middle and high school readers can understand the meaning behind Tim O'Brien's stories and know the entire big Vietnam War picture. Specifically, this article discusses the following issues that are raised by O'Brien in this novel: the Mỹ Lai Massacre and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in Vietnam War veterans. In addition, the Mỹ Lai Massacre cover-up, forgotten heroes of Mỹ Lai, and soldiers' moral courage are also presented.

**Index Terms**—Tim O'Brien, *In the Lake of the Woods*, Vietnam War, Mỹ Lai Massacre, Mỹ Lai cover-up, Hugh Thompson, Ron Ridenhour, Seymour Hersh, Lawrence Colburn, Glenn Andreotta, peers inquiry

## I. INTRODUCTION

Award-winning author Tim O'Brien was sent to Vietnam in 1969, when President Nixon already ordered the gradual withdrawal of American combat troops from the country. As stated in one of his interviews, "By 1969, nobody ever talked about winning... we had been reading enough headlines to absorb the hopelessness of the war" (Ackerman, 2017). Partly based on his direct combat experience, O'Brien's writing about the Vietnam War in all his fiction novels is always "bad," meaning that these war events were terribly destructive for American GIs and Vietnamese civilians, with practically no good, moral, or inspiring stories to share. A detailed discussion about the "good" and the "bad" Vietnam War periods has been presented in "Tim O'Brien's 'Bad' Vietnam War: *The Things They Carried* & Its Historical Perspective" (Mahini et al., 2018a). A closer look at O'Brien's Vietnam war stories reveals that he indeed touched upon almost all issues or problems of American soldiers in this "bad" war (Mahini et al., 2018a and 2018b), yet not many peer-reviewed authors or online literary analysis websites could identify and discuss them all (Heberle, 2001; Green, 2010; Vernon and Calloway, 2010). In 1994, O'Brien makes history by becoming the only American author who uses the actual 1968 Mỹ Lai<sup>1</sup> Massacre, considered by many as the most horrific evil that was committed by American troops in Vietnam, as one the central events in his fiction novel *In the Lake of the Woods* (O'Brien, 1994a) to address the American conscience about the "bad" Vietnam War. This article addresses the war-related issues raised by O'Brien in this novel, with the purpose of helping middle and high school readers comprehend the meaning behind his writing about the Vietnam War, understand the entire big war picture, and discern the right from the wrong according to the US law of war.

## II. THE "BAD" VIETNAM WAR IN *IN THE LAKE OF THE WOODS*

Although O'Brien denies that he is a Vietnam War writer, he admits that three of his novels "have a lot of Vietnam in them... *In the Lake of the Woods* occurs after Vietnam and living with the consequences of history and misdeed and horror" (Hicks, 2005). In this novel, O'Brien's protagonist John Wade struggles to live with posts-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from his combat experience during the Vietnam War. The narrator of the story is similar to the real-life O'Brien, a Vietnam War veteran who served in the United States (US) Army one year after John Wade in the Quảng Ngãi (meaning "Extensive Righteousness") province. As this is the author's own favorite novel (Ackerman, 2017), O'Brien also blends his own childhood personality (e.g., being chubby, lonely, talented in magic), his personal experience (e.g., having an alcoholic father), his wartime aspiration (being a soldier with the least desire to kill [O'Brien,

<sup>1</sup> "Mỹ" means "American" or "Beautiful" and "Lai" means "Mixed-race" in Vietnamese.

1999]), and real details about the Mỹ Lai Massacre with the fictional life and love of John Wade and his wife, Kathy Wade. After serving as Minnesota state senator and lieutenant governor, John Wade suffered a humiliating landslide loss during the US Senate primary because the media found out about his well-kept secret of [accidentally] killing two people (an old Vietnamese man and his fellow soldier) during the Mỹ Lai Massacre. As O'Brien tries to reconstruct the different events leading to the disappearance of Kathy Wade – without disclosing the story end, he includes many hypotheses and supporting evidence in an innovative way to evoke curiosity and different sets of emotions in his readers. The aspects of the Vietnam War that O'Brien touches upon in this novel are the unspeakable atrocities committed by American troops on unarmed Vietnamese civilians at Mỹ Lai 4 and the PTSD several soldiers subsequently suffered as they returned to America. In addition, the forgotten heroes of Mỹ Lai, the Mỹ Lai Massacre cover-up, and soldiers' moral courage are also presented in this article.

#### A. *The Evil of the Mỹ Lai Massacre*

The Mỹ Lai Massacre has been considered by people in the US and around the world as the most shameful part of the American military history, in which American soldiers proved that they themselves could commit Nazi-like atrocities. In various published interviews, O'Brien has expressed the possibility of how deep sorrow and immense anger could cause some soldiers to cross the line between rage and homicide to commit the barbaric murder of innocent civilians (Public Broadcasting Service [PBS], 2009a). According to Piwinski (2000), O'Brien is disgusted at the "grotesque, monstrous, obscene evil" of the 1968 Mỹ Lai Massacre and is disappointed that "his feelings about this shameful incident are no longer shared by many Americans." In "The Vietnam in Me," O'Brien writes, "It made me angry that only one person was convicted for Mỹ Lai and that was Lieutenant Calley... Soldiers who testified that they killed twenty people were never prosecuted... What really bugs me is that of the 150 or so people who were there, the American public only remembers Calley's name. But what about the rest of them? Those people are still all around us. What are they telling their wives and children? Are they guarding their secrets, too?" (O'Brien, 1994b). So then we have it: using the Mỹ Lai Massacre in his fiction novel *In the Lake of the Woods*, O'Brien "not only fictionally dramatizes the notorious massacre, he also makes it the novel's moral lynchpin as he explores the corrosive effect of protagonist John Wade's unsuccessful attempt to repress the evil he witnessed at Mỹ Lai" (Piwinski, 2000).

Interestingly, there is a real public figure whose life is similar to John Wade's – the real story of one [questionable] American hero, the [falsified citation] Bronze Star recipient, the [inflated] Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, the governor/senator from Nebraska, and the one time US presidential candidate – Bob Kerrey. For 32 years, Bob Kerrey kept secret about his commanding role in the 1969 Th ánh Phong (meaning "Sacred Maple") Massacre (that killed up to 23 unarmed civilians), until a reporter learned about it from his SEALs (Sea, Air, Land, US Navy Special Force) teammate's confession [Gerhard Klann] (Vistica, 2001; Accuracy in Media [AIM], 2001). Kerrey's squad after-action report did not mention the murdered civilians, only the falsified "21 killed Việt Cộng" (or VC, a shortened slang for Vietnamese Communists). This falsified report earned Kerrey a Bronze Star that he never mentioned in his official biography. Less than a month after the Th ánh Phong Massacre, Kerrey's next mission also went wrong because his squad was led into a trap. A grenade exploded at Kerrey's feet during the intense 90-second firefight, but he got his men into safety. Somehow, that disastrous mission was considered a success by their commanding officers. When his SEAL squad mate Mike Ambrose recommended Kerrey for a Silver Star, the request was embellished and the recommendation was elevated as it moved up the chain of command. One year after his last mission, Kerrey was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor (the nation's highest military award) from President Nixon. All his SEAL squad mates knew "it was ridiculous" and Ambrose mentioned that Kerrey wanted to turn the medal down because it was "just another night out" when "they got hit by the VC." Kerrey and his SEALs team believed that his Congressional Medal of Honor was politically motivated, because it was given within days of the invasion of Cambodia, and the unpopular Nixon needed more "heroes" for his war (McGeary and Tumulty, 2001). Although Kerrey felt that he was being used as "a pawn in the Nixon's war," he finally accepted the Congressional Medal of Honor on May 14, 1970 "for the sake of all members of the SEALs" (Vistica, 2001). By doing so, Kerrey became a national hero but he was uncomfortable being introduced as an American hero anywhere he went to.

Just like John Wade, Bob Kerrey was forever changed by the Vietnam War experience because he felt that, "I cannot be what I once was, carefree, no nightmares, no pain, no remorse, no regrets, feeling in church like God was smiling warmly down upon me..." (Vistica, 2001). Speaking of that awful night in Th ánh Phong on February 25, 1969, Kerrey admitted, "It's far more than guilt. It's the shame. You can never, can never get away from it. It darkens your day. I thought dying for your country was the worst thing that could happen to you, and I don't think it is. I think killing for your country can be a lot worse. Because that's the memory that haunts" (Vistica, 2001). To the US Army, this statement is unmistakably accurate with regard to the Mỹ Lai Massacre. It was the SHAME that many US Army officers deny, cover, and whitewash the Mỹ Lai Massacre, especially when the official number of murdered civilians went up to more than five hundred people.

The Mỹ Lai Massacre, also called the Pinkville Massacre, was a 4-hour brutal mass raping, maiming, and killing of 504 unarmed villagers<sup>2</sup>, mostly women, children, and old men by more than 100 US soldiers of the Charlie Company. It was the beginning of a 4-day tactical operation (March 16-19, 1968) in the village of Son Mỹ (meaning "Beautiful

<sup>2</sup> The murdered civilian victims included 17 pregnant women and 210 children under the age of 13.

Mountain”), a heavily populated area known to the American GIs as Pinkville<sup>3</sup> (*Peers Inquiry*, Library of Congress [LOC], 1970). The key target of the operation that morning was Mỹ Lai 4, a small sub-hamlet called Thuận Yên (meaning “Gentle Peace”), part of the Son Mỹ village. Later that day, roughly two miles away, “another Task Force Barker unit, Bravo Company, similarly massacred 90 people in a village called Mỹ Khê 4” (Ridenhour, 1993). O’Brien used real names and actions of the American GIs who committed the reprehensible atrocities at Mỹ Lai, except the three fictional characters John Wade (nicknamed Sorcerer), Richard Thinbill, and Private First Class (PFC) Weatherby: “Simpson was killing children... He [Sorcerer or John Wade] found someone stabbing people with a big silver knife. Hutto was shooting corpses. T’Souvas was shooting children. Doherty and Terry were finishing off the wounded. This was not madness, Sorcerer understood. This was sin” (O’Brien, 1994a, p. 107). One of the most grotesque imageries of the savage attack describes how the soldiers shot people, “...dead and carved up with knives and raped and sodomized and bayoneted and blown into scraps. The bodies lay in piles” (O’Brien, 1994a, p. 200). Other gruesome details of the massacre show Sorcerer, “...came across a GI with a woman’s black ponytail flowing from his helmet [indicating he scaped his female victim]” (O’Brien, 1994a, p. 106) and “...came across a young female with both breasts gone. Someone had carved a C in her stomach” (O’Brien, 1994a, p. 210). Using vivid imagery, O’Brien paints the horrid massacre scene in which a logical human mind is no longer working. The massacre at Mỹ Lai that day was undeniably a deeply inhumane act committed by many American GIs. In reality, no GIs were shot or killed at Mỹ Lai 4 because there was no enemy resistance.

In many chapters, O’Brien also mentions Second Lieutenant (2LT) Rusty Calley [leader of the First Platoon] and his specific order of killing all unarmed civilians to his troops, “‘Eyeballs for eyeballs,’ Calley said. ‘One of your famous Bible regulations’ (O’Brien, 1994a, p. 102)... ‘Kill Nam,’ said Lieutenant Calley. He pointed his weapon at the earth, burned twenty quick rounds. ‘Kill it’... ‘Grease the place’... ‘Kill it’ (O’Brien, 1994a, p. 103)... the lieutenant said, ‘get with it - move - light up these fuckers’ (O’Brien, 1994a, p. 107)... Rusty Calley was among the talkers. Gooks were gooks, he said. They had been told to waste the place, and wasted it was, and who on God’s scorched green earth could possibly give a shit?” (O’Brien, 1994a, p. 205). O’Brien even describes Rusty Calley’s real-life murdering actions, “He [Sorcerer] watched a little boy climb out of the ditch and start to run, and he watched Calley grab the kid... then toss him back... and shoot the kid dead” (O’Brien, 1994a, p. 214-215). O’Brien also records Calley’s threat to his troops to remain quiet about the massacre: “‘Hey, *which* babies?’ Calley lifted his eyebrows at Boyce and Mitchell... ‘No way,’ said Boyce. ‘Not the breathing kind.’ Calley nodded. ‘... if you ask me, the guilty shouldn’t cast no stones. Another famous Bible regulation’ (O’Brien, 1994a, p. 212)... The little lieutenant pushed up on his toes... ‘Here’s the program. No more flappin’ lips. Higher-higher’s already got a big old cactus up its ass people blabbling about a bunch of dead civilians’” (O’Brien, 1994a, p. 205-206). Obviously, O’Brien’s viewpoint about the Mỹ Lai Massacre is very clear in his novel. This is evil and murder; and those who commit this act are absolutely guilty. In a study on the Vietnam Veteran’s war stress and trauma, researchers from Brooklyn College and Columbia University found that American soldiers who witnessed “abusive violence” also experienced PTSD like those who committed atrocities (Laufer et al., 1984).

As reported by Matthew Dallek, Associate Professor at George Washington University, what O’Brien did not mention was that one American soldier, Varnado Simpson, admitted in a 1982 [*Four Hours My Lai*] interview that he gruesomely mutilated his victims, slashing their throats, cutting off their tongues, chopping off their hands, and scalping them, “A lot of people were doing it and I just followed” (Dallek, 2018; Montgomery, 2018). Simpson committed suicide 15 years later after that interview. British journalist Michael Bilton, who produced the 1982 documentary film and co-wrote the book *Four Hours My Lai* had said, “Most Americans still don’t realize how savage it was... They ripped open young girls with bayonets. They fired into women’s [private parts]. They threw an [alive] old man down a well and tossed a grenade in after him. They didn’t just shoot people” (Auchmutey, 1998). All this awful Mỹ Lai experience plays a crucial role in John Wade’s life trauma and the suspicion that he might have killed his wife Kathy. It also displays the fact that O’Brien’s America is “a perverse and outrageous double standard” (Coffey, 1990), as O’Brien states, “That’s where I think our nation and our army back then lost its sense of what sin is and what evil is, and then somehow justify it all and say ‘that’s war for you, and this is how you have to conduct yourself’” (Gross, 2010). The Mỹ Lai Massacre is different from other massacres that occurred in Vietnam; it was the US soldiers who committing the Nazi-like atrocities, while the US was “supposed to be on a moral crusade for freedom” (Auchmutey, 1998).

### B. *The True Heroes of the Mỹ Lai Massacre*

What O’Brien does not mention in his fiction novel *In the Lake of the Woods* was that the Mỹ Lai Massacre reportedly ended when a courageous 25-year old American helicopter pilot, Warrant Officer (WO1) Hugh Thompson, Jr., landed his OH-23 helicopter<sup>4</sup> between the advancing Charlie Company soldiers and a few unarmed villagers left, still hiding in their earthen bunker. Perhaps Tim O’Brien did not mention Hugh Thompson because Thompson was not publicly recognized as an American hero until 1998, many years after *In the Lake of the Woods* was published. According to Jon Wiener, Professor Emeritus of history at University of California, Irvine, who had interviewed

<sup>3</sup> The village Son Mỹ’s high population density was depicted in red color on the Army maps; therefore, the area was called Pinkville.

<sup>4</sup> OH-23, also called Raven helicopter, is a small, light 3-man observation helicopter with a “Goldfish bowl canopy” used to draw fire from the enemies and to let the American infantry soldiers know where the enemies are in order to protect the ground troops.

Thompson in 2000 in Los Angeles, by the time Thompson recognized what was going on at Mỹ Lai 4, American soldiers had already killed hundreds of Vietnamese civilians (Wiener, 2018). Thompson mentioned what his 20-year old crew member Glenn Andreotta, his 19-year old helicopter gunner Lawrence Colburn, and he himself saw when flying over Mỹ Lai that fateful day, “we started noticing these large numbers of bodies every where... And we started thinking what might have happened, but you did not want to accept that thought - because if you accepted it, that means your own fellow Americans, people you were there to protect, were doing something very evil... They [murdered Vietnamese civilians] were not combatants. They were old women, old men, children, kids, and babies.” When Thompson went back to Mỹ Lai on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacre in 1998, an old lady survivor that Thompson had saved asked him, “Why didn’t the people who committed these acts come back with you?... So we could forgive them” (Wiener, 2018).

The most harrowing and touching details of what really happened that fateful day of March 16, 1968 in Mỹ Lai do not come the point of view of those who took life, like what O’Brien describes in *In the Lake of the Woods*; they come from the point of view of those who protected life, as recorded from the 2009 emotional PBS interview with Thompson’s door gunner Colburn, in memory of Thompson (PBS, 2009b). Always addressing with respect “Mr. Thompson” in all his conversations, Colburn described the Mỹ Lai Massacre that he, Thompson, and Andreotta personally observed that day, “It was a Saturday morning, people would go to market on Saturday morning [as they had done for centuries]. And we saw groups of men, women, and children leaving the village. We did not think it was unusual. [The Army] probably dropped some flyers before artillery prep, so it was good the civilian population got out of the way. This was right in the center of Son Mỹ, the village... we thought ‘Wonderful, they’re getting out of the way. Let’s continue our recon.’ We were off or out of that particular area for ten, fifteen, maybe twenty minutes. When we came back, those same people were dead or dying on the road that they were leaving on, and they were the same people. That’s when we started marking wounded people... We’d drop a green smoke grenade... to tell our low gunship that we’re marking a civilian here that could use medical attention... [We] left again to continue reconnaissance, came back, and the people that we’d marked were dead... it became obvious to us what was happening when we lingered by one of the bodies that we’d marked. It was a young female with a chest wound, but she was still alive. And we saw a Captain (CPT) with a squad of American soldiers approaching her, and Mr. Thompson decided he’d moved back, stay at a hover, and watch. And that’s what we did, and we saw the CPT approach the woman, look down at her, kick her with his foot, step back, and [he] just blew her away right in front of us... Simultaneously, all three of us - Glenn Andreotta, Hugh Thompson, and I – said, ‘You son of a bitch!’ We screamed it. There was no reason. She was no threat. There was no reason to do that. Later on we found that it was CPT Medina... who did this” (PBS, 2009b).

And Colburn continued, “He [Thompson] was furious. That was not his idea of being an American soldier... Mr. Thompson got on the radio and just said, ‘This isn’t right. These are civilians. There are people killing civilians down there.’ And that’s when he decided to intervene... We were ready to face the consequences. It was so obviously wrong. When you see babies machine-gunned, you must intervene... Then Glenn Andreotta keyed his mic and told Mr. Thompson about an irrigation ditch which he saw... it had bodies in it - women and children and elderly people” (PBS, 2009b). The most ironic and morally depraved scene of all was when Thompson landed his OH-23 helicopter for the first time to ask a Sergeant (SGT) standing next to the ditch to help the wounded people in the ditch. That officer replied, “Yeah, we’ll help them out of their misery” (PBS, 2009b). As Thompson and his crew left, they heard the automatic gun fire and immediately found out what was going on, “Glenn said, ‘He’s shooting into the ditch.’ Mr. Thompson was just beside himself. He felt helpless... These people were marched into the ditch while begging for mercy for their children. And there was no mercy that day” (PBS, 2009b).

Then Glenn saw some people in an earthen bunker peering out a small hole. Thompson noticed that there was a squad of American soldiers approaching that bunker, and he knew that these civilians had less than 30 seconds to live. So he landed his OH-23 helicopter the second time in between the civilian people in the bunkers and the approaching American soldiers. Thompson then asked his two crew members, as a man asking for the last request before he was going to die: “Y’all cover me! If these bastards open up on me or these [civilian] people, you open up on them. Promise me!” (Angers, 1999). When Thompson got out of his OH-23 Raven, he did not take any weapon with him except his sidearm still in its holster. Thompson then confronted the 2nd Platoon’s leader, 2LT Stephen Brooks, “Hey, listen, hold your fire. I’m going to try to get these people out of the bunker. Just hold your men here” (Angers, 1999). When the superior Brooks told Thompson that he could get the civilians out of the bunker with a hand grenade, Thompson seriously demanded, “Just hold your men here. I think I can do better than that” (Angers, 1999). Seeing that Colburn had a machine gun M-60 pointed at their direction<sup>5</sup>, Brooks and his platoon soldiers stayed put. Thompson then courageously rescued about 12 civilians, including old men, women, and children. He took another radical departure from the norm during war time by asking his two friends Danny Millians and Brian Livingston to land their UH-1 Huey gunships in the actively operating military zone to take the civilians to a safety area. Those 12 civilians would have been killed if Thompson did not intervene. Later Glenn even jumped out of the helicopter and got down to the bloody and slimy ditch filled with massacred civilians [up to his waist] to rescue an eight year-old boy who still held on tight to his dead mother’s body, and Thompson’s crew took the boy to the Quảng Ngãi hospital. To Thompson, Glenn

<sup>5</sup> Colburn testified later that he pointed his M-60 at the ground and was thankful that no Charlie Company soldiers took any aggressive action during the standoff.

Andreotta was a true hero that day. O'Brien uses a similar scene of Sorcerer accidentally falling in the same ditch filled with blood and slime from dead bodies of massacred Vietnamese civilians in *In the Lake of the Woods*, but not to rescue anyone else. Instead, Sorcerer accidentally killed one of his fellow soldiers [PFC Weatherby] (O'Brien, 1994a, p. 64), perhaps because the ditch was slippery with blood, blasted body parts, and excretion, so Sorcerer could not control his rifle while trying to get out. In real life, Thompson's courageous team member Andreotta gave his life to his country when he was killed in action three weeks later on April 8, 1968.

According to Colburn, even though Thompson and his crew already saved nearly 12 innocent civilians, this sad experience haunted Thompson for the rest of his life because he would beat himself up, "why didn't I intervene more quickly? I could have saved more people" (PBS, 2009b). Associate Professor Matthew Dallek at George Washington University (2018) reported that the Army's Public Information Office issued the March 18, 1968 press release about the Mĩ Lai operation that was full of falsehoods, "For the third time in recent weeks, the Americal Division's 11th Brigade infantrymen from Task Force (TF) Barker raided a Viet Cong stronghold known as "Pinkville" six miles northeast of Quảng Ng ả, killing 128 enemy<sup>6</sup> in a running battle" (Roberts, 1968). Because of Thompson's report, the indiscriminate killing of Vietnamese civilians during entire Mĩ Lai operation was called off early, around 2:00 – 4:00 PM on March 16, 1968, instead of the end of the day of March 19, 1968. Indirectly, Thompson had saved thousands of civilians from being massacred for the rest of the 4-day Mĩ Lai operation (US Naval Academy [USNA], 2004). Thompson quickly received the Distinguished Flying Cross for his action at Mĩ Lai, but the award citation contained falsified and fabricated information<sup>7</sup>. Thompson threw away the falsified citation and medal and suspected that the Distinguished Flying Cross medal was an effort to shut him up.

Speaking of the event that day at the US Naval Academy in 2004, Thompson states, "We do have casualties of war. Civilians get killed in war... It was a massacre, and civilians were murdered, not killed. There was nothing accidental about this. These were not soldiers. They were not military people. They were hoodlums, renegades disguised as soldiers, and that's what hurt me the most that day, because my job was to save their life..." (USNA, 2004). "Hoodlums, renegades disguised as soldiers," Thompson was right, because it had been reported that those who had committed criminal acts prior to joining the Army became prolific killers or killers without remorse. They were part of the McNamara's Morons (see "Tim O'Brien's 'Bad' Vietnam War: *Going After Cacciato* & Its Historical Perspective" [Mahini et al., 2018b]). In their 2003 investigation on the atrocities committed by US Tiger Force in the Quảng Ng ả province (The Blade, 2003), Sallah and his reporters wrote that Private (PVT) Sam Ybarra and SGT William Doyle were the prolific killers of civilians and they both had criminal records before their Army service (Sallah and Weiss, 2006; Sallah, 2017). For their investigation of the Tiger Force killing spree, Sallah and his associates received the 2004 Pulitzer Prize. *The Peers Inquiry* report on the cover-up of the Mĩ Lai Massacre (see Section D "Uncovering the Mĩ Lai Cover-up with American Conscience and Democracy" below) also states, "TF Barker had some men who had been law violators and hoodlums in civilian life and who continued to exercise those traits, where possible, after entering the Army... it is considered likely that the unfavorable attitude of some of the men of TF Barker toward the Vietnamese was a contributing factor in the events of Son Mĩ" (LOC, 1970).

### C. *The Thorough Cover-up of the Mĩ Lai Massacre*

A cover-up of the Mĩ Lai Massacre throughout the American Army chain of command, from company to division (LOC, 1970) that involved 20 senior Army officers including two generals, started on day one to omit/falsify the facts and finally conceal the Mĩ Lai Massacre (Ridenhour, 1993). This cover-up included submitting falsified reports and arranging the disappearance of potential living witnesses. When Thompson's aircraft arrived back at landing zone Dottie around 11:15 AM on March 16, 1968, he reported to his section leader, CPT Lloyd, and the company commander, Major (MAJ) Watke, what he had seen. Thompson's complaint was confirmed by other crewmen and pilots who had also flown over Mĩ Lai 4 that day. Details of the cover-up, described in the *Peers Inquiry* report (LOC, 1970) and summarized by PBS (2009b), involved Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Barker, Colonel (COL) Henderson, Major General (MG) Koster, LTC Holladay, Brigadier General (BG) Young, etc. At the high-rank officer meeting on March 18, 1968, COL Henderson was tasked to conduct an investigation, which appeared "to have been little more than a pretense of an investigation and had as their goal the suppression of the true facts concerning the events of 16 March" (LOC, 1970). This investigation contained mainly a brief interview with Thompson, a brief conversation with CPT Medina (who later instructed his troops to stay silent about their actions), and a fly-over of the Son Mĩ village area. During this interview, Thompson was described as being furious at "Henderson's lack of concern," and he threw his pilot's wings to the ground (PBS, 2009b).

From March 19-22, 1968, COL Henderson made a series of oral reports to BG Young and MG Koster and he concluded: "This operation was well planned, well executed, and successful. Friendly casualties were light and the enemy suffered heavily. The infantry unit on the ground and helicopters were able to assist civilians in leaving the area in caring for and/or evacuating the wounded." MG Koster accepted this falsified information as "adequately responding

<sup>6</sup> Falsehood reported by the US Army: killing 128 [VC] enemies, instead of murdering between 347 [figure not including those killed in the Mĩ Lai 5 area] to 504 unarmed civilians.

<sup>7</sup> Thompson was falsely praised for rescuing and taking a Vietnamese child "caught in intense crossfire" [there was no enemy resistance] to the hospital and that his "sound judgment had greatly enhanced Vietnamese-American relations in the operation area."

to the charges made by Thompson.” On April 8, 1968, Task Force Barker’s mission was declared a success and the Companies involved were disbanded. The Mỹ Lai Massacre problem appeared to have been squashed until about mid-April 1968, when the Vietnamese Sơn Mỹ Village Chief submitted a report to the Sơn Tịnh (meaning “Quiet Mountain”) District Chief alleging mass civilian killings by US Army soldiers as “an act of insane violence, if true.” Around the same time, officers of the Army Republic of Việt Nam (ARVN) or South Vietnam Army also received VC propaganda alleging that US forces had killed 500 people in the Sơn Mỹ village. To respond to these Vietnamese sources, MG Koster directed COL Henderson to change his oral report to writing. The “Report of Investigation” dated 24 April, 1968 consisted of only two typewritten pages and two inclosures - the operation summary and list of personnel purported interviewed. Making no reference to Thompson or to any other members of the aero scout unit, it falsely concluded that “20 non-combatants were inadvertently killed by artillery and by crossfire between the US and VC forces, no civilians were gathered and shot by US Forces, and the allegation that US Forces had shot and killed 450-500 civilians was obviously VC propaganda” (LOC, 1970).

PBS (2009c) also reported that as part of the cover up, between April to May 1968, righteous American soldiers like Thompson and his crew and other Army soldiers who refused to participate in the Mỹ Lai Massacre were assigned to dangerous missions to “make them go away”: “The Army sends Warrant Officer Thompson out in increasingly dangerous situations. Thompson is shot down five times, the last occurring during a mission from Đà Nẵng (Vietnamese adaptation of the ethnic minority Chăm word “*da nak*,” meaning “Opening of a Large River”) to an airbase at Chu Lai (named after the mandarin name of General Victor Krulak), which breaks his back. Many members of Charlie Company have a similar bad experience, such as being isolated in the mountains surrounded by enemy snipers for over 50 days following the massacre (PBS, 2009c). It has also been reported that not every soldier in the Charlie Company committed the murderous acts that day (USNA, 2004). For example, PFC Michael Bernhardt reported that CPT Medina threatened him and gave him more dangerous assignments such as point duty on patrol to silence him. Other soldiers who refused to murder civilians were Team Leader Ronald Grzesik, SP4 Robert Maples, and PVT Harry Stanley (Angers, 1999). Stanley refused to massacre unarmed civilians, even when 2LT Calley threatened court-martial and pointed his rifle at Stanley, who pointed and cocked his pistol back to Calley. After Stanley’s story (“I ain’t killin’ no women and children” [Angers, 1999]) was told in several newspapers and in a film documentary, the City of Berkeley, California, designated October 17 to be the “Harry Stanley Day” to honor him (Herald, 1989).

#### *D. Uncovering the Mỹ Lai Cover-up with American Conscience and Democracy*

The military cover-up of the Mỹ Lai Massacre would have been a *fait accompli* if not because of the courage of more US soldiers/heroes like 21-year old Ron Ridenhour and other citizens/reporters. Ridenhour joined the US Army at the end of 1967 as a helicopter door gunner. By mid April 1968, while serving in the Quảng Ngãi province, he first learned about the Mỹ Lai or Pinkville Massacre over a beer with PFC “Butch” Gruver [some references cited “Gruber”], one of his friends from the Schofield Barracks in Hawaii: “Oh, man, we massacred this whole village... We just lined them up and killed them... Men, women and kids, everybody, we killed them all” (University of Missouri-Kansas City [UMKC], 2018). The young and morally conscientious Ridenhour could not ignore this story because he felt, “It was an instantaneous recognition... that this was something too horrible... and that I wasn't gonna be a part of it. Just simply having the knowledge, I felt, made me complicit, unless I acted on it.” Ridenhour also recognized, “While the massacre at Mỹ Lai was the logical extension of the smaller but far more numerous day-to-day atrocities I had witnessed as a helicopter door gunner, hearing the story come from the lips of someone I knew and trusted, someone who'd been there, who saw it and participated in it, staggered me” (Ridenhour, 1993).

So Ridenhour spent the remainder of his time in Vietnam to locate more witnesses and facts by going to the divisional Long-Range/Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP) Company, where he could find four or five more people who had been his friends in Hawaii and had been in the Charlie Company. These friends had transferred into the divisional LRRP Company within ten days of the Mỹ Lai Massacre. Ridenhour tried to engage his friends on a one-on-one conversation to obtain information. Two of them were Ridenhour’s very good friends, PFCs Michael Terry and William Doherty, who admittedly “finished off” the noisy, wailing, and moaning wounded civilians in the ditch, so that they would have a quiet lunch break. Mike Terry<sup>8</sup> was a close friend of Ridenhour, whom Ridenhour would never believe to be able to commit murder. Ridenhour wrote about his feelings when hearing that his fine friend Mike Terry admitted that he too had committed murder at Mỹ Lai 4, “As Mike told me the story, my head felt like it must feel when someone is scalping you alive. Even as it is actually happening, you can’t bring yourself to believe it. But yes, yes, yes, he said on every detail. It was all true. He hadn’t shot into the people when Calley first had them all crowded into the ditch. That was awful. The whole thing was like a bad dream. ‘It was like a Nazi kind of thing,’ he said” (Ridenhour, 1994). After talking to SGT LaCroix and obtaining the falsified military report (about 128 VC killed in Mỹ Lai) from the official history of the division, the coordinates of the village, and other specific information, Ridenhour needed one more witness who did not participate in the Mỹ Lai atrocity, and that was PFC Michael Bernhardt. After CPT Medina threatened Bernhardt to keep his mouth shut about the Mỹ Lai Massacre, Bernhardt’s commander did not allow him to transfer to any place (e.g., the LRRP Company). Like Thompson, Bernhardt was sent to all the dangerous places, and

<sup>8</sup> PFC Michael Terry is described by Ridenhour as a “very fine human being”, a kind-hearted young Mormon who was so pure that “he didn’t cuss, discuss women, lie, cheat, steal or speak badly of anyone... Just sort of determinedly innocent.”

even to the front of the line every time they thought an ambush was coming. They would not let him out of the field when he got bad jungle rot for four months, to the point of not being able to walk. Dropping from 145 to 105 pounds (lbs) (Angers, 1999), finally without obtaining any permission, Bernhardt jumped on a supply chopper as it was lifting off and went himself straight to the aid station, where the doctors told him that he should have been there months earlier (UMKC, 2018).

Ridenhour did not bring up the M̃y Lai Massacre when he was in the US Army because he was afraid of his own safety (the way Thompson, Bernhardt, and other righteous Charlie Company soldiers were treated). When he finished his tour and returned home in Phoenix, AZ, against all friends' and families' advice of leaving the incident alone, on March 18, 1969 (a year or so after the massacre), he sent 30 letters to President Nixon; Secretaries of State, Defense, and Army; Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staffs, and two dozens of members of Congress in Washington detailing the M̃y Lai Massacre and telling them about a "2LT Kally" who mowed down groups of civilians with machine gun. Citing what Winston Churchill once said, "A country without conscience is a country without a soul, and a country without a soul is a country that cannot survive," Ridenhour urged an investigation onto the alleged massacre (Angers, 1999). Most recipients ignored Ridenhour's letter. However, with the support of AZ Congressman Mo Udall, they contacted the Army's Chief of Staff General Westmoreland and the Pentagon. By April 1969, the Office of the Inspector General began a full inquiry, started interviewing members of the Charlie Company, and eventually identified 2LT Calley as a suspect. Early in August 1969, the investigation was turned over to the US Army Criminal Investigation Command (commonly known as CID). On September 5, 1969, Calley was charged with six counts of premeditated murder the day before his scheduled discharge from the Army.

When the investigative reporter Seymour Hersh got a tip that 2LT William Calley of the Charlie Company was being court-martialed on charges that he had murdered unarmed Vietnamese civilians, Hersh interviewed Calley about his role in the massacre. Calley insisted that M̃y Lai had been a fierce battle against the VC, not a massacre of unarmed civilians. Undeterred, Hersh sought to interview other soldiers who were there. In the second week of November 1969, more than a year and a half after that fateful day, Hersh reported the M̃y Lai Massacre and its cover-up to the public on *Dispatch News Service*, a small wire agency (because no other large, national journals wanted to publish it) (PBS, 2009c). Hersh won the 1970 Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting for this work. A week after, the first gruesome pictures of the M̃y Lai Massacre taken by the Army photographer Ron Haeberle with his private color camera appeared in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (Theiss, 2018). In the same month, Mike Wallace of CBS News interviewed ex-GI Paul Meadlo, who remorsefully confessed to shooting and killing many unarmed Vietnamese civilians of all ages, together with 2LT Calley.

By late November 1969, GEN Westmoreland appointed Lieutenant General (LTG) W.R. Peers to investigate the potential military cover-up of the M̃y Lai Massacre (Raviv, 2018). Early in December 1969, the *Wall Street Journal* informal poll showed that most Americans didn't believe the occurrence of the M̃y Lai Massacre (Laderman, 2018). As evidence was collected, the *Peers Inquiry* recommended that charges be brought against two non-commissioning officers (NCOs) and 28 officers for the M̃y Lai Massacre cover-up. The CID report also showed adequate evidence to charge 33 out of 105 Charlie Company soldiers with major war crimes. But 17 had left the Army and charges against them were dropped due to the 1955 Supreme Court case *Toth v. Quarles*<sup>9</sup>. Of the 13 soldiers that were charged, only five were tried, and four were acquitted. In the end, only 2LT William Calley, the First Platoon Commander of the Charlie Company, was convicted for premeditated murder of "not less than" 22 civilians and was sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labor in March 1971.

#### E. *The Corrupt President, Deluded Politicians, and Confused American Mass*

The recent release of the declassified Haldeman's (Nixon's Chief of Staff) handwritten notes stored at the Nixon Presidential Library in Yorba Linda, CA, shows that Nixon started his shadow campaign to sabotage the M̃y Lai Massacre trials as early as December 1, 1969. Nixon gave Haldeman the following instructions to do damage control of the M̃y Lai crisis: "use dirty tricks... [but] not too high a level... Discredit one witness [referring to Hugh Thompson]... We have to use a senator or two [to support Nixon's shadow campaign]" (Angers, 2014). As a result, records show that Haldeman met with Nofziger (White House Director of Communications) the next day, who in turn solicited help from South Carolina Congressman L. Mendel Rivers, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee and a dependable Nixon's ally. Congressmen Rivers and Herbert formed a subcommittee to take testimonies from witnesses (including that from Hugh Thompson) in secret sessions, sealed the testimonies and refused to share them with defendants' lawyers to sabotage the trials. Secretary of the Army Stanley Resor and one prosecutor COL William Eckhardt had condemned Rivers and Herbert's tactics. Meanwhile, Rivers asserted that there was no massacre and that the alleged M̃y Lai Massacre reports were simply attempts to oppose the Vietnam War (UMKC, 2018); in fact, Rivers did everything he could to protect the soldiers who were responsible for the massacre. Worse, after Thompson testified before the secret hearings of the Armed Services Subcommittee, Rivers publicly mentioned that Hugh Thompson should be the only soldier at M̃y Lai to be punished (for turning his weapons on fellow [hoodlum] American troops).

<sup>9</sup> The 1955 Supreme Court case *Toth v. Quarles* asserts that US ex-servicemen cannot constitutionally be subjected to trial by military court-martial.



Although Rivers unsuccessfully tried to have Thompson court-martialed, he was successful in the defamation of Thompson's character. As a result, instead of coming home as a hero for stopping the horrific massacre, protecting unarmed civilians, and upholding the moral courage of the American Army, Thompson was accused to be "unpatriotic," "traitor," and "VC sympathizer." He was frozen in rank and ostracized by both the US Army and the public. Colburn reported that within 15 minutes after Thompson walked into an officers' club, he would find himself sitting alone after other officers recognized who he was (PBS, 2009b). At home, Thompson started receiving hate mail, death threats over the phone, and mutilated dead animals on his doorstep (USNA, 2004).

The tactics used by Nixon and his sycophants seemed to be working because the confused media and the public were more supportive of the mass murderer Calley than the morally courageous Thompson. Calley's verdict of guilt and sentence of life imprisonment caused a huge rally from both the rights and the lefts, the hawks and the doves. He had simply performing his duty, or he was considered as a scapegoat for the politicians and military brass who dragged America into an immoral war, they would say. About three months after his verdict, the White House received more than 300,000 telegrams and letters expressing support for Calley. Calley himself received approximately 10,000 letters and packages a day. To appease their angry constituents, deluded politicians even came up with their own colorful and imbecile acts. Georgia's Governor Jimmy Carter [the future US president] urged his state residents to "honor the flag as Rusty [murderer Calley] had done!" Indiana's Governor Whitcomb ordered his state's flags at half-staff! Mississippi's Governor Williams asserted that his state was "about ready to secede from the Union" over the Calley verdict. Local leaders across the country also demanded that President Nixon pardon Calley (Raviv, 2018). Some of Calley's supporters went to greater lengths to let their voices heard. Two musicians Julian Wilson and James M. Smith of Muscle Shoals, AL wrote the "C Company – Battle Hymne of Lt. Calley, featured Terry Nelson. On January 10, 1972, *Time Magazine* published the results of a public opinion poll conducted by two Harvard scholars on Mỹ Lai. It showed that two-thirds of the 989 Americans surveyed thought that "incidents such as this [Mỹ Lai] are bound to happen in a war". Only 22 percent of those surveyed expressed the moral repugnance to the action that "soldiers may have intentionally gunned down unarmed women and children" and 13 percent had no opinion (*Time Magazine*, 1972). As a result of public outrage, Calley's jail time was reduced by Nixon to about three and a half years of house arrest and he was a free man in November 1974.

In a letter to President Nixon in April 1970, CPT Aubrey M. Daniel, Calley's prosecutor, strongly protested Nixon's interference of the military judicial system, "When the verdict was rendered, I was totally shocked and dismayed at the reaction of many people across the nation. Much of the adverse public reaction I can attribute to people who have acted emotionally and without being aware of the evidence that was presented and perhaps even the laws of this nation regulating the conduct of war. These people have undoubtedly viewed Lieutenant Calley's conviction simply as the conviction of an American officer for killing the enemy. Others, no doubt out of a sense of frustration, have seized upon the conviction as a means of protesting the war in Viet-Nam. To believe, however, that any large percentage of the population could believe the evidence which was presented and approve of the conduct of Lieutenant Calley would be as shocking to my conscience as the conduct itself, since I believe that we are still a civilized nation... How shocking it is if so many people across the nation have failed to see the moral issue which was involved in the trial of Lieutenant Calley-- that it is unlawful for an American soldier to summarily execute unarmed and unresisting men, women, children, and babies. But how much more appalling it is to see so many of the political leaders of the nation who have failed to see the moral issue, or, having seen it, to compromise it for political motive in the face of apparent public displeasure with the verdict... In view of your previous statements concerning this matter, I have been particularly shocked and dismayed at your decision to intervene in these proceedings in the midst of the public clamor... Your intervention has, in my opinion, damaged the military judicial system and lessened any respect it may have gained as a result of the proceedings... I would expect that the President of the United States, a man whom I believed should and would provide the moral leadership for this nation, would stand fully behind the law of this land on a moral issue which is so clear and about which there can be no compromise. For this nation to condone the acts of Lieutenant Calley is to make us no better than our enemies and make any pleas by this nation for the humane treatment of our own prisoners meaningless" (Daniel, 1970).

#### F. *True Military Heroes and Moral Courage*

In contrast to the prevailing public opinion about the Mỹ Lai Massacre at the time, professional military leaders thought differently about Calley and his verdict. These leaders believed that Calley should have never been an officer in the US Army because he was initially rejected in 1964 due to hearing defect. Calley also struggled with achieving respect from his men. In 1971, COL Robert Heinl, Jr. wrote about the college dropout Calley, "Lieutenant William L. Calley, Jr., an ex-company clerk, was a platoon leader who never even learned to read a map. His credentials for a commission were derisory; he was no more officer-material than any Pfc. in his platoon. Yet the Army had to take him because no one else was available. Commenting on the Calley conviction, a colonel at Ft. Benning said, 'We have at least two or three thousand more Calleys in the Army just waiting for the next calamity'" (Heinl, 1971).

In his 2017 book *My Lai: Vietnam, 1968, and the Descent into Darkness*, Professor Howard Jones reported that many Vietnam Veterans felt that the Mỹ Lai Massacre had posed a negative impact on the military, "Perhaps the most outspoken critic was Harry G. Summers, a retired colonel in the U.S. Army, veteran of the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and best selling author of books on military strategy. At a 1994 conference on Mỹ Lai at Tulane University, he told the

audience, ‘Calley and Medina ought to have been hung and then drawn and quartered and the remains put at the gates at Fort Benning to remind all who enter of the consequences. The bastard fell through the cracks.’ In a television interview, David Hackworth [former US Army COL highly decorated in both Korean and Vietnam Wars, creator of Tiger Force] agreed with this position. Calley ‘should have been lined up against the wall and shot.... The guy’s a murderer.’ At the same Tulane conference attended by Summers, [Tim] O’Brien said that ‘military authorities today should prosecute both the perpetrators of the war crimes at Mỹ Lai and those who covered them up. Calley should have remained in jail all his life. He was no scapegoat; he committed the crimes – as did the other in Charlie Company who followed his orders and, like him, publically admitted to the killings. O’Brien’s comment echoed what Lieutenant General Peers had said fifteen years earlier: ‘There is no statute of limitations for war crimes’” (Jones, 2017). These expressions are consistent with the international law of war. The Nuremberg Principles 1946, Article 1 states, “Any person who commits an act which is a crime under international law is responsible himself and may be punished.” Article 4 says, “Even if a person committed the criminal act under orders from the government or a superior, he is still responsible, if a moral choice was in fact possible for him” (International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC], 2018).

On August 19, 2009, Calley made his first public apology for the massacre in a speech to the Kiwanis club of Greater Columbus, Georgia, “There is not a day that goes by that I do not feel remorse for what happened that day in Mỹ Lai... I feel remorse for the Vietnamese who were killed, for their families, for the American soldiers involved and their families. I am very sorry” (Jones, 2017). But Colburn and Professor Emeritus Howard Jones believed that those hollow words showed no true repentance, “There just was no inner change of heart... I mean it just wasn’t there. No matter how people tried to paint it.” Professor Jones noted that because at the end, Calley still insisted that he’d only been following orders of CPT Medina (Raviv, 2018), who recently passed away on May 8, 2018.

It took the Army 30 years to recognize Hugh Thompson’s good deeds and award Thompson, Colburn, and Andreotta (posthumously) the prestigious Soldier’s Medal (the highest medal the US Army can award their troops for courage not involving direct conflict with their enemy) on March 6, 1998, thanks to the 9-year letter campaign by the retired Clemson University professor David Egan, his wife, and the businessman/retired Army Reserve COL William Cavanaugh. Professor Egan, who was a US Army officer in France in the 1960s, could recognize a true American hero when he saw one. Although Egan knew about the Mỹ Lai Massacre for years, he did not learn about Thompson’s heroic deeds until he saw the British documentary *Remember Mỹ Lai* in 1989. He took it on as his mission to make the US Army recognize Thompson as “one of its best and most courageous... outstanding soldier... a shining example of the caliber of men who served their country with honor in the Vietnam War” (Angers, 1999). At first Thompson refused the Soldier’s medal unless it was awarded to all his crew and the ceremony to be held in a public ceremony in front of the Vietnam War Memorial wall.

The award event was broadcasted live on TV that day. Presenting the Soldier’s medals to Thompson and Colburn, MG Michael Ackerman described the Mỹ Lai Massacre as “one of the most shameful chapters in the Army’s history.” MG Ackerman also remarked, “Mr. Hugh C. Thompson, Mr. Lawrence Colburn, and Mr. Glenn U. Andreotta exhibited great personal courage and ethical conduct at the Vietnam’s village of Mỹ Lai... It is clear that the crew saved the lives of at least eleven Vietnamese and initiated the report which saved countless others by bringing about a cease-fire. In his book, *The Mỹ Lai Inquiry*, LTG William Peers wrote, ‘If there was a hero of Mỹ Lai, he [Thompson] was it.’... The ability to ‘Do the right thing’ - even at the risk of their personal safety - that guided these soldiers to do what they did... This award... Is a tribute to these great soldiers... whose actions... have set standard for all soldiers to follow...” In response, Thompson said, “I would like to thank all them [veterans] who served their country with honor. In a very real sense, this medal is for you.” Colburn quoted General Douglas McArthur: “The soldier, be he friend or foe, is charged with the protection of the weak and the unarmed, it is his very existence for being.”

From being ostracized as traitors by imbecile politicians for thirty years, Thompson and his crew began to be recognized as national heroes for their real true worth. After receiving their Soldier’s medals, Thompson and Colburn were invited to West Point, US Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD; Marines Corp Base Quantico, and US Air Force Academy to lecture on the topic of moral courage to young cadets. They also received honorary doctoral degrees from Connecticut College in the Fall of 1998 and had songs written about them. After Thompson’s death in 2006, Colburn emotionally talked about his revered WO1 Hugh Thompson, “He was from Stone Mountain, Georgia... He was Cherokee. His father’s father walked the Trail of Tears... he had a very strict upbringing. He knew right from wrong... He had very solid moral footing” (PBS, 2009b). Professor Emeritus Howard Jones of University of Alabama dedicates his 2017 book *My Lai: Vietnam, 1968, and the Descent into Darkness* as, “A special tribute to Warrant Officer Hugh C. Thompson, Specialist-4 Glenn W. Andreotta, and Specialist-4 Lawrence M. Colburn, for personifying the essence of good character in the midst of horrific circumstances.” Professor Emeritus Wiener ended his 2018 article with, “Hugh Thompson died in 2006, when he was only 62. I wish we could have done more to thank him.” Now the Mỹ Lai story is part of the curriculum at the US and European military service academies. Lawrence (2018) writes that Air Force MAJ Logan Sisson, who is teaching ethics at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, proudly shows his students a picture he took with Hugh Thompson and Larry Colburn, “If we can use the term heroes, if there were any heroes at Mỹ Lai, it was them.” Thompson’s heroic action resulted in an order for a cease fire at Mỹ Lai and put an end to a 4-day operation that could cost up to 20,000 civilian lives (U.S. Naval Academy [USNA], 2004). After more than 30 years of

being ostracized, Thompson was finally recognized, “Warrant Thompson’s heroism exemplifies the highest standards of personal courage and ethical conduct, reflecting distinct credit on him, and the United States Army” (USNA, 2004).

#### G. *A Mỹ Lai a Month?*

Indeed, while praising the courage of Thompson, Professor Emeritus Wiener also mentioned the recent study by Nick Turse, a Ph.D. from Columbia University who found declassified Army materials in the National Archives that indicated “invasive and systemic” killing of Vietnamese civilians by American soldiers. One soldier Turse interviewed even told him that there had been “a Mỹ Lai a month” (Wiener, 2018). Turse’s investigations of American war crimes in Vietnam (Turse, 2013) have gained him a Guggenheim Fellowship, a fellowship at Harvard University’s Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, and a Ridenhour Prize for Reportorial Distinction. Although others have criticized Turse’s work (Kulik and Zinoman, 2014), the objective of this paper is not to evaluate the validity of the Turse’s study or the arguments against his work. Perhaps by “a Mỹ Lai a month,” the interviewed soldier meant that the cumulative monthly killing of unarmed Vietnamese civilians in the free fire zones could add up to be equivalent to the total number of civilians killed at Mỹ Lai. But it does not mean that the systematic murdering of a large group of villagers/families together like Mỹ Lai and Th ánh Phong did occur once a month. Common sense would dictate that if there were actually a Mỹ Lai-like massacre a month, the Vietnamese government, especially the VC or North Vietnamese Army (NVA) propagandists would have erected numerous massacre memorials all over the South Vietnam landscape.

#### H. *PTSD in Vietnam War Veterans*

After his tour in Vietnam, John Wade of *In the Lake of the Woods* suffered many PTSD symptoms like many other Vietnamese war veterans, “On occasion, though, he’d yell in his sleep-loud, desperate, obscene things (p. 75)... In the dark, sometimes, he would see a vanishing village. He would see PFC Weatherby...” (O’Brien, 1994a, p. 76). The US Department of Veterans Affairs (USVA) had found that PTSD affected about 31 percent of all Vietnam War veterans. This number is much higher than the reported values for modern wars (10 percent for Desert Storm and 11 percent for Afghanistan War) (National Institute of Health [NIH], 2009). There are different groups of veterans experiencing different PTSD symptoms. Some started having PTSD symptoms early after they returned from the war and their symptoms last until old age. Others found that their early PTSD symptoms decreased with time, but worsened later in life. And many veterans did not experience PTSD symptoms until later in life.

A recent 2015 VA study found that many older Vietnam War veterans still have PTSD symptoms, more than 50 years after their wartime experience. This is because new stresses like retirement, increased health problems at older age, loss of loved ones, and watching war scenes from television can bring back horrid wartime memories (USVA, 2015). Paul Meadlo of the Charlie Company said that as he gets older, the terrible memories of the Mỹ Lai Massacre came back more frequently, “I can actually see the faces and the terror and all those people’s eyes. And I wakeup and I’m just shaking and I just can’t hardly cope with it” (Raviv, 2018). After his dishonorable discharge from the Army, Sam Ybarra of Tiger Force, who once had worn a necklace of human ears and had tied a scalp to his rifle as trophies, endured severe PTSD and alcohol/drug abuse until his death at 36 years old, “... each time he closed his eyes, the memories would rush back. The more he tried to forget, the more he remembered... ‘It’s my life. What I did... I killed people, Mama. I killed regular people. I shouldn’t have. My God, what did I do?’... Ybarra began sobbing uncontrollably... ‘I asked God to forgive me for what I did, for killing all those people, all those civilians, all those children...’”

Not only those who committed war atrocities experienced PTSD symptoms with flashbacks and nightmares, those who failed to stop others’ horrible actions experienced worse PTSD conditions. Just like Thompson and Colburn, in addition to the trauma of witnessing the atrocities, these righteous soldiers were saddled by a strong sense of guilt because they could not reconcile the killing of unarmed civilians with their core set of values (Sallah and Weiss, 2006). Like many veterans, Colburn and Thompson struggled with PTSD for many decades. Their experience was consistent with the findings by researchers from Brooklyn College and Columbia University in a study on the Vietnam Veteran’s war stress and trauma. These researchers found that PTSD occurred not only to American soldiers who were in combat, but also to those who participated in abusive violence and those who witnessed abusive violence (Laufer et al., 1984).

### III. CONCLUSIONS

Tim O’Brien’s *In the Lake of the Woods* brings the most shameful period of the Vietnam War to the front by using the actual 1968 Mỹ Lai Massacre as one of its central events. However, the complete history of Mỹ Lai also showcases the moral courage of many US soldiers to uphold the country’s highest ethical standards. Currently, as high school students spend less than a minute hearing or talking about the Mỹ Lai Massacre in their AP [Advanced Placement] US History class or quickly scan O’Brien’s war novels for their “American Author” essay in their English class, they could be convinced by O’Brien that the Vietnam War had always been a “bad” war and that “a true war story is never moral” (O’Brien, 1990). But once students know more about the historical context of all O’Brien’s Vietnam War details (Mahini et al., 2018a and 2018b), especially the entire Mỹ Lai story 50 years after its occurrence as presented in this article, they may be able to disagree with O’Brien. No, Timothy O’Brien, a true war story can also, if not always, be moral (USNA, 2004), depending on the ethics and moral courage of the fighters of war. For over a decade, there are

plenty of US soldiers and officers who served honorably and heroically in Vietnam and who sacrificed their lives to help Southern Vietnamese enjoy their democracy. Soldiers and officers like 2LT Robert Swan Muller III, who was sent to Vietnam around the same time as Calley in 1968. He came back not as a war criminal like Calley but as a well-respected FBI director for several administrations, dedicating most of his life for noble public service (Graff, 2018). It was because like Mr. Thompson and other American heroes, Mr. Muller was raised by his parents who did not tolerate any lie or misdeed – always by a strict moral code, always on solid moral footings. The Vietnam War was a painful chapter in the US history, but we did not totally lose our soul over it after all. As Aronovitch concluded in her 2001 article in the *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, “Effective fighters are also ethical fighters... good soldiers must in certain ways be good persons as well.” And the Army Ethic always “begins with the *moral values* the Army defends. The Army protects the rights and interests of the American People by conducting military operations in the service of government policy **in a manner that respects the basic human rights of others**” [emphasis added] (US Army, 2010).

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# Group Work and Classroom Interaction in Communication and Study Skills Classes (CSS) of the University of Botswana

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**Abstract**—This study addresses the role of group work and how it assists the students to interact in the University of Botswana classrooms. The purpose of the study was to establish whether or not the students display quality classroom interaction when working in groups. Four (4) CSS lecturers teaching a total of 162 students were observed. The four lecturers observed did not only teach CSS but they also used group work in their teaching. The same number of lecturers and twelve students were from the various faculties that are offered CSS. Looking at the observation data, it was found out that students interact better when they are working in groups as compared to when they work individually. The main contributing factor was that when the students are asked to individually participate in classroom talk, they seem to be reluctant. On the other hand, when they are asked to work in smaller groups and later report their findings, they are eager to participate. The aforementioned participation makes the students' classroom interaction to be at a 'higher level'. The main conclusion drawn from this study was that the CSS lecturers should engage the students more in group work in an endeavour to develop and maintain dialogic classrooms. The dialogic classrooms provide the students with the motivation to help them interact within the classrooms, university, the world of work and socially.

**Index Terms**—dialogic classrooms, pattern of interaction, collaborative group work, classroom interaction

## I. INTRODUCTION

Group work emerged in the nineteenth century and it has long been introduced in the classrooms (Long., & Porter, 1985). The above authors further state the need of prior knowledge on group work and indicate that there are some pedagogical arguments on the foregoing. Prior knowledge is said to have an impact in the learning process (Gibbons, 2002). Thus, the students' prior knowledge has a strong effect on the students as they learn in their groups. On the issue of pedagogical arguments and group work, there has been an emphasis of the pedagogical classroom practices such as group work (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). This implies that group work is used in the classrooms as a teaching method that can be viewed differently by the lecturers.

In addition to the concern raised above, some scholars of group work state that there are practical and theoretical implications of group work (Stierlin, 1973). During the process, the students demonstrate self-awareness and an ability to reflect on their practice in group facilitation. According to Bourdieu (1987), the practical implications exert the theoretical ones. When the students come and work together on a certain class task, they will at the end of the interaction come up with an idea. It is worth pointing out that the idea brought to the fore is the theoretical implication. The above two implications, therefore, help the students to come up with quality classroom interaction.

Another notable point regarding classroom interaction is that the literature often investigates the individual and group work participation (Pica & Doughty, 1985; Panitz, 1999). According to Panitz above, the individual participation is used by lecturers to help advise students. This takes place when the students are asked to respond individually. This could be in responding to questions either during class discussions or tests. On the other-hand, (Panitz, 1999) emphasizes that the group work participation is where the students are divided or they divide themselves in small groups. In these small groups the students work on a task for a certain time. Therefore, it can be deduced that if the students are in a group, they share ideas within a stipulated time that they would have agreed upon with their lecturer. For Pica & Doughty (1985) the students are reluctant to talk in class when they are asked to work individually. Thus, it is very common that the students do not actively participate in class when asked to do so individually. Still basing on Pica & Doughty's observation, group work activates more dialogic output. This suggests that when the students work in groups, there is more classroom interaction.

It is interesting to note that the points raised above by (Panitz, 1999) and Pica & Doughty (1985) are like 'building blocks'. This is because what Panitz raises regarding individual and group work participation is developed by Pica & Doughty (1985). While the former asserts that, during classroom interaction, the individual participation focuses on the individual oral responses. Conclusively, Pica & Doughty (1985) provide the result of classroom interaction in the classrooms. The authors point out that the oral responses are normally characterised by either silence or reluctance to

talk by the students. Relating to group work in the classrooms, (Panitz, 1999) considers group work participation as an educational mode where the students have to work on the assigned task within a specific time. On the other hand Pica & Doughty (1985) indicate that classroom interaction in group work participation is positive. This is because the students provide rich, dialogic output.

This study is carried out because there seem to be a problem in the CSS classrooms. As illustrated by (Long., & Porter, 1985), there appear to be some pedagogical arguments in relation to group work. The University of Botswana (UB) classrooms are characterised by different approaches to teaching and learning. Some are lecture methods, others are presentations and group work. From the mentioned three methods, this study will focus on how group work is used to interact in the UB classrooms. The study, therefore, seeks to answer the following research question: what is the observed pattern of classroom interaction during the use of group work?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *Group Work and Interaction*

Group work is one of the valuable ways of demonstrating classroom interaction. This is because, when the foregoing is employed in the classroom, there seem to be an in-depth talk among students. In examining group work and classroom interaction, Blatchford., Kutnick., Baines., & Galton (2003) argue that, “Perhaps the most well established conclusion concerning effective group work is that group work skills have to be developed: we cannot just put children into groups and expect them to work well together” p. 166). This suggests that the lecturers should maximise more interaction among the students when working in groups. The said idea was also supported by Vuzo, 2018 when the scholar asserted that “there is need to develop critical consciousness through student dialogue” (p.3). It can be claimed that critical thinking helps the student(s) to come up with detailed information during the lecture sessions. In demonstrating classroom interaction and group work, the following categories will be reviewed: the definition of group work, the approaches of group work in the classroom and the advantages and disadvantages of group work.

### B. *The Meaning of Group Work*

Studies on group work indicate what the concept means from a specific point of view and further depict its purpose. Forsyth (2018) states that a group is, “two or more individuals who are connected by and within social relationships” (p. 3). In further defining group work, Prince (2004) argue that it is where students pursue a common goal. Thus, the two authors above imply that, when a number of students work together in the classroom that is group work. Further, the two definitions suggest that when the students team up as a group, they also develop both the academic and social ties. This is because they relate in academic affairs and the same team spirit can be used even outside the classrooms, in social affairs.

### C. *Approaches of Group Work*

The different ways of approaching group work has been divided into four dimensions. Below are the foregoing dimensions as outlined by Blatchford et al (2003):

1. The classroom context: Preparing the classroom and the groups
2. Interactions between children: Preparing and developing pupil skills
3. The teacher’s role: Preparing adults for working with groups
4. Tasks: Preparing the lessons and group work activities

(Adapted from Blatchford et al; 2003, p. 163)

The previous approaches are meant to indicate the way in which group work is used in CSS classes of the University of Botswana. The first dimension, which is classroom context, can be used to indicate classroom context. It can be claimed that this involves a situation whereby the classroom is always organised in a way that shows that the students always sit in their groups. During the step by step development of the lesson, the students will be asked to work in their groups. Further, examining the second dimension above, this is the type of group that can be used with young children at pre-primary or primary schools. The teacher will in the process give the pupils the instructions on how to go about the group work, sit the pupils in their groups and let them discuss the task given.

To further elaborate on the above dimensions, it can be deduced that the third point refers to an educational setting which consists of adult learners. Such settings are educational establishments such as the universities. The adult learners will be given the instruction of what to do in the groups and the lecturer(s) will go around the groups to check if they are on track. The final dimension is about the tasks. It can be claimed that this is one of the pedagogical practices where the teacher prepares the lesson to be taught and in the process, includes working in groups as part of the instructional approach. As the lesson progresses, when it is time for the group work, the students will be asked to work in their groups.

Conclusively, from the above list of approaches to group work, the CSS classes use the following approaches; 1, 3 and 4. This is because the classrooms are used as the contexts and the lecturers assist the students to work in groups. Thereafter, the students will be given some time to work in their groups before they present to the whole class. The second approach above falls off because the University students are adults and not pupils.



#### D. Advantages and Disadvantages of Group Work

There are a number of advantages of group work in the classroom. One of these is that the students interact better than when they have to individually contribute to classroom talk. This is supported by Ahn, & Class (2011) when they pointed out that, “working in groups to construct knowledge improves student participation and can change their approach to learning” (p. 277). This suggests that group work is very important and if the students work amicably together, it can bring fruitful results that relate to classroom interaction.

Another advantage of group work is based on the quality of classroom interaction as argued by Panitz, (1999). The said quality was based on collaboration and cooperation of the students while working together in the classroom. In defining the two concepts, Panitz above stated that in collaboration, the individual students are responsible for their actions. The students learn together and respect the contributions made by their peers. This implies that when the students learn in their groups, the students are more independent and portray the good attributes of learning together and respecting the responses from other members of the group. Another concept from Panitz’s observation is cooperation. According to the foregoing author, cooperation facilitates the accomplishment of a specific end product. Thus, when the students work in their groups, they work very hard, with all the concentration which goes together with critical thinking because they have a goal to achieve.

It is interesting to note that the above two advantages relate to the Sociocultural Theory discussed in the section that follows. This is shown in a situation whereby when the students work together, there is mediation because the lecturer guides the students. The guidance will be done by giving the students clues to check that they are on the right track. Additionally, the SCT is advantageous because there is scaffolding in the teaching and learning activities. The lecturer helps the students to effectively come up with quality classroom talk. The final advantage that correlates with the SCT is that of co-construction of knowledge. This suggests that when the students work in groups, there is negotiation of meaning between the group members.

Studies on group work also indicate the disadvantages of group work. In making reference to group work, Forsyth (2014) argues that, “they are often the arena of profound interpersonal conflicts that end in violence or aggression” (p. 26). This first point illustrates that the students can sometimes have a heated debate over the point of discussion. This can even lead to disunity within the group. For Zhang (2004), “Some students think their classmates sometimes talk nonsense and that it is a waste of time” (p. 342). From Zhang’s exploratory study, students have different levels of understanding and this might result in individual students perceiving the contributions from a negative point of view.

### III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Galegane (2015) cited Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978) who defined the Sociocultural Theory (SCT) as a theory of cognitive development that emphasises the importance of socially shared activities. In this research paper, the socially shared activities are classroom interaction because the lecturer and the students exchange information by using language. Additionally, how group work is used in the classroom is also a socially shared activity that will be considered herein. Considerable research has examined various components of the SCT but, this research paper will focus on only three components; namely, mediation, scaffolding and co-construction of knowledge. Language can be used in mediation (when the child is helped by a more knowledgeable person during the teaching and learning process), scaffolding (the temporary assistance that teachers provide for their students in the completion of a task) and co-construction of knowledge (the assistance provided by the lecturer to the students). If the three components of the SCT are used in the classroom, there will be quality interaction.

### IV. SPECIFIC ANALYTICAL STRUCTURE

In analysing group work and classroom interaction, there is an analytical structure by Sinclair & Coulthard (1975, 1992). The said structure is the Initiation, Response, Feedback (IRF). The above two authors further referred to the IRF rank scales as “moves”. Further to the “moves”, a lower rank scale named the “acts” was also coined by the aforementioned scholars. From another perspective, Mehan (1979) argues that, the Initiation move requires a reply and it also forms an adjacency pair. This is because, as stated earlier, the initiation move is always followed by the response move. The three part structure introduced above will be individually discussed in the subsections that follow.

#### A. The Initiation Move (I-move)

The initial stage of the analytical structure is the I-move. In describing the I-move, Smith., Hardman & Tooley (2005) argue that it, “is usually in the form of a teacher question” (p. 608). Thus when the teacher asks questions, it is an indicator that an I-move is being used. From another angle, Coulthard (1985) states that during the I-move the teacher, informs, directs and elicits information. The latter explanation of the I-move is broader than the former. The teacher engages in a variety of factors in order to get responses from the students.

The Initiation move is very important in the classroom because the students are guided through a number of activities. The example of the activities are; what to do, how to do it, what not to do (Oxford, 1997). The above three ways that are part of the guidance given the students by the lecturer are an indicator that the students are guided in a

number of ways. These leads to them being able to get the instructions very well and as result there will be quality classroom interaction by the various groups.

### B. *The Response Move (R-move)*

The response move is where, during the classroom interaction, the students provide a reply to the lecturer's initiation (e.g., Harahap & Emzir, 2015). This suggests that there are some questions which are part of the I-move discussed above. These are asked by the lecturers and the students then replies to the questions. This continuum then leads to the development of the R-move. This is the step whereby the students have to dominate the classroom interaction. This is because at this stage of classroom talk, they have all the opportunity to think of the posed question and express themselves before the lecturer can move on to the next step.

### C. *The Feedback Move (F-move)*

Chin (2006) explains how the Feedback Move works by stating, "the "F" part of the three-part exchange could comprise a "comment– question" (C–Q) or "statement–question" (S–Q) couplet where the question component of the couplet may be regarded as overlapping with the initiation or "I" move of the next IRF sequence" (p. 1322). Thus, there are a number of Feedback options such as accepting, evaluating and commenting on the points that are meant to contribute to the analytical structure. The F-move plays a very important role in the classroom (Cullen, 2002; Reinke, Herman & Newcomer, 2016) because as an analytical structure, it determines whether there should be a follow up or the end to the interaction (Hellermann (2003). This suggests that the quality and pattern of classroom interaction is determined by how the F-moves unfolds.

## V. METHODOLOGY

### A. *Sample and Sampling Procedures*

The participants of this particular study were chosen from a population of Communication and Study Skills first year students for academic year 2011/12. From the above population, a sample of 162 students and 4 lecturers was chosen. These were chosen from the following four faculties within the seven faculties: Science, Social Sciences, Health Sciences, Education and Business) of the University of Botswana. However, it is worth mentioning that one of the observed lecturers mentioned above, was observed twice because she had agreed to be observed in the two faculties that she taught.

The procedure followed in identifying the above sample was to approach all the CSS lecturers. Office visits were done by the researcher and the aim of the study was discussed by the two parties (the researcher and the lecturer). If the lecturer agreed then the class taught by the lecturer was visited. The above sampling procedure then led to the following sample: Lecturer Star teaching the Faculty of Science, Lecturer Masterpiece teaching the Faculty of Social Sciences and Lecturer Glorious teaching (at different time slots) both the Faculty of Education and Health Sciences.

### B. *Data Collection Instruments*

The data was collected by the use of classroom observations in the year 2011 between the months of August and November. At the University of Botswana, there are two academic semesters, the data for this research paper was collected during the first semester. The main method of data collection was classroom observations and will be discussed below:

#### **Classroom Observations**

The Classroom Observations were used to collect data for this research paper. The Classroom Observations are advantageous because the researcher is able to capture all the aspects of classroom talk. These are later useful in coming up with a deeper and rich analysis of data. According to (O'callaghan., Neumann., Jones & Creed, 2017; van Dijk, 2015), the capturing of rich information is possible because of the instrument's clarity. The time for each of the four lessons was approximately fifty minutes. The classroom observations were done by the research assistant who video recorded the lessons. Thereafter, the researcher transcribed the recorded information. For all the four classes, the recording was done under the following sub-headings:

(TABLE 1)

Exchanges	Participant	Classroom talk	Moves	Acts
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From the above sub-headings (refer to figure 2), there are two types of exchanges. According to Sinclair & Coulthard (1975), there is a boundary exchange and a teaching exchange. The boundary exchange is the step used at "the beginning or end of what the teacher considers to be a stage in the lesson" (p. 49). This suggests that the boundary exchange acts like a 'block' that separates the teaching exchanges. On the other-hand, the teaching exchanges are (according to the same scholars above), "the individual steps by which the lesson progresses (p.49). Thus the lessons are presented in steps and the lecturer and the students have to accomplish a step before moving on to the other one. The said continuum will be carried out until the lesson comes to an end.

Having defined what the exchanges are from the above lesson observation categories, this section will define the other four categories; participants, classroom talk, Moves and Acts (refer to table 1). The participants in the lesson are

either the lecturer or the student(s). The participant column indicates who contributed to the classroom interaction; whether it was the student(s) or the lecturer. Further to the participant, the classroom talk portrays the interaction as it unfolds during the lesson. The next category that was observed was the Moves. According to Sinclair & Coulthard (1975), "Moves are made up of acts, and moves themselves occupy places in the structure of exchanges." (p. 44). From the above point on Moves, they are the yard stick when it comes to the IRF analytical structure (refer to section 4). Finally, the acts are smaller discrete units that make up the moves (Coulthard, 1975). This means that from the moves, there are a number of acts and these depend on how the classroom interaction unfolds.

In summing up the data collection, it can be noted that, using the classroom observations helps the students to develop their interaction skills. This is because the students use language to talk in the classroom and in the process, the above data collection instruments are used to measure the pattern of classroom interaction during the use of group work.

### C. Data Analysis

#### Classroom Observations:

After carrying out the observation in the four classes (4), the researcher transcribed the data. This was done by the researcher listening to the recorded videos. The researcher listened to the videos several times to ensure that no point regarding classroom interaction was missed. These were analysed by using the Initiation, Response, Feedback (IRF) analytical structure of classroom talk (refer to section 4). The data were later coded to come up with the emerging themes for the study. The information was then analysed basing on the themes that emerged from the observations.

## VI. RESULTS

### A. Analysis of Classroom Observations

The interesting factor about the classroom observations is that, in all the observed classes, the students sat in their groups. They were then asked by their lecturer to discuss one of the topics from their course outline. The specific topics for discussion were prepared by the lecturer prior to the commencement of the lecture. The above class preparation aimed at investigating the pattern of classroom interaction where group work was used. The group interaction results from the individual students were immediately evaluated by the lecturers. Examples of these were discovered in lecturer Star (Faculty of Science), Masterpiece (Faculty of Social Sciences) and two lessons belonging to Glorious (Faculty of Science and Education). From all the four lessons observed, a transaction of the lesson was analysed. This helps in that the results will be more manageable and specific in relation to the context being studied. The transcripts presented in this research paper are only a fraction of the whole lesson that was taught for about fifty minutes each.

Transcript 1 below was taught by lecturer Star and the lesson was on Communication Barriers.

#### Lesson transcript One

Lecturer Star

Faculty of Science

Topic: Communication Barriers

Exchanges	Participant	Classroom talk	Moves	Acts
Boundary	L	Okay class, we have come to the end of the discussion. Now I want you to go back to your original seats and let's have class presentations.	Fo	ms
1	S	<b>Presenter 1:</b> Our first barrier was language. There are those people who are literate and those who are illiterate; those who know English and those who do not; that is a big language barrier. Our second communication barrier was culture because we come from different social backgrounds. An example of social background, the way people dress is different.	R	rep
	L	Very good. Can I give you an example; Last night, I had visitors who came over to my house and they are going to be married soon. Clearly, I could see the difference between these two people's backgrounds because the guy talked with food in the mouth. And the lady kept on saying (lecturer uses non-verbal communication). When I went for dessert, the woman showed him that it was not good to speak with food in the mouth. So, clearly background plays an important role.	F	e com
Boundary	L	Can I negotiate? Can I request for six minutes of your time. Do you have a class? Over to you. Thank you	Fo	ms

END OF LECTURER STAR'S LESSON (Adapted from Galegane, G. (2015). A study of student-lecturer interaction in communication and study skills classes at the University of Botswana).

The results of the study from lecturer Star's lesson indicate that each student represented a particular group. One student was chosen by the group members to represent the group in their presentation of the Communication Barriers. The results indicate that when the students work in their small groups, the interaction in the classroom is very good. This is because in presenting their discussed point of views, the students willingly shared rich information with the rest of the class. This suggests that as observed by Kanuka & Anderson (1998) in their study of the SCT, the faculty of

Science students negotiate meaning. After deriving meaning from their discussion, they confidently share their findings with the rest of the class.

Another point worth mentioning is that when the students work in their groups the classroom interaction is more detailed. This was indicated in teaching exchange 1 alone, where the group representative pointed out four communication barriers of language and social background. Thus, it can be claimed that when the students work in groups, the information is rich. The aforementioned point of view is supported by other scholars (e.g., Allwright, 1985; Ulleberg & Solem, 2018) when stating that when the students talk to each other through a group, it automatically multiplied the talking time hence, expanding their repertoire. The above claim implies that there is more talk from the students when they work in their small groups. It is also interesting to note that the multiplied talking time from the students is accompanied by quality classroom talk. The issue of quality classroom talk among the students is also emphasised by (Hardman; 2016).

On the other hand, Transcript 2 below was taught by lecturer Masterpiece in the Faculty of Social Sciences and the lesson was on Reading.

**Lesson transcript Two**  
**Lecturer Masterpiece**  
**Faculty of Social Sciences**  
**Topic: Reading**

Exchanges	Participant	Classroom talk	Moves	Acts
Boundary	Ss	STUDENTS WORK IN GROUPS	Fo	ms
1	S	<b>Group One:</b> The student reads to the whole class one of the articles they chose.	R	rep
	L	Can you take us through. I like that story. I don't like the Voice newspaper as there is a lot of untruth but when I saw that article I bought the newspaper because she was a former classmate.	I	d cue
	S	What we picked from this story is that mostly people are corrupt. Keletso says that her mother has power to corruption and that is why things do not favour her (Keletso). There is a lot of untruth from Keletso because (a) I tend to wonder why she did not sign the affidavit. (b) I don't think there is a reason why someone of high power can lose a job like that just because of her son. I personally believe that there must be reasons why she lost her job (c) her son cannot just be taken from her " <b>go sena mathata hela</b> " (when there are no problems). The story shows that justice is not served.	R	rep
2	L	What if the points raised in the article are not true?	I	el
	S	If it is not true? " <b>Ema pele</b> " (Wait a minute) " <b>Ke gore nkareng?</b> " (What can I say?) A lot of investigations still need to be done so as to clarify some issues.	R	rep
3	L	What else can you pick from the story?	I	el
	S	My look from one point; maybe say Keletso is trying to be manipulative and she does not want to take responsibility of her life based on the fact she is the eldest child and has to provide for the family. And on the other hand, maybe the other members of the family are taking advantage of Keletso because they do not want to equally share what the father left for all of them when he died; so it's a bit unfair to her.	R	rep
	L	Thank you for that. Also on the issue of language, she uses abusive language that does not portray unity and respect in the family. There is a lot of untruth and biasness in the story.	F	e com
Boundary	L	The other groups will present in the next lesson.	Fo	ms

**END OF LECTURER MASTERPIECE'S LESSON (Adapted from Galegane, G. (2015). A study of student-lecturer interaction in communication and study skills classes at the University of Botswana).**

In this lesson, the students were asked to choose a newspaper article and thereafter analyse it. After the analysis, one student represented the other group members and shared their results with the rest of the class. It is interesting to point out that the lesson indicated one of the advantages of group work. Reisigi (2017) refers to the foregoing advantage as "application-oriented" outcome. This is because it shows that when the students read, they are also capable of analysing the newspaper articles. It can be claimed that this is because when the students work in their groups, they exchange a number of opinions. These opinions are from both the positive and negative perspectives. The above point is supported by the literature on group work as it is stated that working in groups to construct knowledge improves student participation (Ahn, & Class, 2011). It can be claimed that when the students work in groups during the CSS lessons, the groups help them to be critical thinkers. This is because, as reflected in teaching exchange 4, they analysed the story they read from the newspaper and interpreted information from two sides. The two sides are that they considered both the negative outcome of the story (Keletso trying to be manipulative) and the positive one (family members being unfair to Keletso).

Further to the two transcripts above, there is transcript 3 which was taught by lecturer Glorious in the Faculty of Education and the lesson was on Writing.

**Lesson transcript Three**  
**Lecturer Glorious**  
**Faculty of Education**  
**Topic: Writing**

Exchanges	Participant	Classroom talk	Moves	Acts
Boundary	L	I asked you last time to go and research on some topics regarding 'Writing'. The funny thing is that I am talking and the people are also talking.	Fo	ms
Teaching 1	L	So, we will have the opportunity for people to share with us what they researched on. So, I do not think we should have this in any particular order; any people, any group should start; I don't have to call people by name. Let us not waste time please.	I	i el
Boundary	L	Excuse me, I think we have run out of time, so you will continue next time because it is already time up. Please write your comments and questions so that you draw them in the next lesson.	Fo	ms

**END OF LECTURER GLORIOUS'S LESSON (FACULTY OF EDUCATION) (Adapted from Galegane, G. (2015). A study of student-lecturer interaction in communication and study skills classes at the University of Botswana).**

There was one group representative sharing with the class one of the types of academic writing. Each group representative addressed a different topic such as, Narrative, Argumentative and Descriptive. But for this research paper, the interaction was on Expository writing. The results from this particular class illustrate that the students' presentations were very elaborate. This is because the students' classroom interaction for each group presenter ranged between three and ten sentences (refer to teaching exchange 1). These lengthy presentations can be a symbol of the collective efforts that the students orally portrayed during the group discussions. Some scholars (e.g. Blatchford., et al, 2003) argue that in effective group work, the relevant skills have to be developed. It can thus be claimed that when the students work in their respective groups, they develop skills such as confidence, initiating and responding to the classroom talk.

As indicated earlier in this research paper, the last lesson was taught by the same lecturer at lesson 3. Lecturer Glorious taught the lesson on Presentation Skills at the faculty of Health Sciences as indicated below.

**Lesson transcript Four**  
**Lecturer Glorious**  
**Faculty of Health Sciences**  
**Topic: Presentation Skills**

Exchanges	Participant	Classroom talk	Moves	Acts
Boundary	L	<b>We are now going to listen to group 2 as they take us through their group presentation</b>	Fo	ms
1	S	<b>GROUP 2:</b> <b>Presenter 1:</b> We will be presenting traditional uses of 'Mokgwapha' which is (Aloe Vera) and how it contributes to modern medicine. Aloe Vera is a plant common in hot semi-arid temperatures. It looks like a hot plant and a cactus. Aloe Vera is jacket looking and is the medicinal plant that has stood the test of time. It is very much used in the medical field. It has been used all over the world in those hot-semi arid temperatures, like I said. If some of you read the Bible, Jesus was crucified in the mixtures of aloes and they call them aloes of good will; they talking of Aloe Vera. Now, Aloe Vera heals skin wounds, burns, scalp, burns, rashes, sores and also for allergic reactions and dry skin.	R	rep
Boundary	L	Well done presenter and let us applaud him. Thank you.	Fo	ms

**END OF LECTURER GLORIOUS'S LESSON (FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES) (Adapted from Galegane, G. (2015). A study of student-lecturer interaction in communication and study skills classes at the University of Botswana).**

It can be noted that from the foregoing lesson transcript, the whole lesson transaction captured information on the same topic (Aloe Vera). Each of the eight student presenters had a subtopic to present on regarding Aloe Vera. The results from this lesson indicate that the students, in their presentation, strived to inform and persuade the audience about the importance of Aloe Vera. It is worth mentioning that during the said presentations, the students described the particular topics. This point of view is supported by scholars of group work and classroom interaction when they pointed out that during group work, the students engage in a prolonged discussion (Miller & Brownell, 1975). This demonstrates that group work helps the students to talk more, for example, there are four sentences (eg., teaching exchange 8) to 9 sentences (e.g., teaching exchange 2). Another interesting point relates to the Vygotsky's theory where he also asserts that group work results in prolonged classroom talk. It can be argued that, when the students are requested to work in groups, best classroom talk results are achieved. From a theoretical position, the findings support studies (e.g., Vygotsky, 1978, Wertsch, 1985) that emphasises the importance of socially shared activities such as group work. In a group, the students talk amongst themselves before sharing the information with the whole class.

## VII. DISCUSSION

This research paper focused on whether or not students display quality classroom interaction when working in groups. The following research question drove this particular research paper: what is the observed pattern of classroom

interaction during the use of group work? This was done in order to share with educators the effectiveness of group work at the University of Botswana CSS classrooms.

In most instances where students were asked by their lecturers to work in their smaller groups, classroom interaction was of high quality. This is because the students were able to come up with detailed classroom talk during the lesson presentations (refer to lecturer Star; teaching exchange 1, lecturer Glorious-Health Science; teaching exchange 5, lecturer Glorious-Education; teaching exchange 6, lecturer Masterpiece; teaching exchange 4). From the SCT's theoretical point of view, if there is mediation, co-construction of knowledge and scaffolding during group work activity in the classroom, there will be good co-construction of knowledge which results in quality classroom interaction. For mediation, the CSS lecturers will help the students to carry out the tasks effectively. This can be done by giving the students the clues on how to go about the task. Secondly, scaffolding provides quality classroom interaction because the CSS students will be guided by their lecturers to ensure that they work on the tasks as per the intended outcome. Further to the guidance, the lecturer sees to it that language is used very well. It can be inferred that as the students are being guided to use the appropriate language, they also think critically. Finally, co-construction of knowledge also plays a big role in quality classroom interaction. This is shown by educational parties working together; the lecturers and the students work together by sharing ideas. On the other hand, co-construction of knowledge in the classroom can be indicated by the students working together by discussing the various ideas that lead to classroom talk.

Another notable feature is that in all the four lesson transcripts, the lecturers used the same group teaching method. This was evidenced by students discussing the topic in their small groups for about ten minutes. This was immediately followed by the individual students presenting their findings. According to Poehner (2009) this type of group assessment is also referred to as "group-as-context" perspective. It can be deduced that the aforementioned perspective is where the students work with one another to share the tasks assigned by the lecturer. The above author further reveals that in this perspective, every effort is made to explain the individual student's performance in order to infer his/her abilities as they are observed in a group setting. In Poehner's exploratory analysis of group work and classroom interaction, he was able to show a similar case that was reflected in the CSS classes at the University of Botswana. The CSS group work context in all the studied classrooms is similar to Poehner's observation. This is because individual students made oral presentations in an endeavour to show their abilities regarding classroom interaction.

Another point worth mentioning, that relates to the group teaching method, is three of the Blatchford et al (2003) perspectives. Out of the four perspectives discussed under the literature review in this paper (refer to section 2), it can be claimed that three of the perspectives are used in CSS classes of the University of Botswana. The relevant group work perspectives are (a) The teacher's role: Preparing adults for working with groups. This is where the adult learners will be given the instruction of what to do in the groups and the lecturer(s) will go around the groups to check if they are on track. The second and final dimension is about the (b) Tasks: Preparing the lessons and group work activities. This is a pedagogical situation where the teacher prepares the lesson to be taught and in the process, includes working in groups as part of the instructional approach. As the lesson progresses, when it is time for group work, the students will be asked to work in their groups.

Even though the four CSS classes seem to produce the same results as revealed in the three paragraphs above, there are some conflicting ideas from some authors. Wilson (2017) state that, "Such codified research knowledge is not easily translated into practical knowledge because each classroom context is different" (p.2). This suggests that after coding data from the classroom observations, there is that likelihood that the results may differ. This is based on the fact that the observed classrooms differ in terms of the students taught and the lecturers. It can thus be implied that how the students respond to classroom interaction depends on some factors such as previous schooling, language, and context of the study.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

This research paper aimed to find out whether or not students display quality classroom interaction when working in groups. One of the main findings is that, in the observed CSS classes, classroom interaction was elaborate during the use of group work. Two reasons are brought to the fore regarding the quality interaction. One of the reasons is that the students are guided by the lecturers on how to effectively go about the task. The participating lecturers encouraged their students to talk more on the topics provided. As a result this ended up in very detailed responses from the students as they were presenting their work to the students in their individual classes. This was also supported by Poehner (2009) when stating that, "Correctly organised group work does not reject, but necessarily stipulates the leading role of the teacher" (p. 476). Thus, the more organised the group work, the more quality classroom interaction would be. Another reason is that the students critically think of the points under discussion. It can be claimed that during group work, the students become more confident hence the elaborate classroom talk.

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# S'ncamtho Lexico-semantics and the *Isichazamazwi sesiNdebele (ISN)*: Implications for Lexicography and Standardisation

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**Abstract**—S'ncamtho is an urban youth variety which uses Zimbabwean Ndebele as its matrix language. The youth language has had influences on the Ndebele language over time. This article argues that Ndebele benefits from S'ncamtho, its urban youth variety in terms of vocabulary although efforts at linguistic purism often moderate this contribution. The article avers that S'ncamtho terminology creates synonyms and polysemy in some cases whereby S'ncamtho lexis become as popular as the Ndebele counterpart and in some cases the S'ncamtho lexemes are more popular. The article goes on to evaluate the treatment of popular S'ncamtho terminology in the only Ndebele monolingual dictionary *Isichazamazwi seSiNdebele (ISN)* and gives recommendations on standardising some S'ncamtho terminology in Ndebele. The article is motivated in part by the debate that arose after the S'ncamtho term for prostitute *umahotsha* was included in a grade seven (primary school) examination. However, looking closely at S'ncamtho and Ndebele it is not linguistically and socially possible for S'ncamtho and Ndebele to share space and speakers and remain independent of each other's influences on the other.

**Index Terms**—lexicography, Ndebele, tsotsitaal, S'ncamtho, slang, pragmatism

## I. INTRODUCTION

S'ncamtho is a Ndebele based urban youth language, the term S'ncamtho is popularised by Ndlovu (2012) after he realised that the Nguni based slang lingonym, iScamtho in South Africa is usually pronounced with an audible alveolar nasal sound [-n-] in Zimbabwean Ndebele. Hadebe (2002) has identified lexical variation as following the speaker's geographical, social, ethnic, and gender profiles, but indicates that in *ISN* they were interested more in the variation according to geography. The question here is; what about other speaker profiles such as social variation? Hadebe (2004) notes that Ndebele dictionary editors used their assumptions not user needs in their compilation. African languages were affected by colonial language policies and they diminished in their creative capacity. Alexander (1999) confirms the loss of creativity in African languages due to colonial language dominance. However, youth, especially urban male youth have been creative and have produced African urban varieties. Aitchison (2006) argues that: 'a leap in vocabulary size around the age of 14 is associated with the acquisition of standard rules for word formation' (p. 20). When the youth master the rules of word formation they creatively work through the base language to create their social varieties that impact on the base language over time.

When the youths create their variety, all aspects of language are stylistically affected to create the "slangs", Ndlovu (2010:86) points out that metaphors are created in the youth varieties and calls such metaphors the lunatic fringe idiomatic expressions. Youth languages ride on the grammar of the base languages, they have no separate grammar of their own, and it has been difficult for linguists to call them slang or languages, Mesthrie and Hurst (2013) propose the term stylect for the phenomenon as their study of Xhosa based tsotsitaals reveal that the grammar of the base language does not change. Momanyi (2009) makes a similar observation on Sheng the Kanyan youth variety: 'Sheng is based primarily on Kiswahili structure' (p. 131). However, due to common elements in urban youth languages, Mesthrie (2008) suggests the term tsotsitaals in small letters as a collective term and S'ncamtho fits into this broad term.

People have had negative attitudes towards urban youth varieties. Calling these varieties tsotsitaals and associate them with criminals and justifies their banishment and detest, yet they have had a lot of influence on society. Others have classified them as anti-languages while others view them as metaphor codes that have a high lexical turn-over, and as such cannot be taken seriously. Ugot (2013) argues that slang is ephemeral like fashion and music trends. Ncube (2005) also notes that some loan words actively used in youth varieties do not last in the lexicon of the varieties. The assumption here is that no style is permanent, and such an assumption cannot be true suffice to note that style in linguistic theory is the same as register. While it is true that most slang vocabulary is ephemeral there are some terms that are established and are spread to the matrix language, and these are the terms that warrant recognition in lexicographic work so that they are standardised and fill in the gaps created by the general lack of creativity in African languages.

The influence of youth varieties on matrix languages and society in general needs serious attention from researchers. De Klerk (1995) argues that whatever the attitudes towards slang, it deserves serious attention from linguists. While,

Bembe (2006) avers that slang influence cannot be ignored by linguistic and sociological inquiry. The youth who speak these varieties are key players in society today, and they in a way control popular culture and this means these tsotsitaals spread even faster and influence people more through, music, internet, media, and social media. Tsotsitaals across Africa and the Americas are known to be actively used in popular culture that involves popular music such as Rap in America (Dixon et al, 2009), Kwaito in South Africa and Zimbabwe (Mfusi, 1992), Bongo Flava in Tanzania (Englert, 2007, Suriano, 2007), American Jazz (Dalzell, 2012), and Zim-dancehall in Zimbabwe (Mpofu and Tembo, 2015). Some people dismiss S'ncamtho inclusion in Ndebele lexicography and standardisation because it corrupts the Ndebele language. However, Sebba (1997) scoffs at the idea of a pure language and he argues that languages cannot and should not be "pure". The influence of S'ncamtho has been felt in Ndebele and the ISN has a number of S'ncamtho words, however, this article avers that the S'ncamtho in ISN is not well representative of the pragmatic use of S'ncamtho in Ndebele today.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The research is a descriptive survey which is aided by quantitative data and it uses both primary and secondary data. It employs Nippold and Taylor's (2002) methodology which they apply for testing idiom familiarity and usage. In their methodology participants perform three tests to measure metaphor knowledge which are: Familiarity Judgment, Idiom Comprehension and Transparency Judgment. S'ncamtho vocabulary was collected from Bulawayo male youth through interviews and participant observations, the data is derived from an on-going research project under the University of Cape Town on African urban and youth varieties. S'ncamtho vocabulary was then identified in the ISN, there after the words were tested for familiarity and pragmatism on samples of Ndebele speakers. Participants for familiarity and pragmatic testing were divided into eight groups along the variables of; youth/adult, male/female, and rural/urban, each group had a total of five respondents. The groups are identified in the paper as; A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2, D1, and D2, these are explained in table 1 below:

TABLE 1:  
PARTICIPANTS GROUPS.

Group	Participants
A1	5 urban male youth, age range- 14-20 years, location-Nketa Bulawayo
A2	5 rural male youth, age range-14-21 years, location- Silobela rural area
B1	5 urban female youth, age range-14-19 years, location-Pumula Bulawayo
B2	5 rural female youth, age range-14-20 years, location- Silobela rural area
C1	5 urban male adults, age range-40-65 years,- Great Zimbabwe University Masvingo
C2	5 rural male adults, age range-35-72 years, location- Silobela rural area
D1	5 urban female adults, age range- 40-75 years, location- Entumbane Bulawayo
D2	5 rural female adults, age range- 42-63 years, location- Lower Gwelo rural area

A total of 14 S'ncamtho terms found in the ISN were tested on the samples, and a further 20 that are not included in the *ISN*, totalling 34 S'ncamtho words tested on the population samples.

## III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research is framed around the principle of pragmatism in selecting headwords. The reasoning is that more S'ncamtho vocabulary is used in Ndebele because the urban youth who are the speakers of S'ncamtho have risen in influence. A Social Psychology theory, The Social Impact Theory is employed to frame the spread of S'ncamtho lexis. According to Aronson et al (2007), Social Impact Theory posits that social influence of a human aggregate depends on the aggregate's importance, it's immediacy, and it's size. This view is supported by Argo et al (2005) who note that people are impacted by the presence or actions of an individual or group. They further note that the more the number of group members that greter the influence on outsiders and reduction in distance and importance of the members also make their group attract more members. The number of S'ncamtho speakers is increasing and their style is used in popular culture making it important and all these factors increase S'ncamtho influence on Ndebele language and culture.

## IV. TREATMENT OF S'NCAMTHO LEXIS IN THE *ISN*

The influence of S'ncamtho or isiTsotsi as others have called it over the years on Ndebele has been viewed with suspicion as is the case with other slang forms the world-over. However, the growing influence cannot be resisted for ever and as a result editors of the *ISN* found it prudent to include some of the S'ncamtho terms in the dictionary. Their bias towards geographical variation could explain the small number of social variation inclined vocabulary including S'ncamtho vocabulary. Modern lexicographic work in Ndebele is a fairly recent exercise and more still has to be done to create a more pragmatic dictionary for the language. Hadebe (2004) notes that: 'research on lexicography in the Ndebele language is still in its early stages' (p. 90). There are many developments that have changed Ndebele vocabulary such as war and Christianity and S'ncamtho has had its fair share of change.

Hadebe (2002) and Khumalo (2004) justify the inclusion in the *ISN* of vocabulary that came with the war period in Zimbabwe such as umthengisi (sell out), umjibha (war collaborator), ukhijane (young boy), ogwa (guerrillas). The war

is not a permanent feature in Ndebele, but it left a mark, yet, S'ncamtho is permanently part of Ndebele and should indeed contribute more vocabulary to the language. Khumalo (2004) also alludes to the fact that Christianity also influenced vocabulary change in Ndebele and continues to do so through semantic changes and shifts on words such as *ukukhuleka* which originally meant a salutation when getting into someone's home, but Christianity brought the prayer meaning to the word and the ISN acknowledges the prayer meaning to the word. S'ncamtho like Christianity and the war has introduced new vocabulary and in some instances created synonyms and some of these are used across sex and age within Ndebele aggregates and they warrant inclusion in the Ndebele dictionary. Hadebe (2002) notes that in compiling the ISN they were guided by the principle that in cases of synonymy between an indigenous word and a loan word the indigenous one carries the meaning and the loan is cross-referenced and this can be done for popular S'ncamtho words that are widely used in Ndebele.

The ISN can be credited on pragmatic basis for including some S'ncamtho terms, but they do not account and represent all the popular S'ncamtho words used in Ndebele today. It is important to note that in the ISN some words are marked or identified as originating from S'ncamtho while, others are not a sign that they are so popular it is difficult to identify them as S'ncamtho. Table 2 below gives 14 words used in S'ncamtho that are included in the ISN, and indicates whether they are marked as S'ncamtho. The table also gives the ISN meaning of the terms and juxtaposes it with the S'ncamtho meaning of the same terms.

TABLE 2:  
S'NCAMTHO WORDS IN THE ISN

S'ncamtho term in ISN	Marked as S'ncamtho	ISN definition	S'ncamtho meaning
<i>nikisi</i>	No	Nothing	Nothing
<i>imenya</i>	Yes	N-girlfriend	N-girlfriend
<i>itshomi</i>	Yes	N-friend	N-friend
<i>idladla</i>	No	N-small hut	N-house
<i>itshamali</i>	No	N-mistress	N-mistress
<i>isipansula</i>	No	N-dance	N-dance/culture
<i>isikhokho</i>	No	N-burnt food lining	N-expert
<i>impintshi</i>	No	N-friend	N-friend
<i>ingamula</i>	No	N-gentleman	N-gentleman
<i>inyuku</i>	No	N-new pastor	N-money
<i>zwakala</i>	No	VB-to be heard/felt	VB-come
<i>sampula</i>	No	VB-advertise	VB-sample
<i>gawula</i>	No	VB-chop	VB-eat
<i>ikopo</i>	No	N-head	N-head

A total of 14 S'ncamtho lexis are identified in the ISN, but only two of the 14 *imenya* and *itshomi*, are marked as originating from the youth variety. Some of the terms appear to have been adapted totally to the language such that the editors did not see the need to mark them as S'ncamtho or they did not recognise the S'ncamtho origin. While, youth varieties are popular for re-lexicalising base language lexemes to create polysemy there appears to be new S'ncamtho words in the ISN that are not re-lexicalised. S'ncamtho borrows from other languages and youth cultures to create new terms that are not there in the base language. In the new words, the meaning ascribed to them in the ISN and their S'ncamtho meaning correspond and this is in the case of words such as; *imenya*, *itshomi*, *ingamula*, *nikisi*, *itshamali*, *impintshi*, and *ikopo*. The new words that have corresponding meanings make up 50% of the sampled S'ncamtho terms in the ISN, a figure that vindicates the S'ncamtho contribution to Ndebele vocabulary outside re-lexicalisation. The ISN did a great job by including these terms to represent youth social profiles and their spread into Ndebele vocabulary. However, this article avers that there are some that are popular or even more popular than those included that the ISN editors left out and there is a case to have them included. Most of the new terms from S'ncamtho can carry meanings, and in cases where they are synonyms they can be cross-referenced to represent the pragmatic use of Ndebele today.

The other seven words are a result of re-lexicalising Ndebele words or extending meaning to derive meaning that differs from that given in the ISN. The way people speak the language determines what they want in a dictionary and capturing the polysemy in words affected by S'ncamtho meaning represents what users want and do. Benjoint (2000) argues that: 'lexicographers in many countries have recently felt the need to go beyond empirical observations on the use of the general-purpose dictionary, seeking to find out what the users really do, as opposed to what they are believed to do, in order to make sure that the dictionary really corresponds to the needs of the public' (140). The S'ncamtho meanings in the 50% of re-lexicalised words in table 1 are operational in spoken Ndebele today.

While revivalism was one of the guiding principles in the ISN, it is saddening that some old and obsolete meanings were chosen ahead of the pragmatic S'ncamtho ones. The editors could have given the old Ndebele meanings and given the current ones as second meanings, but they chose to ignore the S'ncamtho meanings, yet they are the popular ones today. The urban style has infiltrated Ndebele and their meanings are popular. Brookes (2005) has argued that urban youth languages can be fully understood as markers of urbanity and street style. The rural tradition is fast fading and S'ncamtho takes these archaic words and gives them new meaning and it is the new meaning that is pragmatic not the excavation of old meaning. The words; *idladla*, *isikhokho*, *inyuku*, and *gawula* were popularly recognised in their S'ncamtho meaning by participants across all the variables. While *idladla* is a small hut in old Ndebele, S'ncamtho

extended the meaning to any house, and this meaning was common among respondents only one rural male adult, three rural female adults referred to the old Ndebele meaning. All the respondents recognised inyuku as money and only after the researcher told them of the old Ndebele meaning did the adult samples claim to know the meaning too. Zwakala is not old Ndebele or a loan word, but S'ncamtho speakers re-lexicalised to word to mean “come here” and this meaning appears to be operational within the youth both urban and rural, and has not made much impact in Ndebele to warrant inclusion in the dictionary.

#### V. *ISN* PRAGMATISM IN THE SELECTION OF S'NCAMTHO VOCABULARY

Editors of the *ISN* tried to reflect of the present state on the language by including many loan words and some S'ncamtho ones, but as far as S'ncamtho is concerned the included words are a far cry from what obtains in Ndebele today. Hadebe (2002) notes that vocabulary selection in *ISN* was guided by the principles of pragmatism, revivalism, and historical concerns, and on pragmatism he notes that this was not measured on the population but rather it was the decision of the editors on what they thought was commonly understood currently. Ncube (2005) also notes that while it was argued that the *ISN* is a reflection of how the Ndebele speak the language at present critics of the *ISN* view it as a consolidation of Ndebele corruption by the African Languages Research Institute (ALRI). This article argues that no language can resist change, especially that which comes from within such as S'ncamtho. There are some S'ncamtho words and meanings that are popular from the research, but they are not considered in the *ISN*.

S'ncamtho is very common among Ndebele speakers much that a pragmatic approach to vocabulary selection in a dictionary should at least account for it. Swanepoel (1978) argues that the Tsotsi language in our towns is so common that many people recognise terms from the youth gangs in town. Winkler (2007) avers that slang has a tendency of spreading out of in-groups and some slang lose its slang characteristics and is used in the base language. This article argues that S'ncamtho is not slang, but a youth variety, some of the words may have originated from youth slangs, but they are now common to all Ndebele speakers and should be treated as Ndebele vocabulary. The research collected 20 S'ncamtho words that are not in the *ISN* and measured their popularity and usage within; urban youth male and female, rural youth male and female, urban adults male and female, rural adults male and female. The results of the familiarity and use tests on the population samples are given in table 3 below; the key to the table is guided by table 1 in the methodology. In the table; A- is for male youth, B-for female youth, C- for adult male, and D- for adult female, all groups marked as 1 are urban and those marked as 2 are rural.

TABLE 3:  
FAMILIARITY AND USAGE OF S'NCAMTHO WORDS THAT ARE NOT IN THE *ISN*

S'ncamtho	Gloss	A1		A2		B1		B2		C1		C2		D1		D2	
		F	U	F	U	F	U	F	U	F	U	F	U	F	U	F	U
<i>ohata</i>	police	5	5	5	4	5	3	5	3	5	4	2	1	4	2	2	1
<i>umahotsha</i>	prostitute	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	4	5	3	5	3	5	3	5	2
<i>isipano</i>	work	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	2
<i>ideni</i>	house	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	3	4	2	4	0
<i>ukuyilahla</i>	spoil/danger	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
<i>shapu</i>	sharp/ok	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
<i>ivari</i>	truth	5	5	5	4	5	3	5	4	5	4	4	2	4	1	3	0
<i>ivathi</i>	water	5	5	5	5	5	2	5	3	5	3	5	4	5	1	3	2
<i>vaya</i>	go	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	2	3	1
<i>izozo</i>	food	5	5	5	5	5	2	3	2	5	3	3	1	3	0	1	0
<i>itayima</i>	father	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	4	2	5	1	3	0
<i>isigela</i>	school	5	5	4	4	5	4	4	3	4	3	2	0	4	0	1	0
<i>natshi</i>	available	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	1	4	1
<i>ijida</i>	friend	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	2	5	4	5	3	5	2	3	1
<i>ukukhupha</i>	good	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	2	5	2	5	2
<i>itsheri</i>	girlfriend	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	2
<i>idiski</i>	soccer	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	2	5	4	3	2	4	1	1	0
<i>umasalu</i>	mother	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	2
<i>uthini</i>	hallo	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
<i>hafa</i>	pay	5	3	1	1	3	1	1	0	3	1	1	0	2	0	0	0

The social impact theory states that as a group's importance and numbers grow they become a force to reckon in society and the familiarity and use of S'ncamtho words in Ndebele is one such influence. Of the 20 words in table 3 above 16 are new words in Ndebele which is a significant contribution to a language that is lacking in lexical creativity. The usual crime given to youth languages is that they re-lexicalise and create metaphors out of base language lexemes, but S'ncamtho seems to be bringing in more new words than new meanings. There are certain areas of vocabulary whereby S'ncamtho is more prominent, Hurst and Buthelezi (2014) note that: ‘the ten most popular topics in the Durban data were: girls and sex; drinking; smoking; other people; religion; famous people; music; race; crime and police; money; fighting and violence’ (193). Some of the words in table 3 above are in the areas identified by Hurst and Buthelezi (2014).

All the 40 respondents in the different categories claimed to be familiar, and to use; ukuyilahla, shapu, and uthini, the

three words scored 100% in both familiarity and usage. The words pass the pragmatic test and should be included in Ndebele dictionaries such as the ISN. A further five words score 100% familiarity in the 40 respondents and these are; umahotsha, isipano, ziyakhupha, itsheri, and umasalu, their usage also averages above 60%. However, usage is relative as some people may not be honest because use of S'ncamtho words carries a stigma, especially among adults. All, but three words in table 3 have a high popularity and usage rating and there is reason to include the words and their senses in the ISN. The majority of the words in table 3 are more popular than those in table 2 which were included in the ISN. The low ranking words are hafa, izozo, and isigela, these are still at ephemeral stage and can be left out for now. Hadebe (2002) avers that: 'any dictionary compiler is caught in this dilemma where words are coming into the language while others are falling out. The big question on the dictionary maker is the timing when a new word should be included in the dictionary' (124). The time could be ripe for the other 17 words as they are popular and used in both urban and rural Ndebele vernaculars.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Lexicographic work in Ndebele has been largely small bilingual dictionaries that were written without proper lexicography training. It was until the ALRI trained lexicographers that culminated in the production of the ISN which is the first general Ndebele dictionary. As the first general dictionary the ISN did a lot of ground breaking work and tried to reflect the current state of the Ndebele language. However, as an initial venture there are some aspects of the language that were left out. S'ncamtho as a Ndebele based youth variety has contributed a lot of words that are used in Ndebele today, and population samples show that most of these words are used by the youth, adults, males, females, rural, and urban Ndebele speakers. This research concludes that the number of S'ncamtho words in the ISN is not representative of the pragmatic use of S'ncamtho words within Ndebele aggregates and there is need to add more if the dictionary is to reflect usage at present. Controversies around S'ncamtho words arise because the dictionary excludes some of them, yet the population uses them creating a gap between standard Ndebele and the language as it is spoken today. Urban youths who are credited with originating and maintaining S'ncamtho are now an important social group in Zimbabwe through media, social media, education, music, and style making them a source of influence across the Ndebele language in the process spreading their variety. S'ncamtho may not be ignored in Ndebele lexicography.

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# The Use of Effective Strategies to Improve Saudi EFL Dyslexic Learners' Writing Skills

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**Abstract**—The use of techniques and strategies is instrumental in teaching different language skills to physically and mentally healthy learners; however, the importance of devising special techniques and strategies to teach dyslexic learners cannot be denied in English as Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Dyslexic learners have difficulties particularly in the recognition of words and putting them into writing. Based on the review of previous works and contexts, the present study aims at implementing the two strategies, i.e., multisensory and chunking, to improve Saudi EFL dyslexic learners' writing skills. The work utilized a qualitative method to collect the data from the participants, i.e., four EFL teachers. Structured interviews were conducted with four EFL teachers from the 'Alkhamisah Ashrah' primary school to collect the data and apply the strategies, i.e., multisensory and chunking, to dyslexic learners and see their impacts on dyslexic learners' writing skill. The study was conducted to develop awareness among parents and society at large about the learning difficulties and needs of dyslexic learners. In addition to this, the study aims to draw the attention of the Ministry of Education, educational institutions, researchers, and pedagogues to measure the academic needs of Saudi EFL dyslexic learners by devising different strategies. Furthermore, the study provides recommendations for the establishment of special schools, infrastructural facilities, well trained teachers, a rubric of strategies, special curriculum, and syllabus to meet the academic needs and enhance comprehension and writing abilities of Saudi EFL dyslexic learners.

**Index Terms**—EFL, learning English, Saudi Arabia, strategies, dyslexic learners, writing skill

## I. INTRODUCTION

In everyday life, we come across many learners with disabilities who cannot utilize the opportunities of life like their healthy counterparts. Needless to say, every child is a unique human being; however, some suffer from certain physical or mental disabilities that take them away from living a normal life. Dyslexic learners fall into the category of such learners. In the past, they were perceived as lazy learners who lagged behind in the classroom despite having outstanding abilities in various other fields (Team, 2018). This attitude took those learners away from their academic careers and led to the deterioration of their interest and self-esteem. Later on, the poor performance of such learners caught the attention of educational institutions, pedagogues, and researchers who probed into the matter and highlighted their problems and needs.

Dyslexia is a type of specific learning difficulty identifiable as a developmental difficulty of language learning and cognition. It is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling. Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory, and processing speed. It is significant that a considerable number of famous people, such as Leonardo da Vinci, Albert Einstein, Agatha Christie, Walt Disney, Pablo Picasso, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and John Lennon, had broken their speech. Dyslexics included politicians such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Winston Churchill, and John Kennedy. However, the condition did not prevent these people from becoming famous and influential personalities.

Learners with dyslexic disabilities are not always easy to diagnose. Sometimes it seems difficult to parent a child who is lazy. However, with the right approach, a child with dyslexia can be turned into a pure genius. After all, these learners have highly developed creative abilities and intuition. Therefore, an in-depth study is needed to help in providing practical strategies for developing skills for reading and writing to ensure an active and successful life for learners with dyslexia. This study will investigate the use of effective strategies to improve dyslexic learners' writing skills.

Objectives:

**The objectives of the study are to:**

- a. Identify effective functions of multisensory and chunking strategies to help promote Saudi EFL dyslexic learners' learning proficiency;
- b. Enhance Saudi EFL dyslexic learners' writing ability;
- c. Promote awareness among teachers of the effectiveness of multisensory and chunking strategies for dyslexic learners.

Research questions

It is noted that in any area of inquiry, research questions play a vital role in identifying the problem and determining the focus of the researcher on its possible solution. The research questions provide the backbone of any study and help

to distinguish innovative work by new researchers from previous attempts carried out in the same area. More precisely, research questions determine the delimitations of any study and lead the researcher to bridge the gap by introducing novel dimensions. The research questions envisaged for the present study were:

1. What are the different writing skill difficulties faced by Saudi EFL dyslexic learners and what strategies do we need to use to improve their writing skills?
2. What are the impacts of multisensory and chunking strategies on the writing skills, and particularly on the vocabulary learning, of Saudi EFL dyslexic learners?

#### **Statement of the problem**

Research on dyslexic learners has long been neglected in the domain of teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language in Saudi Arabia as all efforts have been exerted towards developing the English proficiency of normal learners. The present study focuses on the implementation of two strategies, namely multisensory and chunking, to help develop Saudi EFL (English as Foreign Language) dyslexic learners' writing skills. It has been noticed that numerous researchers have discovered that foreign/second language teachers who employed numerous strategies to teach different skills to dyslexic learners were not only able to improve their skills but also achieved outstanding academic results.

In this section, a quick glance at the related studies conducted to improve the writing skills of dyslexic learners has provided a sketch of the relevant works of different researchers on dyslexic learners as, before undertaking an in-depth study of the topic in hand, it is important to know what has already been explored and what still needs to be.

1. Studies in the field of improving the language skills of dyslexic learners have been carried out for approximately six decades.
2. So far, in Saudi Arabia insufficient studies have been conducted in this field whilst in other countries this topic is attributed greater importance and explored at a higher level. Among the relevant studies, the work of Cimermanova (2015), entitled '*Teaching English as a foreign language to dyslexic learners*', is very significant. The study focuses on the use of different multisensory strategies to improve dyslexic learners' writing skills through clay, wiki sticks, and writing on colored sand.
3. Similarly, Hammond and Hercules (2016) used the chunking strategy in their paper, entitled '*Understanding dyslexia: An introduction for dyslexic learners in higher education*', to improve the vocabulary of dyslexic learners. Their study aimed to use the chunking strategy that subdivides the letters of vocabulary items in different colors, enabling dyslexic learners to easily identify different colors and memorize spellings of different words.

The focus of previous inquiries in the background to these studies was on the improvement of dyslexic learners' vocabulary and writing skills and how the learners can efficiently write about any given idea. However, to date in Saudi Arabia no research has been conducted in this area so this study is focusing on the implementation and impacts of these strategies on EFL Saudi dyslexic learners' writing skills. The need of the hour is a thorough implementation of these strategies to enhance EFL Saudi dyslexic learners' motivation and improve their writing skills.

#### **Rationale of the study**

The research in hand is an attempt to encourage new researchers to apply different strategies to improve Saudi EFL dyslexic learners' writing skills. The present study focuses on the implementation of multisensory and chunking strategies on Saudi EFL dyslexic learners. The multisensory strategy utilizes different tools to stimulate the senses and make the learners perform robustly whilst the chunking strategy subdivides the vocabulary items into different colors and parts and enhances dyslexic learners' ability to identify those particular expressions. So far, no special primary and secondary schools have been working in the Kingdom to educate Saudi EFL dyslexic learners and meet their academic needs. For this reason, the study proposes a set of recommendations for the Ministry of Education, policy makers, academic institutions, and pedagogues to bring reforms in this domain.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section aims at suggesting strategies to improve Saudi dyslexic learners' writing skills. This part of the research contextualizes my work within a wide range of appropriate contexts to analyze discursive dimensions of the previous works, indicating the 'focus' and 'limitations' of their reading(s) as well as those of my own study. This helps me to bridge the gap and direct my work to speak for itself. In order to see the effectiveness of multisensory and chunking strategies on dyslexic learners, a brief history of their background is indispensable. The next section will be given over to a brief introduction of different researchers who applied different strategies to dyslexic learners to enhance their learning process.

Dyslexia refers to a reading disability that often affects a learner's writing skills negatively. Beringer et al. (2008) that spelling is typically impaired, which in turn interferes with the development of written composition. In some cases, the learner may end up writing incomprehensibly. Consequently, the problem may threaten their self-confidence as well as their motivation to attain better academic outcomes. Therefore, it becomes essential for educators to adopt effective instructional strategies to ensure that dyslexic learners can attain desirable learning outcomes in learning activities that involve writing.

Alnahdi (2014) also points out that educators can enhance the writing skills of dyslexic learners through the use of a multisensory strategy. The approach entails teaching learners how to use different senses to enhance their learning processes. In addition to the use of the visual and auditory senses, educators can also focus on engaging the learners in



physical activities that are likely to help them in remembering spelling and writing skills learnt during different learning sessions, for example, games that involve singing songs, clapping, or making movements. In studies conducted among dyslexic learners, researchers used multisensory techniques among half of the participants during spelling lessons while the other half acted as a control group.

Eventually, the learners who underwent spelling lessons involving the multisensory techniques exhibited a higher level of progress than those who engaged in normal lessons. As such, it is clear that the multisensory approach is an effective way of enhancing writing and spelling skills in conjunction with other methods among dyslexic learners.

Teachers can enhance the writing skills of dyslexic learners through the use of the chunking strategy. This method entails breaking down complex texts into smaller pieces (chunks) and then allowing the learners to rewrite them in their own words (McNeill & Kirk, 2014). Consequently, the learners gain the ability to identify the key words during the given sessions and paraphrase text. As a result, they manage to organize and synthesize information. Eventually, dyslexic learners manage to efficiently spell and write texts involving complex language.

According to Gallardo et al. (2013), learning institutions are mandated to adopt varied online and direct teaching resources. Explicit teaching has been mentioned to necessitate constructive language patterns as the instructor provokes active learning. Correspondingly, active learning should be exploited as a teaching strategy through the use of matching and games as well as group discussions. The authors indicate that teachers need to employ repeated learning practices as a means of facilitating the improvement of learners' memory and writing capabilities. The method is suitable for all learners who engage in spelling and writing activities, especially those who have low learning capabilities. It is also essential for educators to consider kinesthetic modes of learning, such as the use of games that are suitable for dyslexic learners, and integrate them into their instructional programs.

Cimermanova (2015) adds that a multisensory strategy that incorporates audiovisual illustrations is particularly important as it assists the learners to locate the target information.

Hammond and Hercules (2016) reveal the techniques that dyslexics employ to limit their challenges in the course of learning. Some of the learners reported to institute cramming and chunking to synthesize details during lectures. The learners utilize cramming to deal with academic matters such as tests. With chunking, the learners fragment the underlying problems into smaller sections in order to comprehend and solve them. Mind mapping is another technique that the learners engaged in, given that it is a multisensory strategy (a teaching technique that embraces audiovisual elements).

Essentially, it consolidates different tactics by combining and overlapping ideas. The learners use equipment as learning tools, for example tape recorders and computers, to write and store information (Hammond & Hercules, 2016). The computers allow dyslexic learners to arrange, compute, and write information clearly and readably.

On the same note, Griva and Anastasiou (2009) outline the use of morphological strategies to teach English to dyslexic scholars. The authors conducted an experimental study among 25 participants utilizing the Morphological Processing Spelling Approach (MPSA) to determine the system's effectiveness. In effect, the researchers noticed that the approach was *apparently* beneficial in improving the spelling proficiency of the respondents across specific morphemes (linguistic units that are evaluated in their ordinary usage). The authors observed that MPSA was *apparently* productive in conjunction with explicit teaching to eradicate spelling mistakes (Griva & Anastasiou, 2009). Likewise, morphological awareness helped the learners to improve their spelling skills.

Based on cognitive theories, meta-cognitive learning facilitates the flow of information across the working memory, such as learners' reading abilities improving over time. The positive impact, in this case, arises because the learners gain opportunities to understand their thinking and base their learning on the same. Camahalan (2007) undertook a study to determine the impacts of meta-cognitive learning on learners with dyslexia. The author selected samples of two groups of learners who had been diagnosed with dyslexia. Both groups of learners were then subjected to meta-cognitive learning programs. The findings indicated that the sessions had significant benefits regarding improvement to the learners' reading and writing skills. The program entailed helping the learners to understand their learning processes. In such cases, the educators formulate strategies that enable the learners to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning achievements within specified durations. Reportedly, the programs also enable learners to learn new concepts and tasks. Other than just gaining knowledge of the academic concept under study, they also manage to gain self-awareness, based on evaluations and achievements. For instance, the outcomes of the evaluation may present the various strengths and weaknesses associated with a given learner. Consequently, the educator finds it easy to help the learner in maintaining the strengths and neutralizing the shortcomings.

Berninger et al. (2008) offer a set of specialized instructional methods that the educators may employ to improve the writing skills of dyslexic learners. The authors conducted their study through the random selection of dyslexic learners who were repeatedly subjected to guided planning, writing, and text reviewing. Eventually, they discovered that the learners reported improved spelling and writing skills. The researchers then realized that the availability of regular guidance from the instructor is an important way of improving the writing skills of dyslexic learners. Moreover, they noted that the learners normally ask frequent questions of their instructors and in this way, it becomes challenging to proceed with their schoolwork if they fail to receive the necessary clarifications. As such, the learners are likely to develop improved writing and knowledge construction abilities as they learn under close guidance from their teachers. However, other researchers indicate that instructors should avoid criticizing the learners' errors as they continue to

guide them in learning sessions. They go on to explain that too much criticism may lower the learners' levels of confidence and morale.

They are required to understand that the learners are usually trying hard to undertake the learning processes completely even if their work shows some errors. Instead, the teachers should focus on determining whether the learners can manage to put their ideas down instead of examining spelling errors at all times.

A study conducted by Ryder et al. (2007) indicated that learners who are engaged in phenomenal awareness and decoding learning sessions managed to outperform those who did not receive such instruction. A follow-up on the same group after two years indicated that they had developed understanding in word recognition. Thus, the development of simple coding skills and effective collaboration among the three parties aids in enhancing the writing skills of dyslexic learners.

Teachers may also need to exploit the advanced technologies available in their institutions to help dyslexic learners in improving their writing skills. Other than just focusing on direct interaction with learners, they may need to use assistive tools to allow for self-evaluation among learners. Alnahdi (2014) describes how educators can employ assistive technologies to assist learners with special needs. For instance, he points to software that contains approximately 39 educational tools capable of enhancing the behavior, learning, and writing abilities of learners. Teachers may examine the computer-based applications and identify the tools that may be useful for dyslexic learners. For instance, tools that support the use of imagery may support the learners in learning how to explain their thoughts through writing accurately. Additionally, the use of visual media may help the learners to make significant connections to the words under study and describe them correctly. Instructors should also adopt other tools to assist the learners, for instance those that monitor grammar and spelling. After ensuring that the learners have gained effective learning capabilities, the teacher may guide them in using the tools to make sure that they can express their thoughts by writing the relevant words correctly.

In some cases, a single instructional strategy may not be sufficient in offsetting improvements among dyslexic learners. For instance, a study conducted by Berninger et al. (2008) among higher-level learners with dyslexia revealed that they performed well when the instructors used diverse instructional techniques to introduce a single concept. The educators assumed that diverse approaches enhance learners' chances of developing their learning capabilities and linking their thoughts with accurate words. Additionally, the availability of adequate support from instructors proved essential in improving the learners' coping skills since the disabilities of dyslexic learners sometimes affect their confidence. The support also helps learners to adapt their learning pace and receive customized assistance. In this case, the use of multi-layered and flexible teaching techniques as well as unending support becomes a suitable mode of enabling learners to attain improved writing skills. Therefore, teachers may have to consider enhancing their teaching strategies when teaching dyslexic learners by exploring more instructional approaches in addition to those that are used to teach various concepts to other learners.

The development of thorough knowledge concerning language structure and effective implementation of instructional activities is yet another aspect that proves vital in shaping the writing skills of dyslexic learners. The teachers also need to focus on the consistent use of certain phrases and words so that learners can find it easy to recall their meaning. As such, they are discouraged from interchanging synonyms when dealing with learners as the latter may encounter difficulties trying to link the words to their respective spellings as well as their meaning. The emphasis on assessment feedback while teaching also facilitates the continuous improvement of learners. Instead of just pointing out their mistakes, it is also essential to offer them learning strategies that are linked to their common errors (Camahalan, 2006). However, the teacher has to be careful not to keep on criticizing the learners' work since they may easily lose confidence in their capabilities.

The regular evaluation of instructional techniques for teaching dyslexic learners would also help in improving learning outcomes, especially when it comes to writing and spelling various words. A study conducted among elementary school teachers in New Zealand indicates that the continuous review of teachers' skills and the strategies used to implement spelling skills had a direct link with achievements among all learners (McNeill & Kirk, 2014). In this case, dyslexic learners were also included in the investigation. As such, the teachers may not manage to improve the spelling and writing skills of their learners if they do not seek to improve their instructional approaches. For instance, they may need to engage in frequent training and development sessions to ensure that they can explore any advanced teaching strategies with the help of more experienced professionals. Moreover, they may engage in team-based research with other teachers to enhance their knowledge of language as well as new instructional approaches.

In Borga's (2007) study, the researcher sought to understand the study situation among dyslexic learners in Akershus University College and employed a multiple-case design for six respondents. Due to the challenges that they endure during learning, the respondents reported employing several techniques to increase their comprehension of concepts. The respondents stated that they prefer reading alternative textbook materials, such as summaries and other learners' essays, to locate the main ideas. The participants also highlighted that lecture materials, especially handouts, were apparently beneficial in understanding the presented information. Participating in discussions also augmented their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter (Borga, 2007). Over time, public speaking helps dyslexics to build their confidence, as opposed to digital presentations. Moreover, during assessments, most learners prefer an integration of verbal and written examinations rather than sitting tests alone.

Following this, Leksinska (2015) suggests distinct techniques that facilitators can integrate into their plan to teach EFL to dyslexic learners. A multisensory strategy incorporates almost all sensory mechanisms to present the associations between graphemes and phonemes. Essentially, it allows the scholars to progress from decoding basic instructions to complex concepts. The technique also employs repetition, whereby the learners undertake continuous revisions and study exercises to grasp the respective information. Secondly, explicit learning encourages the learners to be attentive and to recall the information imparted. Thirdly, the instructors can adopt the dyslexic learning technique, which involves utilizing the learners' study and interpretation routines (Leksinska, 2015). Under this system, the instructor employs individualization to comprehend the actual needs of each learner.

The International Dyslexia Association (2017) recommends three types of accommodation to educate dyslexic learners. With regards to the material, the association highlights that educators ought to underline key points for the learners to discern ideas easily.

Dyslexia affects writing capabilities and skills negatively among learners. The impairment is a disability which interferes with the ability to write. For instance, sometimes the affected learners write words which cannot be understood by normal people. Thus, it is imperative to determine strategies to improve the learning skills of dyslexic learners at school. Essentially, this approach consists of teaching learners the application of various senses to improve their processes of learning in class. There are several multisensory learning techniques that are integrated for the purpose of learning. They consist of auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and tactile approaches to learning elements. The visual technique of multisensory learning for dyslexic learners involves the teacher reading text which contains visual art (Stein, 2017). This includes posters, videos, and painting as well as demonstrating elements of studies for the understanding of the affected learners. For instance, brainstorming sessions about the government may lead to visual maps used to link ideas of monarchy and democracy.

Besides, the auditory techniques involved are reading through the application of audio books as well as text speeches. The initiative requires individuals to develop practice of the understanding of every aspect of text at a very high speed. Examples of such applications are rhymes, lyrics, music, and singing. Furthermore, the tactile technique is a multisensory strategy of improving the learning capability of learners affected by dyslexia. This approach involves touching items while studying or learning, such as using coins, finger paints, and textures as well as letter tiles (Snowling, 2013). This technique is necessary for studies of subjects like mathematics which involve the use of numbers as the primary core aspect. Lastly, the kinesthetic technique (operations that involve participative acts) focuses on learning by doing. Additionally, it may have little similarity with individuals applying tactile learning system. However, the distinction is based on both the use of motion and touch at the same time in learning. Moreover, it can also be used in learning sports and other physical activities. The common teaching method used with dyslexics is air writing, whereby learners say a letter out loud and simultaneously write it in the air.

Another strategy which can be used to improve the learning skills of learners affected by dyslexia is the chunking method (the process of fragmenting a problem into smaller bits). This is an essential comprehensive reading technique which involves breaking down texts into different bundles. Thereafter, the learners are given the opportunity to manage the information by forming meaningful texts on their own. More importantly, when a teacher uses the chunking technique, it is imperative to ensure that learners are provided with a statement of purpose to use in filling in the word in the passage. Such aspects include what they are looking for while reading the context. Therefore, this strategy begins with reading the content word by word without determining the meaning of such words (Kelly & Phillips, 2016). Moreover, chunking helps learners to identify key ideas and develop phrases to synthesize and recognize information. A procedure must be used in this strategy.

The first step is to prepare a paragraph that can be chunked into different phrases and sentences. The second step is review the reading strategies; this is effective to understand specific strategies to decode meaningful texts - for example, circle unfamiliar words, look for their meaning and read aloud many times. The third step is to chunk the text by breaking it down into smaller parts (Kelly & Phillips, 2016). The fourth stage is where learners may begin paraphrasing the meaning of the words. The essence is to let learners rewrite the texts by themselves. Lastly, the teacher should assess and share the paraphrased texts to evaluate the learners' abilities in reading. The application of a morphological strategy is another vital aspect in improving learning skills of learners affected by dyslexia.

Morphological awareness consists of understanding, recognizing, and using parts of words to determine significance in the learning process. These strategies use examples of prefixes, grammatical inflections such as plurality of words, and also root words. Specifically, this strategy is one of the overlooked aspects in building a background for fluent reading, comprehension and spelling (Hulten, 2017).

Teachers are advised to begin applying this strategy as early as either first or second grade to enhance focus in future studies. Additionally, when learners are equipped with strong morphological skills, they have distinct advantages. Notably, such learners may have stable ways of reading and understanding novels and their multisyllabic words to predict the meaning from the text. The use of technological tools may be important in improving the learning skills of dyslexics. These tools vary among the different aspects of learning and consist of pocket spellcheckers. These types of dyslexia tools describe how words can be spelled and, moreover, are phonetical. Their essence is to help facilitate learning by strengthening learners' confidence, both in spelling and writing words correctly. Line readers are also an essential category of technological tools that highlight and magnify some portions of texts for learners (Hartas, 2013).

The application of varied online resources by institutions is another strategy that can improve the learning skills of learners affected by dyslexia. This strategy involves the use of constructive language patterns to initiate active learning. Similarly, it also consists of an educative online game.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Procedure of a study maps out the line of action for a researcher. The research theory, research methods, and overall research design of the study, including population, data gathering tools, sampling, and research procedure, has all been determined in the light of the objectives of the study as well as the main research question, and subsidiary and sub-research questions envisaged for the study.

The study in hand is descriptive and proceeds through: (a) the application of multisensory and chunking strategies on 29 dyslexic learners of Khamisah Ashar school, Taif, Saudi Arabia; (b) structured interviews with four EFL teachers with maximum open-ended questions. (i) The interviews were carried out to analyze the validity, reliability, and impacts of multisensory and chunking strategies; (ii) some of the assumptions made by the interviewees were subjective; and (iii) moreover, the employment of the qualitative method as well as the deductive approach added legitimacy and validity to the present study; (c) description of sampling which is truly representative of the population; (d) data gathering devices, whose administration and collection procedures are also explained appropriately in different sections and sub-sections of this section; and (e) citations, for which the researcher employed the APA style and has provided references at the end of the thesis.

The current study will determine the most effective strategies to improve Saudi EFL dyslexic learners' writing skills. It was indispensable to carry out the study in hand because the results and findings will help the researcher to come up with suggestions for policy makers, researchers, pedagogues, and learners with special needs. The present study provides recommendations that will help dyslexic learners in the development of their writing skills.

#### Research Design

In this section, the researcher has provided the research design, participants, sampling techniques, research instruments, and method of data analysis. The present study will use a descriptive survey designed to incorporate a qualitative research tool, i.e. interviews. A descriptive survey design is appropriate because the work investigated the views of four EFL teachers about dyslexic learners, regarding the use of the best strategy to improve their writing skills in a primary school in Saudi Arabia. The researcher obtained data by investigating individuals on issues about the dyslexic learners' achievement in learning English. The identity of the interviewees was kept secret in order to avoid any future complications and each one has been assigned different codes: Teacher A, Teacher B, and so on.

#### Participants

In the present study, the researcher interviewed four EFL teachers of Khamisah Ashrah School, Taif, Saudi Arabia. The two strategies were applied to 29 dyslexic learners of different ages (8-12) at the same school.

#### Research Instruments

The present study used a qualitative research tool to gather the data from the participants. According to Huang, Liao, Huang, and Chen (2014), an interview is appropriate because it enables the researcher to collect information and opinions from participants for a study. The researcher in the current study administered the interview to female teachers about dyslexic learners' attitudes and achievements in the classroom. The data were collected through interviews with open-ended questions that maintain the validity and reliability of the work in hand.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the researcher presents the results obtained in the field. The scholar used scheduled interviews to gather data from the teachers. The interview schedule was suitable in this study because the scholar collected data regarding the strategies of vocabulary learning that the instructors find most comfortable to use when teaching vocabulary to dyslexic learners of EFL.

According to Kerns et al. (2017), a scheduled interview is suitable in a study where the scholar gathers views and related data from the respondents of the research. In addition, the scheduled interview was appropriate in collecting data about the methods that educators can use to enhance the vocabulary of primary school learners with dyslexia. According to Menatti et al. (2015), a scheduled interview is appropriate when the researcher gathers data concerning the strategies used by the respondents in doing their work.

#### Analysis of Interview Questions

The approach or sequence of analysis of interview questions developed from (i) investigating the impacts of the use of multisensory and chunking strategies on Saudi EFL dyslexic learners; (ii) teachers' subjective or objective opinions about the implementations of multisensory and chunking strategies on Saudi EFL dyslexic learners; and (iii) difficulties in implementation. Moreover, samples of interview questions and teachers' responses are given in Appendices A and B.

The first question of the interview checks for the presence of dyslexic learners in Khamisah Ashrah School: *"do you have EFL dyslexic learners in your classroom with learning disabilities?"* From the results, all four teachers indicated that there are cases among the learners of EFL with learning difficulties such as dyslexia. This implies that dyslexia is a common problem among learners learning EFL between the ages of eight and 12 years. It has also been discovered that

dyslexic learners do not have fully developed perceptual-motor abilities; hence, they are not able to connect what they do and see.

The second question refers to the number of dyslexic learners: *"How many dyslexic learners do you have in your class?"* The first teacher stated that she has eight learners with the problem of dyslexia while the second teacher indicated that she has nine dyslexic learners. In addition, the third teacher pointed out that she has five learners who are struggling with dyslexia and the fourth teacher stated that she has seven dyslexic learners. The teachers' confirmation is an indication that learners of EFL between the ages of eight and 12 have dyslexia. According to Snowling (2013), dyslexia is common among young learners because of their undeveloped motor skills and limited interaction with the environment.

The statistics presented by the four teachers support this argument. It is during this period that parents and teachers should diagnose the disorder because dyslexic learners tend to deviate from the standard growth and progress exhibited by other learners.

The third question investigates the difficulties of dyslexic learners in the classroom: *"explain what difficulties dyslexic learners face in the EFL classroom."* The research established that the learners know the letters and numbers. All the interviewees found that the learners' problem is that they write letters and numbers in the opposite direction and sometimes do not distinguish between some letters such as 'd' and 'b'.

This suggests that the learners might experience difficulty making distinctions between them. The learners might also have visual processing issues and have difficulty in recalling how to form the letters. Stein (2017) in his research on dyslexia found that dyslexic learners portray visual defects, which brings confusion to the sensory organs that help in differentiation. It is for this reason that teachers observed the difficulty of these learners in trying to differentiate between two letters. The coordination between visual sensors and the brain causes confusion, which affects the ability of the learners to note and relate the differences in numbers and letters.

The fourth question probes into the nature of strategies which the teacher uses to reinforce dyslexic learners' writing skills: *"What strategies would you use the most with the dyslexic learners?"* Teachers A, B, and D pointed out that they use the multisensory strategy most of the time. The use of this strategy implies that the teachers are committed to assisting the learners to study in at least two senses.

According to Hulten (2017), teachers use multisensory methods with learners with dyslexia to help them acquire knowledge using at least two senses. However, Teacher C said, "To me I use the Chunking strategy the most" and indicated that she thinks that the use of this strategy is more effective when used to engage the learners' sense of hearing and sight, by asking them to listen or read the text and get information respectively.

The focus of fifth question was to investigate: *"how did you implement the principle of multisensory strategy in your teaching?"* From the results, the teachers indicated that they applied the multisensory approach through writing letters and numbers in colored sand. In addition, the teachers pointed out that they shaped the letters and numbers using wiki sticks and clay. According to Hartas (2013), practical approaches to learning should be used to help learners coordinate their sensory systems. These approaches arouse nonverbal communication skills, which help learners to express themselves in the ways that work best for them. The research supports the approaches used by teachers in helping learners to learn and develop their sensory skills. It indicates that writing in colored sand and shaping with clay and wiki sticks arouses the senses and consequently reinforces learning because learners use their senses to write or form letters and numbers correctly. Besides, the learners can now learn new ideas and use nonverbal skills to tackle problems. Dyslexic learners learn better through practical approaches that exploit their nonverbal abilities. Such approaches motivate learners, which in turn improves their differentiation abilities.

To the sixth question: *"how did you implement the principle of chunking strategy in your teaching?"* the teachers indicated that they applied the chunking strategy through subdividing one word into parts with two colors so that the learners could spell and write the word correctly. The use of the chunking strategy implies that the learners understand the subdivided words easily because the ensuing pieces are simple to retain in their memory. According to Lah, Saat, and Hassan (2014), chunking helps learners to use their short-term memory effectively by grouping data. Chunking subdivides words into small comprehensible units (Lah, Saat, and Hassan, 2014). Subdividing the words into parts also help learners to remember and memorize information.

The seventh question investigates the idea: *"how did the dyslexic learners respond to these strategies?"* All the teachers indicated that it was great fun for the learners because of their young ages. In addition, the learners improved. The excitement implies that the strategies help the learners to connect the learning in class to the ideas that they are familiar with and know about. Kelly and Phillips (2016) noted that "Dyslexic learners have extraordinary abilities which should be identified and used to enhance their learning abilities". These abilities include recognition of colors and uncompleted words and numbers. If learners are exposed to an environment where they can interact with things that enhance their multisensory skills, they can easily overcome their learning challenges. The findings provided by these researchers suggest that learners can recall what they learn more easily by remembering colorful subdivided words than they would when teachers do not split the words. Such approaches help learners to relate concepts and build knowledge, which helps them overcome their challenges.

The eighth question was: *"what improvement did you see in your learners after applying those two strategies?"* The teachers brought to the fore that the learners now understand the correct way of writing letters and numbers. The

learners' improvement is an indication that both strategies helped them to recognize that images are not the same, and assisted them to improve on their visual processing challenges and know how to form the letters and numbers. When it becomes easier for learners to understand the correct way of writing the letters and numbers, it contributes to the improvement of their learning.

The ninth question focuses on: *"which strategy do you feel best improved dyslexic learners' writing skills?"* All the teachers indicated that they prefer the multisensory method because it helps the learners to experience using at least two senses. The use of the multisensory technique is an indication that teachers are confident and the method allows the learners to use the areas where they are active to assist them to acquire knowledge, which depends on the learning needs of each learner. The multisensory method also helps the learners to grasp concepts quickly and without problems as well as remember and use the ideas freely when studying in future (Kelly & Phillips, 2016). This approach has been used and tested and is commonly used in institutions that provide help to dyslexic learners. The approach additionally helps learners to identify their talents, which can be nurtured to help them earn a living in the future. These authors further add that a good number of successful people in the world had dyslexia at some point (Kelly & Phillips, 2016). Supporting learners with dyslexia with the help of the multisensory approach has several benefits and may continue to have its impacts in future as well.

In the tenth question the researcher asked the teachers: *"do you feel that the resources you are currently using are adequate to help dyslexic learners in their writing skill?"* All the teachers indicated that they were satisfied with the improvement of their learners when they used both chunking and multisensory strategies. The resources were adequate because they helped the learners to understand the correct way of writing the letters and numbers. The issue of dyslexia varies from one learner to another and what works for one might not work for the other (Kelly & Phillips, 2016). The differences that exist between learners are a clear indication that different approaches should be used to help learners overcome their difficulties. The adequacy of the approaches is an indication that teachers were satisfied that the strategies developed the mental ability of the learners by arousing their visual and touch senses. These two approaches incorporate a multidimensional approach that allows learners to develop skills in different areas (Kelly & Phillips, 2016). In addition to this, they improve the confidence of learners within and outside the classroom. This stimulation was caused by the teachers writing the letters and numbers on the colored sand and shaping the letters and numbers by using wiki sticks and clay. The combination of the approaches should not be limited to what the teachers proposed. Other techniques should be identified to provide a universal approach to help dyslexic learners.

The focus of the researcher in the eleventh question was: *"Do you feel that these strategies were easy to use with the dyslexic learners?"* All the interviewees indicated that it was easy to use both the chunking and multisensory tactics with the dyslexic learners because the strategies were suitable for the learners' ages. The learners were fascinated by writing the letters and numbers in the colored sand. In addition, the learners were excited to shape the letters and numbers using the wiki sticks and clay. All the teachers said their learners liked the experience very much and it was fun because of their young ages. Hartas (2013) noted that "Learners would eventually find it exciting to learn and try new things once they identify what works well for them".

The excitement of the learners is an indication that the use of both strategies would help them understand their learning easily. It also suggests that the learners' perceptual-motor abilities will develop easily and become capable of relating what they do with what they see. These learning approaches used by the teachers to build the learners' confidence finally pay off as the learners started performing like other learners. Dyslexia requires an early diagnosis to enable parents to find the right intervention for their children (Hartas, 2013). Teachers should be encouraged to help dyslexic learners to overcome their disorder and interact with other learners with ease.

In the twelfth question, the researcher inquired: *"What can be done when the dyslexic learners feel inferior or less confident?"* Three teachers concurred that they should neither make learners feel they are inferior to their peers nor criticize them when unable to perform quickly, and that teachers should continue encouraging the learners to practice more. On the other hand, Teacher D said, "As a teacher I should enhance my learners' trust in themselves and make them feel that they are equal to their peers". According to the teacher, the learners have different abilities, and each of them has her strong and weak sides. In addition, she said, "The teacher should tell the learners that they have different skills to make the learners believe in themselves". The teachers' encouragement is an indication that every learner can realize their objective.

It is also a sign that all learners will regularly work hard to become prosperous and exploit their chances to shine in class.

## V. CONCLUSION

The main aim of the research in hand was to establish the most effective strategies for improving Saudi EFL dyslexic learners' writing skills. The study's primary objectives were to improve the writing proficiency of Saudi EFL dyslexic learners through multisensory and chunking strategies. The other objectives were to enhance teachers' awareness of the effectiveness of chunking and multisensory strategies for such learners. The sample of the study consisted of four female EFL teachers and 29 Saudi EFL dyslexic learners between the ages of eight and 12. The study used structured interviews to establish how learners responded to different strategies used in the classroom.

After the interpretation and analysis of data, specific recommendations were given to improve the writing skills of dyslexic learners. Given that the learners are differently talented, and they have varying levels of learning strengths and weaknesses, the teachers can contribute more in assisting the learners by helping them discover the learning concepts that work best for them.

The outcome of the study established that no approach or procedure is the most suitable, but that each is equally significant. The teachers must apply each of them and maintain learner-friendly classrooms to achieve the best learning outcomes since dyslexia is a learning impediment characterized by difficulties in word recognition, and poor writing and reading abilities.

The results suggest that some cases of foreign language learning face similar challenges. The indications imply that dyslexia is common among learners, especially those between eight and 12, who are learning a foreign language such as English, as pointed out by Camahalan (2006). The reason for the challenges at a young age is the learners' underdeveloped perceptual-motor abilities that make them not connect what they do and observe. This means that applying the strategies established in the study would make a significant difference in improving Saudi EFL dyslexic learners' learning skills.

#### Recommendations

From the analysis of the data and findings given above, it became crystal clear that multisensory and chunking strategies have robustly changed the performance of dyslexic learners. These results invite the attention of researchers, academicians, and pedagogues to devise certain strategies that ensure learners' higher level of interest and curiosity. To optimize the learning environment, the teacher should take certain measures, for instance:

1. The research suggests adopting both online and direct teaching techniques in order to develop learners' skills in various environments. In particular, technology is very likely to provide both learners and teachers with assistance in a variety of tasks, including those related to learning and performance at the same time. In addition, it is possible to find specifically developed games for learners with dyslexia that are both entertaining and helpful in the improvement of their abilities. In fact, such games can be included in both their in-class and at-home activities.

2. It is equally important that teachers who work with dyslexic learners take different approaches in classrooms than those who work with non-dyslexic learners. In particular, there is a useful technique known as 'color coding' that appears to be quite beneficial to dyslexic learners when applied by teachers. The technique implies that the material presented on the blackboard is highlighted with chalks of different colors so that it is simpler for learners to perceive the visually-provided information. In addition, it is important to emphasize that the text is to be well-spaced and written in neat handwriting. With the implementation of this technique, dyslexic learners are likely to find it easier to distinguish and, hence, memorize class materials.

3. Similarly, it is important that teachers of dyslexic learners should not pressure and hurry them in the completion and comprehension of different tasks. In particular, the classes should be conducted at a moderate pace so that the learners feel comfortable in how they can perceive the information as well as not feeling stressed due to having to memorize the presented information. In addition, it is vital that teachers do not limit dyslexic learners in the time dedicated to their homework assignments but set deadlines that can help to keep the learners disciplined while also being achievable.

4. By the same token, in order to ensure that dyslexic learners should not be pressurized, it is useful that teachers repeat the materials several times so that they can ensure that the learners are capable of understanding and memorizing the information. Similarly, in reading exercises, it is beneficial to ask the learners to repeat text pieces several times. Although such an approach may appear to take more time than for other learners, dyslexic learners are likely to benefit from it.

5. The content of the syllabus needs to be interesting for the learners so that they can be engaged in the process of learning. In other words, if some dyslexic learners have a strong interest in particular topics, it is useful to assign readings that cover those areas. At the same time, the texts must not be complex or contain difficult language.

6. Another beneficial approach to be taken into consideration when teaching dyslexic learners is to diversify the exercises that they have to do. Similarly to computer games, that are considered to be contributive to the improvement of the learners' skills, in-class activities are also to be engaging and interesting. Among these, it is useful for the teacher to ask learners to write down their ideas and thoughts and present them afterward so that the learners can practice their skills while not doing anything that requires additional effort.

7. Besides the workload, the teacher needs to consider the learning capacity of dyslexic learners. In particular, as the educational process requires these learners to work harder on their academic performance and skill development than other learners, the fact that they are much likely to be quite tired at the end of the class is significant. Therefore, the teachers of dyslexic learners must make sure that the learners get enough rest in between the classes and activities so that they can remain productive and capable of comprehending the provided material.

8. The reason for this is that it is possible that dyslexic learners get discouraged and hence become demotivated in a shared educational setting. Such an outcome can be caused by the false expectations that teachers may have of dyslexic learners in comparison to the others, as well as their personal understanding that they are not capable of showing the expected progress. With this in mind, it is also important to emphasize that the educators should make sure

that the family of a dyslexic learner is aware of the importance of showing tolerance and understanding of the way their child approaches things. Their help is crucially important to support and assist their child's educational process.

9. In addition to this, it might be difficult to teach learners both with and without dyslexia in the same classroom. Therefore, they should be separated into a special class, where the teachers will be able to concentrate their attention on them and their needs. In some cases, depending on the spread of this disorder in a particular area, special schools may be the best choice.

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# Spelling Scoring Metrics in Malay Language: An Investigation among Young Spellers

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**Abstract**—The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship among three spelling scoring metrics, namely, words spelled correctly (WSC), correct letter sequences (CLS), and phonological coding (PC) in Malay language. The relationship between spelling measure and word reading measure was studied. There were 866 Primary 1 (Grade 1 equivalent) students from 11 randomly selected public primary schools in Kuching, Sarawak Malaysia who participated in this study. The study showed that the scores from each scoring metric were highly correlated to each other. There was a strong relationship between each spelling outcome to word reading.

**Index Terms**—scoring metrics, spelling, reading, Malay language

## I. INTRODUCTION

Literacy skills are clearly more than just reading. It involves both reading and writing. Spelling is an essential part in both reading and writing. It helps improve learner's reading, writing fluency, and vocabulary (McCardle, Chhabra, & Kapinus, 2008). However, reading is always treated to be more important than spelling at schools (Treiman, 1998). According to Snow, Griffin, and Burns (2005, p.86) "spelling and reading build and rely on the same mental representation of a word. Knowing the spelling of a word makes the representation of it sturdy and accessible for fluent reading". Besides, spelling is a foundation for helping students master the basic language, especially those students who may struggle with reading (Jones, 2009). Therefore, spelling must still be specially taught and learned in schools.

### A. The Malay Language

Malay (Bahasa Malaysia) is the official language of four South East Asia countries, namely Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. It is also the first language of majority of the 27 million people in Malaysia (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011).

The Malay alphabet has the same 26 roman alphabet letters like English, which is, the letters from <a> to <z>. There are three types of sounds in the Malay writing system, which are consonants, vowels, and diphthongs (Awang, 2004). In addition, there are 21 consonants and the correspondence between the consonant letters and consonant sounds of the Malay language is almost perfectly one to one (Awang, 2004; Lee, Liow, & Wee, 1998; Lee, 2008). There are five pure vowels (a, e, i, o, u) with six vowel sounds. Nevertheless, there is an exception for the letter 'e'. It has carries two vowel sounds, overlapping in the grapheme-phoneme coding of vowel letters and vowel sounds, such as /e/ as in *enak* (delicious) and /ə/ as in *emas* (gold) whereas other graphemes carry only one unique sound. There are three diphthongs in the Malay language written as 'ai', 'au' and 'oi' which carry a single phoneme (/ai/, /au/ and /oi/). There are five digraphs written as 'gh', 'kh', 'ng', 'ny' and 'sy' that also correspond to one phoneme each (/gh/, /kh/, /ng/, /ny/ and /sy/) (Awang, 2004). The Malay language is based on phonemic units but the syllable is a salient unit because Malay words have distinct syllable structures (Isahak, 1990). Syllable is a phonological unit formed by a vowel, diphthongs or with or without surrounding consonants. The native Malay words are typically based on four types of syllable: V, VC, CV and CVC (Gomez & Reason, 2002; Hamdan, 1988). The phonological structure of Malay words can be described in terms of both syllable and phonic structures. Words can range from very simple syllable structures CVCV (i.e. *susu* which means milk) to more complex syllable structures like CVCCVVCV (i.e. *sentiasa* which means always). The Malay language is consistent and transparent language as the grapheme-phoneme correspondences is almost perfect one-to-one relationship (Awang, 2004).

### B. Spelling and Reading

Many studies have found that spelling and reading are related (Ehri, 2000; Henry, 2003; McCardle et al., 2008; Treiman, 1998); Ehri (2000) described spelling and reading as “two sides of the same coin”. The similarity between spelling and reading is that they rely on the same mental representation (i.e. grapheme-phoneme correspondence) but the direction is different (McCardle et al., 2008). The differences between spelling and reading are they are underlying principles as decoding and encoding, which are different from one another (McCardle et al., 2008). They undergo different processes. Reading entails the decoding of letters into sounds, while spelling entails the encoding of sounds into letters (Carreker, 2011).

According to Treiman (1998), learning to spell does not just come as a product of learning to read. Spelling needs something more and beyond the experience of reading. According to some researchers, the ability to read a word does not guarantee the ability to spell a word. Thus, some students may be good readers but poor spellers (Frith, 1980; Bruck & Waters, 1990; Lee & Al Otaiba, 2017). However, the opposite pattern of being good spellers but poor readers is less common. The real value of spelling is being able to spell a word that is mentally represented so that it is easier for reading (Snow et al., 2005). However, sometimes students learn spelling through reading. For example, first graders who were taught primarily by whole-language methods tried to avoid using ck (i.e. *ckocoo*) at the beginning of words (Treiman, 1993). This was true even for students who were not explicitly taught that ck may not occur in such position. So, students must have learned and picked up this orthographic pattern through reading.

### C. *The Reading Process*

There are generally two kinds of processing in reading which are top-down and bottom-up (Treiman, 2001). Top-down processes are prior knowledge of someone guiding the intake of information. Reading by top-down process is a “psycholinguistic guessing game” (Goodman, 1967). This is because theories that emphasize top-down processing claim that readers form hypotheses regarding the words readers will face and put in only just enough visual information to test the hypotheses (Goodman, 1967, Smith, 1971). Bottom-up processes are those that take in the information from the outside world (i.e. letters and words for reading) and deal with those information with little recourse to higher-level knowledge. Theories that emphasize bottom-up processing focus on how readers remove the information from the printed page then deal with letters and words in a relatively complete and systematic fashion (Gough, 1972). Basically, reading comprises five components: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000). In order to be good in the reading, the foundation in phonemic awareness and phonics are important and needed.

### D. *Spelling*

Spelling is part of both reading and writing (McCardle et al., 2008). This is because spelling relies on the same knowledge of the grapheme-phoneme relationship that is needed and necessary for reading, students will get help in reading when they learn to spell. However, spelling was not included as a component of reading (National Reading Panel, 2000). There are some researchers who disagreed with this omission. Several studies emphasized the importance of spelling in literacy (Ehri, 2000; Henry, 2003; McCardle et al., 2008; Treiman, 1998; Snow et al., 2005). Besides, there is a gap between reading and spelling performance. Researchers discovered that although the growth of students in passage comprehension maintained close to the average from Grade 1 to Grade 4, their spelling scores dropped significantly by Grade 3 and continue to drop in Grade 4 (Mehta, Foorman, Branum-Martin & Taylor, 2005). Therefore, spelling instruction should be explicitly taught to enhance students’ spelling skills.

### E. *Scoring Metrics*

In conventional grading, spelling is graded as either correct or incorrect (Treiman, Kessler, & Caravolas, 2018). According to Ritchey, Coker and McCraw (2010), when a child enters kindergarten, he or she is unlikely to spell a word completely or accurately. So, an assessment that focuses solely on students’ complete spelling ability may limit the information that the students had gained. Therefore, more precise or sensitive analysis of students’ spelling skills that examines incomplete or inaccurate spelling can be used to provide extra information (Ritchey et al., 2010). For example, students’ partial spelling (e.g., cr for car) or substitution of phonetically similar letters (e.g. kar for car) may show knowledge of sound-spelling relationships.

Besides, Lee and Al Otaiba (2017) stated that sensitive spelling tasks and spelling error analysis are significant for the early identification and early intervention relating to children’s spelling and reading. With the spelling error analysis, a spelling task can be a powerful teachable opportunity for young children. This is because spelling error analysis can provide a window of information about young children’s phonological, orthographic, and morphological knowledge. At the same time, it also brings up a better understanding about learning disabilities (Lee & Al Otaiba, 2017). For instance, data from spelling test can provide a lens or ideas for teachers to place children in homogenous groups according to their spelling ability and difficulties.

To address precision and sensitivity, different alternative scoring metrics can be used. For example, the invented spelling scoring system developed by Tangel and Blachman (1992) which awards point using a 7-point scale ranging from 0 to 6. Similar scoring approaches have been used by Craig (2006), and Lee and Al Otaiba (2017). Previous studies have used phonological coding rubric with students in kindergarten and found that it is most sensitive to growth

over time among kindergartners when compared with total words correct, correct sounds and correct letter sequences (Ritchey et al., 2010).

Another scoring metric that has been commonly used for spelling assessments is curriculum-based measurement (CBM). According to Hosp, Hosp, and Howell (2007) and Wright (1992), this CBM method of scoring words is quite sensitive to capturing students' spelling skills. CBM spelling probes is designed to give credit to students even when they do not fully complete the spelling (Wright, 1992). When using the CBM approach, words are perceived as comprising smaller units letter sequences (Wright, 1992). Correct letter-sequences (CLS) are pairs of letters that are placed in proper sequences in a word. For instance, students are awarded points for the word spelled if they are able to write some letters in a proper sequence. Previous longitudinal studies, which involved students in Grades 1 to 4, compared CLS with WSC, both of which were sensitive to weekly growth. CLS was found to be a more sensitive scoring metric of spelling scores because it shows high slope coefficient and it is more likely to capture small changes in students' spelling test (Fuchs et al., 1993). However, many researchers who used CLS scoring as spelling research have found that the use of CLS has been limited to students in Grade 2 and higher (Deno, Mirkin, & Marston, 1980; Fuchs et al., 1993).

## II. METHOD

### A. Participants

The participants were 866 Primary 1 students from 11 primary public schools in Kuching, Sarawak Malaysia. The age of students was from 6.61 to 7.82 ( $M = 7.13$ ,  $SD = .29$ ) and consisted of 462 (53.3%) boys and 404 (46.7%) girls. The major ethnic groups were comprised as follows: Malay (67.1%), Iban (13.9%), Bidayuh (8.3%), Chinese (3.1%), and others (5.9%). There were 1.7% missing data for the ethnicity of the students. Students were included in this study only if their parents had given consent.

### B. Measures

The measures represented the following constructs: *Ejaan* (Spelling), and *Pembacaan Perkataan* (Word Reading Accuracy). Both spelling assessment and word reading assessment contained 10 words which were chosen from the Primary 1 Malay text books, respectively. Examples of the Malay words are *susu* (milk), *gula* (sugar), *kerusi* (chair), *epal* (apple), *penyu* (sea turtle), *Isnin* (Monday), *menyiram* (watering), *terjatuh* (fell down), *berhati-hati* (be careful), and *buah-buahan* (fruits).

### C. Spelling

The spelling test was used to test students' ability to spell the words that were verbalized by the research assistant. The spelling assessment was administered prior to the Word Reading Accuracy assessment because 10 same words were used for both measures. The assessment was scored based on three scoring metrics.

### D. Word Reading Accuracy (WRA)

The WRA test was used to assess students' ability to read 10 single real words. The total score was based on the total number of words read correctly. The range of scores was 0 to 10.

### E. Procedures

Data were collected between August and October in the school year. The spelling assessment was group administered while the Word Reading Accuracy assessment was administered individually. For WRA, marks were given on the spot while the students read the word. For spelling, each word was scored with three scoring metrics. Across all scoring metrics, letter reversals that did not form different letters were not scored as errors, except b and d. Table 1 describes the three spelling scoring metrics for Malay.

TABLE 1.

DESCRIPTION OF SPELLING ERROR CODING RUBRICS IN MALAY		
Scoring Metric	Explanations	Example word: Menyiram
Words spelled correctly	This metric determines if students spelled the words correctly completely. Students receive a point if the whole word is spelled correctly, or else they receive zero points.	1 = Menyiram 0 = Mengiram
Correct letter sequences	This metric determines students' ability to spell the words in the correct letter sequence. A point is given for a correct first letter, a point also given for a correct last letter and a point is awarded for each additional correct letter sequence within the word. The total points for each word is the total number of letters in the word plus one.	0 = bunga 9 = Menyiram 8 = Menyiraam 7 = Meyiram 6 = Megiram 5 = yiram 4 = giram 3 = ram 2 = me 1 = m 0 = nia
Phonological coding	This metric determines students' phonological representations in spelling. The score for each word ranges between 0 and 6. 0 = no relation between the letters or random strings of letters 1 = A phonologically related letter (initial sound or another sound in the word) 2 = initial sound represented by the correct letter, with and without any other letters. 3 = initial sound spelled correctly and there are more than one phonemes spelled correctly. 4 = all phonemes are represented with phonetically related letters 5 = all phonemes are represented with conventional letters 6 = correct spelling	6 = Menyiram 5 = Meyiram 4 = Mengiram 3 = meny 3 = meny 2 = me 2 = m 1 = ngi 1 = nyi 1 = i 0 = Abu

### III. RESULTS

Descriptive statistics for each outcome of spelling scoring metrics and word reading measures are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2.  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF WRA AND THE SPELLING IN MALAY

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
WRA	7.34	3.61	0	10	-1.00	-0.64
Spelling: WSC	4.84	3.23	0	10	0.02	-1.35
Spelling: CLS	41.72	21.13	0	64	-0.73	-0.95
Spelling: PC	40.83	18.77	0	60	-0.85	-0.63

Note. WRA = Word Reading Accuracy; WSC = Words Spelled Correctly; CLS = Correct Letter Sequences; PC = Phonological Coding.

TABLE 3.  
PEARSON'S CORRELATIONS BETWEEN WRA AND THE SPELLING SCORING METRICS

Variables	Malay: WRA	Malay: WSC	Malay: CLS	Malay: PC
Malay: WRA <sup>b</sup>	1.00			
Malay: WSC <sup>a</sup>	.80**	1.00		
Malay: CLS <sup>a</sup>	.90**	.92**	1.00	
Malay: PC <sup>a</sup>	.90**	.91**	.99**	1.00

Note. WSC = Words Spelled Correctly; CLS = Correct Letter Sequences; PC = Phonological Coding; WRA = Word Reading Accuracy; As a result of missing data, <sup>a</sup>n = 863; <sup>b</sup>n = 865.

\*\*p < 0.01 (2-tailed)

#### A. Relationship between Three Different Scoring Metrics

The correlations among the spelling scores in Malay were determined using Pearson's correlation coefficients and are presented in Table 3. All of the students spelling scores from different measures correlated significantly with one another, with the correlation coefficients ranging from .91 to .99, and  $p < 0.01$ . This showed that the scoring metrics capture equivalent similar spelling skills of students.

#### B. Relationship of Three Different Scoring Metrics to Word Reading

The correlations among the spelling scores with different scoring metrics to word reading were determined using Pearson's correlation coefficients and are presented in Table 3. The results showed students' spelling with different scoring metrics correlated significantly with WRA, with the correlation coefficients ranging from .80 to .90, and  $p < 0.01$ . For the measures that phonological plausibility and orthographic acceptability which are more precise and sensitive, they showed same correlations with WRA ( $r = .90$ ). WSC measures showed the lowest correlations with WRA ( $r = .71$ ). The same correlation between PC and CLS suggest that they are equivalent index of Primary 1 spelling skill and they are given better information than WSC to word reading.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

Young children such as kindergarteners and children who are in transition from kindergarten to Primary 1 often spell incompletely and inaccurately. Therefore, assessment that focuses solely on students' complete spelling like WSC may limit the information that teachers could gather from the spelling outcome. In contrast, precise and sensitive analysis of students' incomplete spelling (i.e., <tejato> for *terjatuh* which means fell down), spelling sequential letters spelling (i.e., <gulla> for *gula* which means sugar), spelling that is phonetically related but unconventional (i.e., <Ismin> for *Isnin* which means Monday), or spelling with a mix of phonetically related and conventional letters (i.e., <apel> for *epal* which means apple) may provide additional information that teachers can use for remediation purposes. For instance, orthographical or phonological analysis of spelling may indicate that students have some knowledge about the relations between the sounds and the letters. It provides insight to the teachers in being able to individualize instruction or to group students according to their ability and in turn, this decision making insights enable the teachers to group the students for interventions that meet their needs. Based on the widespread view that phonics is effective in teaching students to read and spell (Ehri, 2015; McCardle et al., 2008), one would expect measures of early spelling performance to be based on phonological acceptability, which serves as a good indicator of students' current knowledge of spelling. For example, one would know students who spelled <terjatu> for *terjatuh* (fell down) have better knowledge in phonics when compared with another student who spelled <tjt> for *terjatuh* (fell down). Besides, one would also expect reading and spelling to be correlated since both of them rely on the same mental representation as mentioned earlier in the literature review. However, no research has been conducted to test these ideas in the Malay language. The current study examined how the three scoring metrics (i.e., WSC, CLS, and PC) are related to each other and which scoring metrics have the highest correlation with word reading performance in the Malay language.

This study found an expected and consistent strong relationship among the spelling performance from the three different scoring metrics which is similar to previous findings (Deno et al., 1980; Ritchey et al., 2010). Another finding of the study is that, there are consistently strong correlations between all the spelling performance and WRA, which is the same as the finding from Ritchey et al. (2010). These results, together with previous findings show that there is high stability in the relationship among different spelling scoring metrics, and the spelling performance with word reading regardless of the language.

A surprising finding of this study is that PC which is based on phonological acceptability and has been the most popular scoring method recent years, was not correlated highest with WRA and did not outperform CLS scoring metric that was based on orthographic correctness. PC and CLS showed the same correlations with WRA, and showed higher correlation with WRA when compared with WSC. This study found that PC and CLS are equivalent in its relation to students' WRA and provided better information regarding students' knowledge of phonemic awareness in relation to WRA in comparison to WSC, which is based on correct or incorrect spelling.

#### V. CONCLUSION

These findings suggest that three different spelling scoring metrics used to score dictated spelling samples of Primary 1 students were closely related. In addition, each spelling scoring metrics showed high relationship to word reading. For PC and CLS, they showed the same correlation to word reading. WSC showed lowest correlation to word reading. The results suggest that PC and CLS are equivalent indexes of Primary 1 spelling skill and can give better and more information to word reading than WSC. Future research on these scoring metrics beyond Primary 1 and further investigation on the relationship between scoring metrics and students' spelling development among Malaysian students are needed.

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# The Role of Written Corrective Feedback in Second Language Writing Practice\*

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**Abstract**—This paper argues that corrective feedback is effective in improving L2 student writers' written accuracy, and what educational researchers should be concerned with is not only *if* corrective feedback should be used in writing practice, but also *how*. Two studies are analyzed to argue that corrective feedback is beneficial for students' writing performance, but some types of feedback can lead to writing development in some aspects, while can result in negative effects in others. Also, an interaction approach and the skill acquisition theory are used to provide theoretical framework to each of the two studies, and to back up the usefulness of corrective feedback. In addition, some of the argument about the ineffectiveness of corrective feedback is refuted empirically and theoretically to further prove its effectiveness in L2 writing practice.

**Index Terms**—written corrective feedback, effectiveness, L2 writing, empirical studies, theories

## I. INTRODUCTION

Writing is a difficult language skill and also an important one for language learners. It is difficult because, among the four language skills -- listening, speaking, reading, and writing, writing is one of the output skills and it usually demands relatively higher mental thinking ability than the other three skills. Writing is important in that it can help develop students' critical thinking ability, which is one of the most essential qualities for students' language development. In addition, for novice student writers, making errors is a natural and indispensable part when they are moving forward. In this case, written corrective feedback (WCF) to students' errors from instructors plays a key role in helping them improve written accuracy so that they can move smoothly to a higher language level.

However, there have long been controversial views on the effectiveness of WCF in improving students' second language (L2) written accuracy. Some researchers argue that WCF is effective in L2 writing practice (Ferris, 1999; Chandler, 2003; Bitchener, 2008; Sheen, 2007), while others claim that WCF should not be utilized in L2 writing practice (Truscott, 1996, 2004, 2007; Kepner, 1991). Encountering these controversial views, educational practitioners may feel hesitant about the utilization of WCF in their instructional practice. Meanwhile, researchers of L2 writing may still want to spend time and energy proving whether or not WCF is useful in writing, which deviates their attentions from more meaningful questions, such as what specific types of direct feedback (written or oral meta-linguistic explanation, direct error correction, etc.) are more effective in improving student writers' written accuracy. After all, the improvement of students' written accuracy is the ultimate goal of the provision of WCF. In addition, it is agreed among L2 writing researchers that students' individual factors can have an effect on their written accuracy. Among these factors, motivation is always playing a significant role in the students' improvement. In this case, if the students are not sure of the effectiveness of WCF when encountering these controversial views, then their motivation of accepting the WCF will be decreasing, which can cause a harmful effect on their writing because the written errors can not be corrected well. Thus, the settlement of this controversy can let the researchers focus their attention on some more meaningful questions, such as how to use WCF effectively to improve the students' written accuracy.

The purpose of this paper is to argue that WCF is effective in improving L2 student writers' written accuracy, and what educational researchers should be concerned with is not only *if* WCF should be used in writing practice, but also *how*. First, in terms of the empirical evidence, two empirical studies are used to argue the effectiveness of WCF, and how to use WCF effectively is the question that teachers should consider because the same type of WCF can have different effects on students' writing. Second, in terms of the theoretical evidence, two theoretical frameworks--an interaction approach and the skill acquisition theory, are used to argue the effectiveness of WCF. In addition, some of Truscott's argument about the ineffectiveness of WCF is refuted empirically and theoretically to further prove the effectiveness of WCF in L2 writing practice.

## II. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WCF

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### A. Is WCF Useful?

In Sachs and Polio's (2007) article, they conducted a study to argue that WCF is useful in improving students' written accuracy. In that study, there were 54 ESL students divided into four groups: 12 in the error correction method, 11 in the reformulation method, 16 in the reformulation with think-aloud method and 15 controls. Specifically, in the written error correction method, students' written errors were directly corrected by teachers. In the reformulation and the reformulation with think aloud methods, teachers gave students the reformulations provided by native speakers. The controls did not receive feedback in their writing.

The result shows that in the error correction method, the mean of the T-units (an independent clause and all of its dependent clauses) showing changes in accuracy is 87.6%; in the reformulation method, it is 70.5%; in the reformulation with think aloud method, it is 72.9%; the worst mean of accuracy percentage is from the control group, which is 55.2%. Subsequently, with a nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis test performed to compare the mean ranks of percentages across the various methods, the result was significant,  $\chi^2(3, 54) = 19.676$ ,  $p < .01$ , and the mean rank of each method was 42.63 for error correction ( $n=12$ ), 28.14 for reformulation ( $n=11$ ), 26.84 for think-aloud ( $n=16$ ), and 15.63 for the control group ( $n=15$ ). The findings suggested that the error correction method produced the most accurate revisions, followed by the reformulation with think aloud method and the reformulation method; the control group, who did not receive error correction in their writing, produced the least accurate revisions. Thus, the provision of error correction, at least in short terms, could help students improve written accuracy in their revisions more than those who did not receive error correction. The argument that error correction is not effective in L2 writing should be taken with caution.

### B. How to Use WCF Effectively in L2 Writing Practice

Based on Hartshorn, Evans, Merrill, Sudweeks, Strong-Krause, & Anderson's (2010) study, an alternative instructional strategy in L2 writing--dynamic WCF will be introduced in this section to argue that there are no absolute criteria that one type of feedback is better than the other for good. Every type of feedback has its positive and negative sides. Thus, teachers should be concerned with how to use the proper types of WCF in L2 writing practice because they can make a difference in students' written accuracy.

In their study, Hartshorn et al. (2010) divided participants into two groups. A treatment group who received the dynamic WCF and a control group who received traditional feedback. The differences between these two types of feedback could be explained by the distinctive features of the dynamic WCF. They pointed out that in the dynamic WCF, writing tasks and feedback should be "*meaningful, timely, constant, and manageable* for both student and teacher" (p.87, emphasis is original).

First, the dynamic feedback is meaningful in that systematic indirect feedback should be provided for the students who can correct their written errors, and explicit instruction for their common errors should be given by teachers. In that study, the treatment group was required to write 10-min compositions every class and indirect feedback was provided by the teachers in the form of coded symbols. Then they continued to rewrite their compositions until all errors were corrected (Figure 1). In other words, the dynamic WCF required the students, with the help of the teachers, to keep revising their writing until it was error free. During this process, the teachers' feedback was coded and the students used tools such as tally sheet and error log to help them improve their written accuracy, which made the dynamic WCF meaningful and distinguished from traditional WCF. Contrasted with the dynamic WCF, the traditional WCF received by the control group in this study was detailed feedback on four multidraft papers they wrote. This group also emphasized both a variety of rhetorical writing skills and linguistic accuracy.

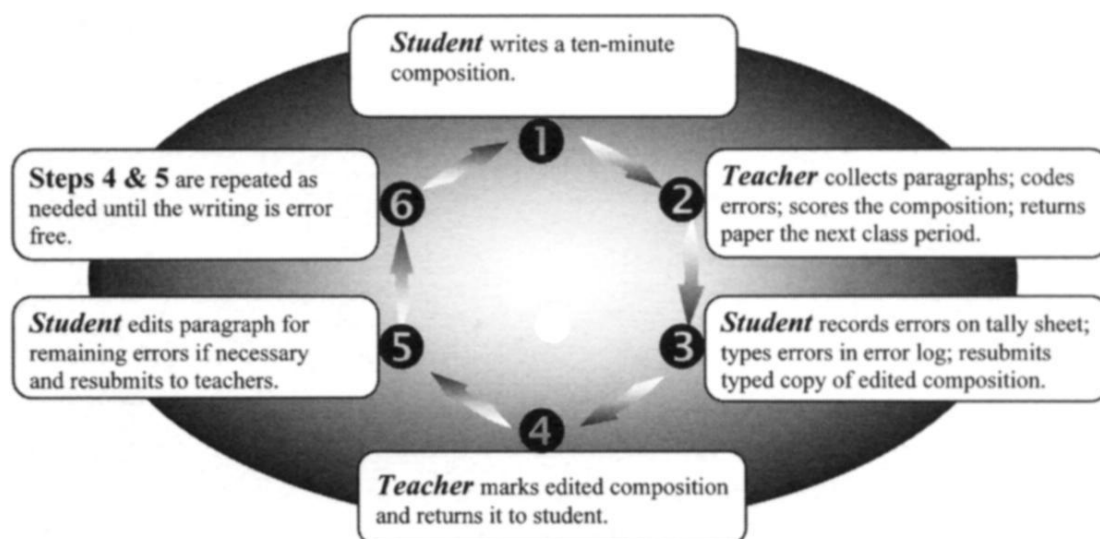


Figure 1. Feedback cycle for dynamic written corrective feedback. (Hartshorn et al., 2010, p.90)

Second, the dynamic feedback is timely and constant. In Hartshorn et al.'s (2010) study, dynamic feedback received by the treatment group was timely "in that student writing is consistently marked with the coded symbols and returned the following class period" (p. 88). It was constant "in that students produce new pieces of writing and receive feedback nearly every class period of the course" (p. 88). However, for the control group receiving the traditional feedback, they did not receive timely and constant feedback.

Third, dynamic feedback is manageable. Hartshorn et al. (2010) pointed out that "feedback is manageable for teachers when they have enough time to attend to the quality and completeness of what they communicate to their students" (p. 88). In their study, the teachers provided the students in the treatment group with feedback by coding errors and scoring the composition after they turned in their writing every time. Subsequently, the teachers marked students' edited versions again and returned them to students. The process continued until the students' composition is error free. In addition, Hartshorn et al. (2010) continued claiming that "feedback is manageable for the students when they have the time and ability to process, learn from, and apply the needed feedback from their teachers" (p. 88). In order to make their composition error free, the students first should learn from the feedback provided by the teachers and apply it to their next version of composition. Conversely, for the control group receiving the traditional feedback, they did not receive this sort of manageable feedback from their teachers. In other words, they were not required to keep revising their composition until it was error free.

The results of the two research questions in Hartshorn et al.'s (2010) study can be used to claim that how to use WCF is the question that the instructors should be more concerned with. The first research question in Hartshorn et al.'s (2010) study was whether there was a significant difference in mean accuracy scores between posttest essays of the treatment group and those of the contrast group. The result of this study showed that the treatment group receiving the dynamic WCF had significantly higher accuracy scores than the control group receiving the traditional WCF, with mean 15.04 from the control group and 19.09 from the treatment group. However, the dynamic WCF was not always better in improving students' writing ability than other types of feedback, which was shown in the second research question of this study. The second question was to explore whether there was a difference in means between the rhetorical competence scores, fluency scores, or complexity scores from the treatment group posttest essays and those from the contrast group. The result of this question showed the dynamic WCF might have a slight negative effect on writing fluency and complexity.

Some alternative types of feedback, such as dynamic WCF analyzed in this section, could provide the students with both positive and negative effects on their written accuracy. As Bitchener & Ferris (2012) claimed that the 10-minute in-class freewrites used in Hartshorn et al.'s (2010) study "may not elicit the types of errors or writing challenges that students will encounter on other types of writing assignments" (p. 143). Thus, the teachers should discern the distinctions among different types of feedback, the different effects generated by the same type of feedback in different situations, and select those that are profitable for their students to use.

### III. THEORETICAL EVIDENCE ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WCF

#### A. *A General Introduction to the Interaction Approach*

The interaction approach stems from Long's (1983, 1996) interaction hypothesis. Long's (1983) interaction hypothesis held that meaning negotiation and interactional modifications are two phases in communication with the former leading to the existence of the latter. Put it simply, meaning negotiation occurs when the interlocutors have difficulty in understanding each other. It mainly works through the forms of "clarification requests, confirmation checks, comprehension checks and repetition" (Pawlak, 2014, p. 53). The phase of interactional modification involves "simplification or elaboration of the initial message, thus making input comprehensible" (p. 53). However, this version of interaction hypothesis was criticized for its failure to address the link between the negotiation of meaning and language acquisition. In his revised version, Long (1996) claimed the importance of negotiation of form, "which covers responses to inaccurate use of target language features, both when the error impedes the flow of conversation and when it is addressed for pedagogic purposes" (p. 54). In this case, the benefits of negotiation activities should include three aspects: the provision of the positive language input produced in form-meaning-function mappings; the provision of negative (corrective) feedback through the forms of vocabulary, morphology and language-specific syntax or other language-facilitated knowledge; the produce of modified output as a result of the feedback provision, cognitive comparison and noticing the gap (Pawlak, 2014). In terms of WCF, these three aspects can be used to refer to the input, the feedback, and the output respectively, which will be discussed next.

Polio (2012) pointed out that the origins of the interaction approach are from the works on oral interaction, and "this approach emphasizes the role of input, output, and feedback, all of which occur during interaction in the L2" (p. 383). When it comes to WCF, the input can be the process of exposure to the feedback, and the output can be the students' production. In other words, in the interaction approach, input, output, and feedback can constitute a chain through which students' written accuracy can improve. More importantly, he pointed out that the most important component in the interaction approach is attention. In the phases of receiving input and producing output, and in receiving implicit or explicit feedback, attention is always playing an important role (Polio, 2012). Furthermore, Long (1996) argued that a learner's "degree of attention to linguistic form may determine the extent to which L2 input becomes L2 intake (i.e., is incorporated into the learner's developing L2 system)" (emphasis is original, as cited in Bitchener & Ferris, 2012, p. 17).

In other words, in terms of WCF, attention plays an essential role in determining whether or not the input and the feedback received by students are effective in improving the students' written accuracy. If the students pay appropriate attention to the input and the feedback, then it is more likely for them to produce more accurate output.

### *B. The Application of the Interaction Approach*

In fact, Sachs and Polio (2007) conducted their research under the framework of an interaction approach even though they do not state clearly the use of this approach in their article (Polio, 2012). Based on the interaction approach, L2 writers can benefit from WCF from two aspects: the first aspect includes input, output, and feedback, while the second aspect is attention (Polio, 2012; Bitchener, 2012).

First, in terms of input, output, and feedback, the ways how the input and the feedback are provided can affect the students' output. In fact, in his reformulation of Interaction Hypothesis, Long (1996) argues that negative feedback plays a key role in developing learners' language ability. In L2 writing domain, students can notice the negative feedback in their writing and they also tend to learn from it. In this case, the negative feedback can serve as WCF through which can help improve students' written accuracy. In Sachs and Polio's (2007) study, students in the error correction method are more directly exposed to the WCF, which is a key factor leading to their higher accuracy in the revisions. However, in the reformulation method and the reformulation with think-aloud method of Sachs and Polio's study, because the students' written errors are not *directly* pointed out and corrected, their revision accuracy is lower than the error correction method. Moreover, after the controls are added to the study, they show the least accuracy of revisions among all of the four groups because there is no error correction provided in their writing. In other words, the extent of exposure to input plays an important role in the effectiveness of students' output and feedback. For example, in this study, students who are provided with error correction are more thoroughly exposed to the corrected forms of their writing than the other three groups of students. Thus, the students in the error correction group can produce better revisions than the other three groups of students.

Second, students' proper attention to error correction can have a positive effect on their accuracy of revisions. Bitchener (2012) points out that "attention is also necessary in the written context if learners are to uptake the feedback" (p. 351). Thus, in Sachs and Polio's (2007) research, they explored the association between participant verbal protocol on feedback and the changes in their revisions. The participants from the reformulation with think-aloud method are interviewed by one of the researchers. The results show that there was an association "between the noticing that learners demonstrated during the think-alouds and the changes they made in their revisions the next day" (p.82). In other words, the more errors the participants were aware of (through use of metalanguage and provision of a reason), the better their revisions would be.

Based on the interaction approach, Schmidt (1990, 1994) points out that there are three types of attention that can be used to explain the effectiveness of corrective feedback: noticing, understanding, and awareness. Specifically, Schmidt (1994) pointed out that "noticing refers to the process of bringing some stimulus into focal attention (i.e., registering its simple occurrence) while understanding and awareness refer to explicit knowledge (e.g., awareness of a rule)" (as cited in Bitchener & Ferris, 2012, p. 17). Thus, in Sachs and Polio's (2007) study targeting the participants of the reformulation with think-aloud method, the reasons why the participants who are more aware of their errors can produce better accurate revisions are as follows: in the noticing type, the focal attention of these participants is stimulated through the occurrence of the reformulations; then, in the types of understanding and awareness, students compare their writing with the reformulations produced by native speakers, and explicate their own written errors through the use of metalanguage and provision of a reason. Those who can be more aware of their written errors can write revisions with higher accuracy.

In addition, the evidence on studies of focused WCF can also explain the fact that WCF is effective in L2 writing practice and the usefulness of the interaction approach in improving students' L2 writing accuracy. This range of recent studies investigated "the effectiveness of focusing WCF on only one or a few targeted linguistic errors" (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012, p. 57). Bitchener and Ferris (2012) presented the effectiveness of focusing WCF by discussing a set of studies utilizing this sort of feedback. One result in common among this set of studies is that the treatment groups (who receive focused WCF) outperformed the control groups (who do not receive WCF) in terms of written accuracy. Moreover, as discussed above, attention and understanding play a key role in the interaction approach, which is also the reason for the effectiveness of focused WCF in improving students' written accuracy. Obviously, if the students' attention is focused on one or a few errors they made, then it will be easier for them to attend to them, understand them, and hopefully, uptake them. In fact, focused WCF derives its rationale from a theoretical perspective by Schmidt (1994) and Ellis (2005) which emphasizes the importance of attention and understanding in learning. (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). Thus, attention and understanding in interaction approach are useful in improving students' written accuracy.

In short, the interaction approach can be utilized to argue that WCF is useful in L2 writing because this approach emphasizes the importance of the input, the output, and the feedback during the process of improving students' written accuracy. Moreover, the interaction approach also presents that the students who can explicate their written errors through the types of noticing, understanding, and awareness can write more accurate revisions than others. In addition, the effectiveness of focused WCF in improving students' written accuracy is also an evidence to prove the helpfulness of the interaction approach in L2 writing. Thus, the interaction approach is useful in L2 writing practice.

### C. *A General Introduction to Skill Acquisition Theory*

This section will elaborate on the significance of skill acquisition theory in WCF. Skill acquisition theory, which is used in Hartshorn et al.' (2010) study to frame the dynamic WCF, can also predict that the proper utilization of WCF can help improve students' L2 written accuracy. Skill acquisition theory is originated from "rule-based theories of automatization, in particular Anderson's (1983, 1995) Adaptive Control of Thought Theory, and has been extended to the area of language learning mainly through the work of Johnson (1996) and Dekeyser (1998, 2001, 2003, 2007a, b, c)" (Pawlak, 2014, p. 60).

The concept of explicit and implicit learning and knowledge plays a basic role in skill acquisition theory. Hulstijn (2005) pointed out that "explicit learning is input processing with the conscious intention to find out whether the input information contains regularities and, if so, to work out the concepts and rules with which these regularities can be captured. Implicit learning is input processing without such intention, taking place subconsciously" (as cited from Pawlak, 2014, p. 12). Based on this point, we can assume that explicit learning is the precondition of implicit learning, and it is implicit learning that can have a decisive effect on the development of learning. Thus, the key question here is how explicit learning can be converted to implicit learning. In fact, Bitchener (2012) points out that skill acquisition theory "accommodates the view that explicit learning and explicit knowledge from instruction and CF (including written CF) can be converted to implicit knowledge considered necessary for acquisition" (p. 350). In other words, teachers explicated WCF to students who can internalize it as implicit knowledge which is vital to language development.

When discussing the use of skill acquisition theory in second language acquisition, Dekeyser (2007) argues that "declarative knowledge (what one knows) is required for the development of procedural knowledge (what one can do) and that it must be based on explicit rules and numerous examples" (as cited in Hartshorn et al., 2010, p. 87). The purpose of learning language is to transfer declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge. In this case, WCF is provided as a source of declarative knowledge which is expected to help students improve their written accuracy through transferring this knowledge to procedural knowledge. In fact, Hartshorn et al. (2010) further hold that "proceduralization requires extensive and deliberate practice, which then leads the learner toward greater automatization" (p.87). Similarly, when discussing Anderson's skill acquisition model, Bitchener & Ferris (2012) also pointed out that "practice leads to automatization" (p. 13). Thus, through the process of feedback and practice, students' written accuracy can improve if they can *automatically* avoid making errors that have already been corrected.

### D. *The Application of Skill Acquisition Theory*

Hartshorn et al. (2010) pointed out that there were two additional concepts from skill acquisition theory that are important to their study. The first one was that "the theory predicts that accuracy is a function of practice" (p. 87). The second concept was that "the theory predicts that procedural knowledge does not transfer well" (p. 87). In their study, Hartshorn et al. designed the dynamic WCF that required the students to write 10-minute freewrites every day and to keep revising them until they are error free. When it comes to skill acquisition theory, this sort of practice plays an essential role in promoting the transformation from explicit knowledge to implicit knowledge, during which the students' written accuracy can improve. Conversely, if the students are lack of practice after receiving feedback, then it must be hard for them to transfer declarative knowledge to procedural knowledge. Also, it will be hard for them to arrive at automatization phase in which they have acquired the knowledge with which they can automatically avoid making errors. Thus, skill acquisition theory plays an essential role in Hartshorn et al.' (2010) study.

In fact, Bitchener & Ferris (2012) presented three stages of converting declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge, which can also be utilized to explain the effectiveness of skill acquisition theory in WCF. The first stage is the cognitive stage which is "a description of the procedure is learned" (p. 14). For example, when a student writer's written error of not including an indefinite article *-a* before a first utilized noun is corrected by teachers, he or she must know that an *-a* should be added before this noun. The second stage is the associative stage through which "a method for performing the skill is worked out" (p. 14). In other words, through association, the student writer in this stage may know how to add an *-a* when other similar contexts require it. The third stage is the autonomous stage through which "the skill becomes more and more rapid and automatic" (p. 14). In this stage, the student writer can add an *-a* more and more automatically in his or her writing. Thus, through these three stages of converting declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge, a student writer's written accuracy can be moved to a higher level.

In short, through the concepts of declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, automatization, and the cognitive, the associative, and the autonomous stage, skill acquisition theory can provide a solid rationale for the effectiveness of WCF in L2 writing.

## IV. THE ARGUMENT OF INEFFECTIVENESS OF WCF AND ITS REBUTTALS

Contrary to the studies and the theories that support the effectiveness of WCF in L2 writing, there are other researchers who argue that WCF is not useful, such as Kepner (1991); Truscott (1996, 2004, 2007). Among them, Truscott's argument, which seems a strong and consistent one, and its rebuttals will be discussed in this part. One of the argument claimed by Truscott is that students tend to simplify their writing because they do not want to encounter the situations that might lead them make errors. In addition, he argues that WCF is not useful because it only leads to

“pseudo-learning” which can not really improve students’ language ability (Truscott, 1996). This part argues that Truscott’s argument is not valid.

#### A. *Truscott’s Avoidance Phenomenon and Its Rebuttals*

One of the harmful effects of WCF proposed by Truscott (2007) is called avoidance phenomenon in students’ writing. Truscott (2007) argues that the immediate goal of correction “is to make learners aware of their errors” (p. 268), which is distinguished from understanding and applying these error corrections to other contexts. In other words, being aware of their written errors cannot guarantee that the students can utilize them in their future pieces of writing. Furthermore, he claims that “this awareness creates a clear motivation for avoiding the type of construction corrected” (p. 268). Thus, he argues that “corrected students tend to shorten and simplify their writing, apparently to avoid situations in which they might make errors” (p. 268). In this way, the students’ improvement of written accuracy should not be attributed to the effectiveness of WCF because what they do is just to avoid utilizing the corrected errors they may not understand. So, WCF should not be used as an effective way to improve students’ written accuracy.

However, this avoidance effect is argued by van Beuningen et al.’s (2012) study which investigates the evidence on the effectiveness of comprehensive error correction in L2 writing. In their study, van Beuningen et al. (2012) divided two hundred sixty eight participants from four Dutch secondary schools into four groups, with two groups receiving experimental treatments and the other two receiving control conditions. The two experimental groups received comprehensive direct CF and indirect CF respectively, while the two contrast groups were required to do self-correction and additional writing practice respectively. The research question was whether error correction led to avoidance of lexically and structurally complex utterances. The authors utilized ANCOVA to answer this research question. The results included two aspects, both of which could be used to refute Truscott’s claim of avoidance phenomenon. The first result was that there was no significant between-groups difference of structural and lexical complexity in both of the posttests involving new pieces of writing. In other words, subjects who received WCF did not tend to avoid writing more complex structures in their new writing. The second result was that there are “significant between-groups differences concerning the structural complexity, ... of the output produced during the treatment/control session” (p. 31),  $F(3, 262) = 7.94, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .08$ . Specifically, the practice group, who were required to write a new text, wrote less complex structures than those who received direct or indirect WCF. Therefore, Truscott’s avoidance phenomenon is not valid in that, instead of avoiding writing more complex structures, the participants receiving WCF do write more complex structures than those who write a new text.

In addition, Truscott used some examples to argue the existence of avoidance phenomenon, but the examples he used are flawed, which made his argument weak. For example, when claiming the avoidance phenomenon, Truscott (2007) argued that “signs of avoidance are not hard to find in correction studies” (p. 269), and he used Sheppard’s (1992) study as an example to prove his argument, saying that students in that study “tend to avoid using complex structures or grammar points they are not sure of” (p. 269). However, Sheppard’s (1992) study is flawed, so its result should be taken with caution. There were two groups of participants in that study with a treatment group receiving WCF on discrete items and a control one receiving feedback on holistic meaning. All participants in both groups had a one-on-one conference with the teacher after receiving the feedback. In the conference, the participants from the treatment group had their errors corrected by the teacher, while the participants from the control group had their writing commented by the teacher (e.g., request for clarification if their writing can not be understood). After a ten-week period of study, the result showed that the treatment group used fewer complex sentences than the control group. However, as Bitchener and Ferris (2012) pointed out that it was hard to say that the control group in that study is a strictly control group. In other words, it is possible that participants from the control group receive feedback on their written errors during the conferences, which makes the result of that study doubtful. Thus, with the use of Sheppard’s (1992) study, Truscott’s argument of the avoidance phenomenon is weak.

#### B. *The Critique of Pseudo-learning*

Some Truscott’s argument is not valid under the examination of the related theories in SLA. For example, Truscott (1996) claimed that WCF “would promote ‘pseudo-learning’ or at best self-editing and revision skills, without fostering true accuracy development” (as cited from van Beuningen et al., 2012, p. 2). He based his claim on the argument that WCF could only lead to explicit knowledge, but not implicit knowledge, which would promote language acquisition. Thus, WCF should not be used in L2 writing practice because it is not useful in improving students’ language ability. However, according to the skill acquisition theory, it is true that WCF can provide students with explicit knowledge, but through consistent practice, and with the use of some instructional strategy, such as the dynamic WCF, this sort of knowledge can be converted to implicit knowledge which is helpful for the improvement of students’ written accuracy. In other words, it seems that Truscott disregarded the connection between explicit and implicit knowledge in terms of WCF.

In short, based on van Beuningen et al.’ (2012) study, the avoidance phenomenon claimed by Truscott is not convincing. Specifically, instead of avoiding complex structures in their pieces of writing, students receiving WCF turn out to writing more complex structures than those who do not receive feedback, which can be a rigorous argument against Truscott’s claim that WCF is harmful because it only makes students simplify their writing. In addition, Truscott used Sheppard’s (1992) study as an example to argue the avoidance phenomenon. But that study is flawed in design, so

its result is doubtful. The claim of pseudo-learning by Truscott is also weak under the examination of the skill acquisition theory.

## V. CONCLUSION

This paper argues that WCF is effective in improving L2 student writers' written accuracy, and teachers should take into more consideration how to utilize it in L2 writing practice. In terms of the empirical evidence, first, Sachs and Polio's (2007) study was used to prove that WCF is useful in the improvement of the students' written accuracy. Second, Hartshorn et al.'s (2010) study was used to argue that even the same type of WCF instruction strategy can have different effects on the students' writing. Thus, how to use WCF in practice is the question of which the teachers should be more aware. In terms of the theoretical evidence, both the interaction approach and skill acquisition theory are used to prove the effectiveness of WCF. In addition, through the analyses of van Beuningen et al.' (2012) study, this paper rebuts the avoidance phenomenon claimed by Truscott. Also, this paper further argues the effectiveness of WCF in L2 writing practice by pointing out the flaw of Sheppard's (1992) study and the weakness of pseudo-learning.

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# The Semantic Features of “v+adv” in Native English Public Speaking Setting

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**Abstract**—This paper explores and concludes the features and semantic prosodies of adverbs in public speaking setting by native English speakers through a corpus-driven approach. The corpus used is a sub-corpus (CES\_C) from the self-built corpus (CES) comprising of 177 texts (type token) that are original and authentic speeches delivered by celebrities from UK and US. The speakers of these speeches are varied from all walks of life including presidents, business elites and etc. In terms of research methodology, this study is conducted both the quantitative approach of corpus linguistics and the qualitative approach of observation. By annotated part-of-speech (POS) with Treetagger tool, the study examined the occurrence frequency of adverbs and listed top 30 high-frequency adverbs employed in the corpus. Then different categories of adverbs were analyzed in terms of semantic function, and the frequency of occurrence was calculated respectively. The results shows the use of adverbs only accounts for 5% of all the words which is relatively lower than the use of other part of speech. Besides, some adverbs have certain semantic orientations based on different categorized adverbs, which provides intuitive reference resources for English public speaking teaching and learning in ESL/ EFL community. In addition, the combination of research focuses such as corpus, semantic prosody, public speaking and adverbs can be used as reference to enlarge the scope of corpus study and enhance the level of public speaking research.

**Index Terms**—corpus-driven method, English speech, adverbs, lexical features, semantic prosody

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Background

According to Hamilton (2012), the purpose of speech is to elicit emotion and reaction among the audience. In reality, numerous thought leaders or grassroots devote to change the world with the power of language and ideas, regardless of what type the speech is (for example, political, economic, academic, military, religious, entertaining and so on). Popular in Western universities, public speech courses are made much of in teachers and students. Consistent with this, Zhong (2011) opines that although those lessons may bring many problems to solve, some Chinese universities have offered public speaking training sessions and have achieved noticeable results at the present pilot stage.

Additionally, in China, a significant number of ongoing competitions and activities to enhance the speaker's abilities and exchange experiences also attract thousands of scholars and researchers (Zhong, 2011). As more and more research is being done on English speeches in recent years, some interesting discoveries are cropping up. Based on the fast development of corpus technology and corpus linguistics theories, researchers explore a new approach or perspective to study speech and the relevant things. In corpus linguistics, there are mainly two research methods. One is a corpus-based approach, relying on corpus data for hypostudy testing; second is corpus-driven research method with a minimum theory reliance “in order not to hinder the process of discovering new phenomena” (Römer, 2005).

Partington (1998) argues that the use of corpus for teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is one of the most extensive areas in corpus linguistics, especially as regards professional and academic settings. To promote ESP teaching, different corpora have emerged include spoken and written academic discourse, native English speaker corpora, ESP English learner corpora, the use of English in professional contexts, and so on. Since many factors may disturb the design of corpora, challenges in this area lie not only in the construction of the corpora but the organization and connection of information in different text codes. Semantic prosody is one of research focuses (Nelson, 2006). To discover the semantic orientation, how to analyze and generalize the collocation of keywords need attention.

Semantic prosody is one of the most active study areas in corpus linguistics and has made significant contributions to language. Though the study started late in China, scholars have reaped rich fruits (Louw, 2003). During the past decades, it has changed from weak to strong gradually; from simple theory introductions to all-area empirical methods in depth; from single text study to multi-aspect comparison consideration. But some hidden weak points have been buried behind the prosperity: ambiguous objects of study, inappropriate corpus, fuzzy statistical standard, and simple conclusion, etc.



Zaabalawi & Gould (2017) further state that past studies have demonstrated that English collocations, especially with adverbs form some of the most challenging patterns in English learning and teaching as they are unpredictable and difficult to remember in later use. For learners of English as a second language, the challenge in learning collocations arises from the differences in meanings during the translation process. This is commonplace especially in China where the learning of English collocations is disregarded. In Chinese-English dictionaries, adverb and adjective collocations are mainly ignored, a trend which is attributed to the differences in the roles played by adverbs in both languages.

Through self-built English Speech Corpus, the semantic prosody of adverbs has important implications for ESL/EFL teaching, learning and research. By exploring the features in using adverbs in English public speaking setting, the paper combines some current research focuses: the corpus-driven method, the speech learning and teaching and the semantic prosody, becoming meaningful and innovative.

### **Problem Statement & Research Questions**

As an active part in English speeches, adverb needs to be studied from various angles. But there have few systematical kinds of research since now. In this sense, it is important to list the high-frequency adverbs and find semantic characteristics of adverbs in English speech. Since corpus linguistics is popular in recent years, it provides a new perspective for observing the characteristics of words and phrases. More importantly, the corpus-based and the corpus-driven approaches are scientific, presenting the data in an obvious way. For this reason, the study aims to answer the following questions:

- (1) In English speech, do native speakers use adverbs frequently? What percentage of adverbs account for?
- (2) Which are the high-frequency adverbs? What kinds of adverbs should we use in English speeches?
- (3) Do these high-frequency adverbs have specific semantic preferences? What are semantic prosodies of those words presented in speech texts? If we want to express our feelings or attitudes, which adverbs should we employ?

### **The Significance of the Study**

Although there are many researchers paying attention to speech, most of them explore from a more macro perspective to focus on learning or teaching methods and speech contests (Yule, 2003). Even though the corpus approach is prevalent in general English, it is seldom applied in the speech area and the relevant fields. As a matter of fact, English speech learners may benefit from corpus data to improve their input through corpus-driven and corpus-based approaches. The author collects hundreds of native speakers' speech texts, then analyzes and organizes the data, finally concludes the rules. The general rules have scientific significance for speech teaching and learning. When learners write a speech text or give a presentation in public, it should be easy to avoid ugly situations with such excellent data for consultation. In this sense, corpora can be used directly in the classroom and applied to become teaching materials and syllabus. With the reference of corpus data, teachers can instruct students more accurately and efficiently.

Apart from the contributions of the corpus in ESP teaching and learning, the study also fills the blank on the study of the semantic prosody of adverbs in English speech. The author hopes to find some specific features in speeches and decides to explore the usage of adverbs from the aspect of semantic prosody. After a literary review, it is found that many researchers concentrate on the semantic prosody of verbs, nouns, verb phrases and noun phrases. From this condition, it is essential, to sum up, the semantic prosody of other word classes, for example, the adverbs. The research will help people realize that the collocation of some adverbs may show a specific semantic orientation to some extent.

Because semantic prosody plays a crucial role in deciding the appropriate word choice in context, it may have significant value in researching the typical collocation of lexical items, especially for the unique style--speech. When it comes to ESL, employing right words with proper semantic prosody is one of the capacities students should have, though native speakers can use collocations subconsciously. To have a growing habit to obey the grammatical rules of using collocations can also avoid semantic misunderstandings or pragmatic errors (Yuksel, 2013). So, the study of speech from the semantic prosody perspective provides new insight, no matter for lecture writing or public speaking practice.

When addressing various groups of people on different occasions, speakers always employ language differently cater to all needs from an audience. In all aspects of the characteristics of the speech style like syntax, rhetoric, phonetic and discourse structure, lexical items reflect expressive effect indeed. The study of adverbs holds an important position in the grammar research, but often be neglected by scholars (Zhong, 2011). In theory, the in-depth and in-width achievements have been obtained with the rapid growth of research methods and technology.

However, few people choose English speech style as a breakthrough point. In this way, through the detailed research of high-frequency adverbs in speech, the findings will provide an effective learning and teaching mode to standardize the use of adverbs. It is worth to initiate discussion on this blank new area and attract more and more people to achieve valuable results.

## **II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Different theories have been put forward to discuss the various aspects of adverbs in the English Language. This section discusses four approaches that add into the knowledge repository about adverbs namely, the syntactic Role and Reference Grammar, the Functional Grammar, and Croft's approach.

### **Role and Reference Grammar (RRG).**

Yuksel (2013) argues that this theory describes the primary differences between arguments and non-arguments, which is defined as the core and the periphery in the structure of a layered clause. Within the core is the predicate which is found in the nucleus, as well as the arguments brought forth by the predicate. On the other hand, the periphery is composed of non-arguments which might be present in a clause. A simple clause is only consisting of the core and the periphery at the same level while in more complex clauses, the nucleus, the core and in some instances, the clause as a whole may have their peripheries. In this instance, the noun phrase will have a core which has a periphery and may have a nucleus which translates into the presence of another periphery.

Within the RRG model, there is an operator which is defined as the grammatical item that modifies each clause level like the tense, modality, among others (Zhao,2010). They are not found in the nucleus, core, or periphery; instead, they modify each of the levels, and they are denoted externally to them in the layered structure. In some cases, operators such as negation, and an aspect modify the nucleus where they perform this role without the mention of the participants.

Additionally, Yule (2003) argues that operators are found among directional and event quantification, internal negation, and modality where they play the role of modifying the relation between the core argument which is defined as the actor and the action. As such, they can be compared to the periphery of the core which is composed of adverbs of pace, manner and locational adverbs which cannot describe the actions alone without mention of participants.

Zhong (2011) further adds that there are parallels between the levels on which different modifiers are found when drawing comparisons between the noun phrase and the clause. The RRG model provides an in-depth insight into the role played by modifiers drawing attention to the fact that the view of adjectives and adverbs does not always depict the entire image on a par. It emphasizes that the noun phrase which has several sublevels is very different from the clause with its sub-levels as shown by the different types of modification.

Adjectives are found in the nuclear periphery and can only modify the referent while manner adverbs are located in the periphery of the core at the clausal level. They change not only the predicate but also its participants. As such, the model concludes that the scope of modification of adjectives is narrower while manner adverbs modify the events that are denoted by verbs as well as other participants and other aspects of activities into their scope (Yuksel, 2013). This translates into that manner adverbs modify more complexly.

#### **Functional Grammar Approach**

According to Zaabalawi & Gould (2017), predication holds a more central role and is defined as the designating the application of a predicate to an appropriate number of arguments with the predicate specifying a relation or a property. Based on this, the different parts of speech are given definitions which are related to their uses as predicates. As such, an adverbial predicate is defined as those predicates which are used as modifiers of non-nominal heads and which correspond to manner adverbs. Although they are defined as predicates, they do not have any predicative uses. This is viewed as a feature of English where the non-predicative adverbs modify predicative verbs (Yuksel,2013). Verbal predicates are considered the only predicate type of those which serve as a basis for differentiating the parts of speech which have a predicative use only. This aspect opens up possibilities of nominal, adverbial and adjectival predicates being used in predicative functions.

#### **Use of Adverbs as Modifiers of Predicates**

The semantic division of parts of speech that has been used traditionally is considered inadequate as the classes are not restricted to a single part of speech each. Croft (1999) then proposes that while the semantic levels are not sufficient in the discernment of the part of speech categories, they are still required to do so. He adds that there is a need for a different dimension which gives the functions that the semantic classes are used in.

He opines that within every language, there are expressions for three primary pragmatic or propositional act functions. In this, they perform the tasks of modification, predication, and reference. Based on this, then, adverbs modify predicates since adjectives modify referents. As such, it is conclusive to say that adjectives and adverbs are closely related where adverbs are usually formed from adjectives such as when the suffix *-ly* is added to words in the English language. However, in other languages, there is no formal distinction between adjectives and adverbs.

However, there is a limitation to this approach that arises from the use of the terms reference and referent with regard to modification (Zaabalawi & Gould, 2017). Modification by a property aptly captures the similarities between adjectives and adverbs. On the other hand, the ability of modification to act within either referring or predicating expressions is illustrative of their different functions. To overcome this challenge, prototypical adverbs should be treated as property modifiers within predicating expressions which then gives a clear delimitation.

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Adverbs**

There have been studies exploring the role played by adverbs as modifiers. There are marked differences between native and non-native speakers of English in their usage of intensifiers; the ESL speakers made more use of a restricted number of core vocabulary items. Adverbs, especially those ending with *-ly* are a productive category of collocation since they involve a complicated interplay of lexical, semantic and stylistic restrictions. The focus of this paper is the lexical features of the English adverbs, so the related knowledge of adverb is discussed, including the following parts: the definitions of adverbs and the classifications of adverbs.

#### *Definitions of Adverbs*

Different dictionaries and grammar books give different interpretations of adverbs. From the perspective of semantic and syntactic functions, Merriam-Webster Dictionary describes adverb as “a word belonging to one of the major form classes in any of numerous languages, typically serving as a modifier of a verb, an adjective, another adverb, a preposition, a phrase, a clause, or a sentence, expressing some relation of manner or quality, place, time, degree, number, cause, opposition, affirmation, or denial, and in English also serving to connect and to express comment on clause content.”

According to Wikipedia encyclopedia, “an adverb is a word that modifies a verb, adjective, another adverb, determiner, noun phrase, clause, or sentence. Adverbs typically express manner, place, time, frequency, degree, level of certainty, etc., answering questions such as how, in what way, when, where, and to what extent.”

#### *Classifications of Adverbs*

Regarding word formation, adverbs fall into the following groups:

1. Simple adverbs. e.g. in, down, only, etc.
2. Compound adverbs. e.g. somehow, therefore, anyway, etc.
3. Derivational adverbs. e.g. actively, backwards, clearly, etc.
4. Fixed phrases. e.g. Of course, kind of, at last, etc.

In terms of syntactic function, adverbs can be divided into:

1. Modification adverbs. e.g. early, above, little, etc.
2. Conjunctiva adverbs. e.g. how, when, so, etc.
3. Relative adverbs. e.g. how, when, where, etc.
4. Sentence adverbs. e.g. actually, clearly, seemingly, etc.
5. Interrogative adverbs. e.g. how, when, where, etc.
6. Exclamatory adverbs. e.g. how, what.

In terms of semantic function, Leech divided adverbs into ten categories:

1. Adverbs of manner: Adverbs provide information on how someone does something.  
For example, Tom works quietly.
2. Adverbs of Time: Adverbs provide information on when something happens.  
For example, I met Tom yesterday.
3. Adverbs of Place: Adverbs provide information on where something happens.  
For example, I will meet Tom there.
4. Adverbs of Frequency: These adverbs are used to show the timing of the action that is happening.  
For example, I meet Tom every week.
5. Adverbs of Degree: They show what extent or how much has action been done or will be done.  
For example, I love Tom.
6. Adverbs of Comment and Attitude: give a comment or opinion about a situation.  
For example: Fortunately, I finished my paper.
7. Adverbs of Linking. e.g. firstly, however, therefore, etc.
8. Adverbs of Adding and Limiting. e.g. too, also, else, etc.
9. Adverbs of Viewpoint. e.g. strictly, mentally, officially, etc.
10. Adverbs of Length of Time. e.g. just, long, never, etc.

#### **Semantic Prosody**

##### *Definitions of Semantic Prosody*

Semantic prosody is also known as the semantic set (Stubbs, 1995; Hunston, 2002), semantic harmony (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, 1996), semantic associations (Hoey, 2003; Nelson, 2006) and so on. Sinclair (1987) first noticed the phenomenon that some words or phrases always occur in a specific semantic surrounding. For example, the phrase “set in” mainly connects with the subjects expressing unpleasant things: “decay”, “despair”, “rot” and “prejudice”.

Then, enlightened by Sinclair, Louw (1993) created the term semantic prosody in one of his papers. He borrowed the word “prosody” from phonological prosody which used by Firth (1957) in phonology. Louw enriched the basic idea of Sinclair and defined semantic prosody as “a consistent aura of meaning with which a form is imbued by its collocates” (Louw, 1993). He illustrated this language phenomenon with examples: “utterly” and “bent on”. They both have negative prosody because the expressions connected with these two words usually refer to bad things such as “sins”, “depression” and “ruining”. Stubbs then broadened it and suggested semantic prosody as “a particular collocational phenomenon” and collocation as “the habitual co-occurrence of two or more words” (Stubbs, 1996). According to Partington, the term is “the spreading of connotational coloring beyond single word boundaries” (Partington, 1998). In 2000, Hunston offered a new perspective that semantic prosody can express language users’ emotional tendentiousness include attitude, viewpoint and opinion.

As seen from the different definitions given by the scholars, a clear comprehension of semantic prosody should be realized. It is not confined to a single word, the certain meaning transfers from one word and another and even spread to the sentences and the whole context. And the pattern of collocation of lexical items shows language users’ feelings and evaluation. adverbs and the classifications of adverbs.

### *Classifications of Semantic Prosody*

According to the evaluation of the node words, the semantic prosody can be classified into positive, neutral and negative (Stubbs, 1996). Positive semantic prosody refers that the collocates of the node word are the words with distinct positive semantic characteristics. While negative semantic prosody means the collocates are words having negative semantic features; the words of natural semantic prosody attract compound words which can wither specific positive or negative meaning. Wei Naixing (2002) used the term “mixed semantic prosody” to refer to a complex one that has both positive and negative connotations.

Tribble, C. (1998) proposed global semantic prosody and local semantic prosody regarding linguistic style. Global semantic prosody is appropriate for all kinds of texts; however local semantic prosody is applied in a specific context or manner.

Pertington (2004) realized that semantic prosody is gradable, involving favorable or unfavorable features more or less. It mainly depends on whether the node item always connects with positive, negative or natural words. Absolutely, as a complicated linguistic phenomenon, whether semantic prosody is positive or not is hard to distinguish.

### **Public Speaking**

#### *Definitions of Public Speaking*

Many scholars define “speech” for different purposes. Speakers need to be taken into account, so Byrns (1997) believed that speech is a fundamental means of conveying information because the speaker often prepares the goal of a speech and deliver the intended message vividly. As to Dance (1996), speech is an act of using spoken language or gestures to communicate with audiences or participants. This is not a one-person show. Participants or, more often, listeners determine whether the speech is successful or not.

From the perspective of purpose, Wilson claimed that “A speech is usually considered as a unified strategy aimed to achieve a special effect, informative, persuasive, or others, to the extent that it is clear, interesting, credible and appropriate for the audience within a given time limit.” Regardless of the purposes involved, the attitude and the value of speeches usually affect listeners, so public speaking is “a value-embodied activity” (Osborn, 1998).

Lucas (2003) claimed a speech should involve seven elements-speaker, message, channel, listener, feedback, interference, and situation. In public speaking, the speaker is the person who presents information with appropriate oral language according to the speech context and the audience. What the speaker decides to convey is a message. Channel is the medium of intercourse between speaker and participants. Most speeches are transmitted in the wind through sound waves. Listeners are receivers who get messages, attitudes, values, knowledge and experiences from the speaker, accepting speaker’s verbal signals and non-verbal behaviors. To meet their needs, the speaker should also adjust his/her language according to audiences’ feedbacks. The situation includes time, place and other relevant environmental factors. Interference refers to noises that obstruct the communication, including not only the external noises but also more complicated one-internal interference.

#### *Studies on Public Speaking at Home*

In recent years, with the continuous development of all kinds of English speech competitions, many universities are gradually opening the relevant courses in our country, attracting a lot of people to study in this field. But in the process of gathering information, relevant research findings in corpus linguistics are insufficient.

For the study of speech, scholars have analyzed from multiple perspectives. To take a whole view, Wang Huijuan (2011) did a comprehensive survey of trends and problems of public speaking in China. Most of the studies focus on political or inspirational speeches, identified by the speech type property. Wang Hongyang (2007) did contrastive research of modifiers in English political speech and academic speech and found that different modifiers in political and educational speeches help speakers express different meanings. Jiang Xue (2009) and Cao Xia (2014) both do research based on speeches delivered by Barack Obama. Other political leaders are also popular in studies.

Public speaking teaching is a significant part as well. There are three main groups: non-English majors; English majors and other English learners. Wang Lifei and Wen qiufang (2007) pointed out that the number of participates in our country is naturally small, comparing with other countries. And schools are supposed to find ways to improve students’ oral English proficiency. Therefore, it is a practical way to achieve this goal by integrating English speech teaching into daily teaching schedule (Ji Zhimei, 2009). Some researches put particular emphasis on the cultivation of students’ thinking ability in English speech teaching process. Zhang Jingping, Huang Xiumin (2009) claimed that for many years, our country’s foreign language teachers emphasize the inflexible rules of language skills and the existing knowledge of books rather than the practical application ability and critical thinking. Everybody welcomes independent minds and voices.

According to the theories adopted, abundant research achievements have been gained, combining speech and pragmatic principle, discourse analysis, systemic functional grammar, among others. However, there is no systemic and thorough research in the field of semantic prosody. Additionally, adopting this theory in studying adverbs is still a new field, so the relevant issues need to be further examined; positive and negative meanings.

## IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is conducted through a combination of both the quantitative approach of corpus linguistics and the qualitative approach. Generally, researchers use quantitative studies to open doors to reveal questions and show the

relationship between data and observation. Employing mathematical theories and developing statistic models are essential in the quantitative method because of the central questions such as “how many”, “what are they” can be solved by using them.

The applications of quantitative studies spread throughout many research fields, making contributions to social sciences, natural sciences and language studies. In a scientific study, both corpus-based research and corpus-driven study are quantitative methods. After deciding what to study, researchers design specific and valuable questions and then collect quantifiable data from various sources to analyze useful numbers by using statistics. Finally, findings and results can be concluded with objective and unbiased observation.

In this study, the author asks questions about the frequency and characteristics of adverbs first. Then a native speakers' speeches corpus of around five hundred thousand has been established, aiming to discover the answers to the questions mentioned above. The author intends to render the results objectively, without excessive suppositions. So, the quantitative research method is used to observe the relation between data and information in this paper.

A qualitative study, however, is a process of exploration. It is also a process of identifying questions. After dealing with issues about quality (For example, “what they are” “why this phenomenon happens” and so on), researchers can describe the thing or phenomenon in words.

In this way, the quality and features of the studied object will be reflected indeed, comprehensively and deeply. The qualitative study lays particular emphasis on language explanation and illustration of the phenomenon. The significant steps of qualitative research include: explore the aspect; reveal what the problems are; find out the feasible solutions.

Furthermore, the methods of qualitative research mainly comprise the case study method, interview and observation. In this study, the author regards the various kinds of adverbs as research objects and takes English speeches as research texts. And much of the work is interpretative from the accurate observation rather than speculative ideas.

The reasons why the author combines both qualitative and quantitative study are that these two methods have their specific superiority and practicability, but they also interrelate with each other to some extent. With these two complementary approaches in one study, the author could research the same issues from different angles, thus bringing forth conclusions roundly and accurately. Accordingly, the mixed methodology is conducive to understanding the fundamental laws of using adverbs.

### **Corpora Used in This Study**

To collect the original and authentic materials from native speakers, the author decided to download classical and famous speeches delivered by celebrities. After searching on the Internet, the public 100 speeches were chosen. 137 renowned experts in public speaking selected those speeches which have often been retold and recited around the world because of social influence and the art of language. Also, the author found dozens of 21st speech texts on the Internet, including commencement speeches, festival speeches, entertaining speeches and so on. As a whole, there are 177 articles in the self-built English speech corpus, having 20,542 types and 485,406 tokens. The speakers are varied: from the president to student, from Her Majesty to feminist, from business elite to AIDS patient.....They give the audience substantial contents.

The topics are various that related to political issues, economic development, education reformation, cultural diversity, military strategies, social environment, scientific and technological advance, etc. The reasons why the author adopted famous speeches not simple homework from Western students or impromptu speeches given by native speakers are that the famous speeches are popular not only among the English-speaking countries but also in other regions. It is easier for learners to grasp knowledge with the help of familiar and vivid texts. Then, they are formal and standard. To obtain the correct usages of words, learners are supposed to regard the official speeches as “reference textbooks”. Finally, because they are recorded in the form of text or radio, the convenient access to the original texts make them adequate for corpus construction.

### **Instruments**

#### *Tree Tagger*

The TreeTagger is a tagging software, noting text with POS and lemma information. The founder Helmut Schmid defined the tool as “Markov Model tagger which makes use of a decision tree to get more reliable estimates for contextual parameters” (Helmut Schmid, 1995). The tagger works very well for not only English but also several other languages where even large corpora are available based on thousands of studies. It can be successfully used to tag German, French, Italian, Bulgarian, Portuguese, Russian, Dutch, Spanish, Greek, Chinese texts, etc. According to Helmut Schmid, the best tagger version shows the high accuracy, 97.5%. Furthermore, the running speed is fast. About 8000 tokens are tagged per second.

#### *AntConc*

AntConc is a freeware corpus analysis toolkit developed by Japanese scholar Laurence Anthony for concordance and text analysis. One of its fundamental functions is to search and extract all the entries of a word or a phrase. People can collect and analyze statistics by using word lists or cluster lists. Besides, some keywords will be listed through the comparison between the observed corpus and reference corpus, reflecting the usages of words in different contexts as well as the relationship between the words. AntConc is applied in this research to count the frequencies and semantic orientations of adverbs.

#### *PatternBuilder for Treetagger*

PatternBuilder for Treetagger is an object creation software which provides a fast and easy way to design patterns. With this software, the construction of a complex object from its representation is separated. By doing so, the same construction process can create different representations. The difficulty of it is to use patterns to edit objects that contain flat data (HTML code, SQL query, X.509 certificate...), which means, data that can't be easily edited step by step. Using a builder class is the best way to construct these kinds of complex objects. PatternBuilder for Treetagger is an efficient tool designed for it specifically.

### Procedures

Firstly, the articles are selected and converted into a textual format. Because subjects in this study are various forms of adverbs, we should extract them to do some further researches. As seen above, adverbs are divided into simple adverbs, compound adverbs, derivational adverbs and fixed phrases. However, it seems unlikely that all the categories can be covered in a single limited study due to some practical reasons. Therefore, the author has narrowed the subjects down to words rather than phrases. By using TreeTagger software, the tagged articles are as follows.

*Mona\_NP and\_CC I\_PP would\_MD like\_VV to\_TO take\_VV this\_DT opportunity\_NN to\_TO greet\_VV our\_PP\$ friends\_NNS here\_RB in\_IN China\_NP and\_CC our\_PP\$ old\_JJ friends\_NNS back\_RB home\_RB in\_IN America\_NP . \_SENT*

According to English Treetagger tag set, RB symbolizes adverbs. So there are three adverbs in the excerpt: "here", "back", "home". Likewise, the author filters the data so that all the RB type of words, that is, adverbs, can be extracted by using Excel. The obtained adverbs are placed in a txt file named "adverbs". The writer then applies the AntConc search tool which provides the occurrence frequency of each of the adverbs to list the top 30 adverbs that are commonly used by native speakers.

Adverbs can be classified in different ways. For ease of operation and editing, the types are given as follows: adverb of time, place, frequency, degree, conjunction, sentence and other kinds of adverbs. With the aid of AntConc, the author observes the quantities of each type and calculates the frequency of occurrence respectively. When it comes to the number of adverbs in the whole corpus, it is necessary to use PatternBuilder for TreeTagger tag set to get any adverb's pattern. After knowing the total number of adverbs, the proportions of every type in the general adverbs can be calculated as well.

In the next step, to find out whether high-frequency adverbs have a specific semantic preference or not, the writer uses AntConc to analyze the corpus data. By searching the adverbs in this software, the total number of collocate types and collocates are presented, which can also obtain the most markedly used verbs. With those verbs, some specific semantic preferences will be created. At last, the prosody of some adverbs will be analyzed, and the frequently used verbs will be listed. Conducive to understanding fundamental laws of using adverbs.

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### General Studies of Adverbs

#### Overall Frequency

At first, the speeches should be tagged by TreeTagger that adds the part-of-speech of each word. Next, the author searches symbol of adverbs (R) in the PatternBuilder for TreeTagger tag set, then gets the pattern of adverbs: "\S+\_RB\w\*\s". After opening the corpus, the writer hides tags but allow tag search in Conc/Plot/File View, and searches "\S+\_RB\w\*\s" in AntConc to observe the overall frequency of adverbs. The study also contains the searches of noun's pattern "\S+\_N\w+\s", verb's pattern "\S+\_VV\w\*\s" and adjective's pattern "\S+\_JJ\w\*\s" as references.

TABLE 4.1  
OVERALL FREQUENCY OF ADVERBS IN CORPUS

Corpus Size	Adv.(%)	N.(%)	V.(%)	Adj.(%)
485,406	26,006 (5.36%)	112,435 (23.16%)	55,887 (11.51%)	36,787 (7.58%)

The data from Table 4.1 reveals that native speakers use fewer adverbs in their speeches compared with nouns, verbs and adjectives. However, it is undeniable that adverbs occupy an important place in English language, especially in speeches. Like other kinds of words, adverbs should be valued sufficiently. laws of using adverbs.

#### High-frequency Adverbs in Corpus

With the function of word list, the list of high-frequency adverbs is observed. The 30 most commonly used ones are as shown in the table below.

TABLE 4.2  
TOP 30 COMMONLY USED ADVERBS IN CORPUS

Rank	Frequency(%)	Word	Rank	Frequency	Word
1	5128(19.71%)	Not	16	296	well
2	1473(5.66%)	So	17	272	always
3	1002(3.85%)	Now	18	263	much
4	773	As	19	247	still
5	651	Only	20	238	together
6	592	Here	21	235	again
7	533	Just	22	230	back
8	512	Never	23	221	ago
9	474	Then	24	217	about
10	437	All	25	214	far
11	385	Very	26	194	yet
12	356	There	27	190	really
13	353	Too	28	180	no
14	303	Also	29	176	long
14	303	Ever	30	143	right

As we can see, native speakers rely heavily on the negative adverb-- “not”, accounting for nearly 20 per cent in the whole group. The reason why “not” is so significant is that quite a number of negative clauses contain this word. And it is clear that negative sentences are widely used in speeches in order to express the opposite ideas, emotions, facts and so on. Therefore, the proper use of negative sentences in both general English and English speeches will play an active role in language learning. The second frequently used adverb is “so”. When used as an adverb, the most important function is to show what extent or how much has an action been done or will be done. Other popular adverbs of degree also include “just” “only” “very” “too” “much”. Besides, there are some words that have complex semantic meanings, for example, “as” can be used as an adverb of degree showing the same meaning with “equally” and “the same as”. The third one is an adverb of time: “now”.

One of the purposes of those speeches in corpus is to charm the audience. Often, they may be concerned about the things at the moment. If the speaker mentioned a current situation and emphasized it by using the word “now”, the audience would be motivated, inspired and encouraged to put into practice. In this way, some adverbs of time, not just a symbol of time, play a major role in attracting audience. Other kinds of adverbs, such as adverbs of manner, adverbs of frequency, adverbs of place, are used widely so that the rich and varied sentences can form an informative and attractive speech.

From the table 4.2, the native speakers tend to use adverbs which are simple and multifunctional. All the words are pretty ordinary in our daily life. The possible reason may be that the speeches need to be enormously easy to understand so that the ideas of speakers could convey to audiences clearly. Therefore, learners are supposed to use simple but meaningful adverbs in public speaking.

#### *Distribution of Each Semantic Category of Adverbs*

In terms of semantic function, the adverbs can be divided into several groups. However, it is inevitable that the boundaries of each category are not very clear because both the overlaps and gaps are existed. Table 4.3 shows a general summary of the distribution of different types of adverbs. Besides, some examples are also mentioned.

TABLE 4.3  
DISTRIBUTION OF EACH SEMANTIC CATEGORY OF ADVERBS

	Frequency	Words
1 adverb of degree	5774	fairly,pretty,rather,quite,just,very,much,too,so,greatly,almost,nearly,half,highly,deeply,partly,perfectly,really,especially,indeed,only,totally,particularly,rather,absolutely,enough,ultimately,probably,merely,little,surely,etc.
2 other kinds of adverbs	5581	faithfully,carefully,successfully,perfectly,sincerely,financially,confidently,fortunately,positively,etc.
3 adverb of time	5292	now,then,soon,ago,recently,lately,later,before,early,today,tomorrow,yesterday, tonight,suddenly,immediately,still,already,early,finally,first,immediately,late,long,presently,shortly,since,soon,yet,ago,before,again,fourth,firstly,secondly,second,thirdly,etc.
4 adverb of place	4440	here,there,up,down,away,nearby,home,ahead,abroad,indoors,overseas,upstairs,downstairs,out,etc.
5 adverb of conjunction	3406	when,why,where,how,also,therefore,besides,otherwise,however,moreover,furthermore,still,thus,meanwhile,etc.
6 adverb of frequency	1299	always,usually,often,frequently,constantly,occasionally,sometimes,seldom,hardly,rarely,never,once,twice,etc.
7 adverb of sentence	207	frankly,honestly,clearly,obviously,evidently,generally,briefly,fortunately,luckily,unexpectedly,naturally,hopefully,hence,etc.

In order to make the data more comparable, the writer draws a pie chart with proportions of different categories of adverbs.

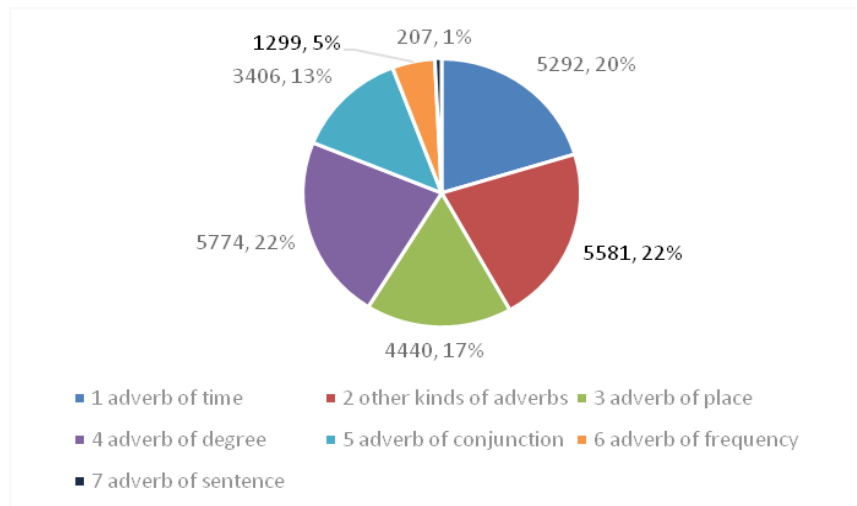


Chart 4.1 The percentage of each semantic category of adverbs

The results reveal that native speakers use various kinds of adverbs in English speeches, especially the adverbs of time, place and degree. The proportions of those three categories are 22%, 20% and 17%, which occupy relatively large part in Chart 4.1. Other kinds of adverbs embrace the adverbs of manner, the restrictive adverbs and some adverbs with more than one semantic meaning. It is also a large part because it accounts for 22% of all those adverbs. Those adverbs of frequency that used to show the timing of the action that is happening, including “always”, “usually”, “often” and so on, accounting for about 5 per cent. Though the percent of adverbs of sentence is only 1%, we cannot ignore this category. Therefore, ESL learners can master idiomatic usages of adverbs with the help of the corpus data.

#### Specific Studies of Adverbs

As is mentioned in last part, all the adverbs are extracted utilizing the AntConc and Excel programs. Next stage is to place those adverbs in their original contexts to find out the rules, that means the author should open the corpus files and observe the specific semantic preferences of adverbs through KWIC concordance method provided by AntConc. Some words can create certain semantic preferences, and the phenomena occur with a degree of regularity (Ernst, 2002). The major types of semantic prosody will be investigated in this part, followed by a detailed observation and analysis. Furthermore, the verbs, which collocate with different adverbs, will be listed as well.

#### Positive Semantic Prosody

A speaker tends to choose positive adverbs to modify verbs, adjectives and other adverbs when he or she wants to spread optimistic emotions, convey positive attitudes and provide positive messages to listeners. A speaker also would like to use those kinds of adverbs to draw the audiences' attention so that the purpose of speeches will be accomplished. Several adverbs with positive prosody are listed below.

TABLE 4.4  
THE ADVERBS WITH POSITIVE SEMANTIC PROSODY

Adverbs(freq.)	Collocates(freq.) V.
wisely(23)	use(3); act(2); form(2); perform; extend; strengthen; inaugurate; solve; undertake; order; forecast; make; fulfill; invest ; regulate; exempt; face; admonish; spend
faithfully(22)	execute(9); report(2); manifest; observe; discharge; carry; serve;
perfectly(19)	adapt(2); work; illustrate; appear; make; correlate; sell;
fortunately(13)	demonstrate; think

From this table, “wisely”, “faithfully”, “perfectly” are mostly modify the verbs. However, the searching result shows that “fortunately” is an adverb which modify the whole sentence in more cases.

Table 4.4 Concordance lines of WISELY (span=5)

*held to account to spend wisely, reform bad habits, and do in sharing burdens, will we wisely perform the work of peace. of business on currency, have wisely extended their investigations in European. must be sacredly preserved and wisely strengthened. The constituted authorities affairs of foreign governments wisely inaugurated by Washington, keeping ourselves of our people to solve wisely and for civilization the mighty our task must be undertaken wisely and without heedless vindictiveness. Our Constitution and that weak but wisely ordered young nation that looked be the duty of Congress wisely to forecast and estimate these might arise, and provision was wisely made for it. The freedom to the great mission so wisely and bravely fulfilled by our majorities, the Executive has been wisely invested with a qualified veto those political institutions that were wisely and deliberately formed with reference proof that a popular government, wisely formed, is wanting in no just powers. You have been wisely admonished to "accustom yourselves to Constitution our commerce has been wisely regulated with foreign nations and the functions of religion, so wisely*



exempted from civil jurisdiction; to that we use this gift **wisely** and that we avert some uses his freedom and equality **wisely** well. My good friends, I is the strength to act **wisely** when most we are afraid. problem if we face it **wisely** and courageously. It can be interest. Whether we use it **wisely** or unwisely, we can use nation, to act -- to act **wisely**, to act vigorously, to act

Take “wisely” as an example, the author finds 23 occurrences in corpus. After observing the 23 concordance lines of “wisely” with eyes at first, the verbs that connect with it are noted down. According to the classification of speeches, the words all existed in the inaugural addresses and political speeches. Therefore, when it comes to some political policies or declarations in public speaking or writing, learners can use the item “wisely” appropriately like native speakers.

**Negative Semantic Prosody**

There are also unpleasant events in speeches. It is such an effective way to show the bad feelings or express griefs over incidents or concern about the situations with the negative adverbs. Though the purpose of lecture is to give audiences the strength and courage, the negative prosody, to some extent, uncover the dark side of the society and bring the truth to light. The number of these kinds of adverbs is relatively small in corpus.

TABLE 4.5  
THE ADVERBS WITH NEGATIVE SEMANTIC PROSODY

Adverbs(freq.)	Collocates(freq.) v.
unwisely(5)	choose; cede; control; use; disturb
Unfortunately(8)	Deteriorate

Table 4.5 Concordance lines of UNFORTUNATELY

of our system, but, **unfortunately**, it has not been executed in a manner to accomplish ring revolutionary music, the Marseillaise (which **unfortunately** has deteriorated into a war tune) ssive military assistance to Cambodia itself. Now **unfortunately**, while we deeply sympathize with ith the public and the press invited. Sometimes, **unfortunately**, Communists are driven to cation of how many people saw what you gave them. **Unfortunately**, it does not reveal the depth l meetings that have been scheduled thus far, but **unfortunately** I had to scrub the Western one -- you go ahead and clean up. Then the young lady, **unfortunately** for her first argument, proved excess is almost sure to invite a reaction; and, **unfortunately**, the reactions instead of taking the

Statistics shows that “unfortunately” appears only 8 times in corpus. The mainly function is to modify the whole sentence to express the negative feelings. Speakers may feel sorry for something, may share regrets in life, or even keeps people alert to convince people completely. Therefore, when learners need to comment on things that have identical properties with those in corpus, they are supposed to employ the negative adverb “unfortunately”.

**Mixed Semantic Prosody**

These kind of adverbs have a complex prosody, showing positive or negative semantic prosody on the basis of different feelings and attitude conveyed by speakers. There is no good or bad trend in other situations. Comparatively speaking, the number of this type is smaller than words with positive or negative prosody.

TABLE 4.6  
THE ADVERB WITH MIXED SEMANTIC PROSODY

adverbs(freq.)	collocates(freq.) v.	
carefully(22)	Positive	guard(2); endeavor; cultivate
	Negative	avoid; control
	Neutral	read(2); examine; look; listen; calculate; pick; control; analyze; select; check out; consider; think

Table 4.6 Concordance lines of CAREFULLY

for I assure myself that whilst you **carefully** avoid every alteration which might endanger on a long walk in Central Park, listened **carefully** to me, and finally said, "That sounds like curious that the Americans, who calculate so **carefully** on the possibilities of military victory the jury, my comrade and co-defendant having **carefully** and thoroughly gone into the evidence to be to keep women in the places they have **carefully** picked out for them. Treitschke, made rights of the citizens of other nations as **carefully** as it protects the rights of its own America's weapons are nonprovocative, **carefully** controlled, designed to deter, and capable on the circumstances. We find him **carefully** analyzing the society for which he was publications we all have seen that **carefully** select quotations out of context from the plane, we had to check out everything **carefully**. And we've had the plane protected and the appropriate time not just a few articles **carefully** culled for the Government i's purposes, but let me start a rumor. Like you, I have **carefully** read President Kennedy's messages about consider such clearance reports **carefully** when making up its mind about the reason for taking the time today to think **carefully** and clearly on the subject of human of rationalizations, and if you read **carefully** the President's last speech to the people within the privacy of courts or behind **carefully** guarded confidences of a narrow and

By analyzing the collocates of “carefully”, we are able to know the exact usages of those adverbs which have complex semantic prosodies. It is clear that “carefully” can cause positive prosody when speakers express positive ideas

or attitude. The negative prosody will be created if speakers share bad feelings with listeners. Besides, speakers use the neutral semantic prosody to narrate in a calm and objective manner. With the help of data in corpus, ESL learners can easily have a grasp of this kind of adverbs.

### Neutral Semantic Prosody

More words, in fact, show a neutral attitude lack of the obvious preference. Because in more cases speakers should maintain their objectivity to narrate things in a calm and fair manner.

TABLE 4.7  
THE ADVERBS WITH NEUTRAL SEMANTIC PROSODY

adverbs(freq.)	collocates(freq.) v.
truly(39)	light; express; enjoy; believe; want; love; call; realize; depend; need; understand
completely(39)	feel (2); cover; close; change; establish; deny; recover; remove; clear; explain; fail; deteriorate
politically(30)	move(7); aware(2); think; smear; mangle; operate

After the observation of these words, we can find that the semantic prosodies of them are not apparent. It reminds us that knowing the usages of those words is necessary for the process of practical teaching and learning, because not every ESL learner can make good use of adverbs. Sometimes, they may use these adverbs to create good or bad semantic orientation and make mistakes.

### Major Findings

(1) When compared with nouns, verbs and adjectives, the frequency of adverbs is relatively low in English speeches, and it only accounts for 5 % of all the words. However, it is undeniable that adverbs occupy a prominent place in English teaching and learning, especially in speeches.

(2) According to semantic functions, adverbs can be divided into several categories: adverbs of time, place, degree, frequency, conjunction, sentence and other types. The most commonly used class is the adverbs of frequency, while the adverbs of sentence occupy a small part.

(3) Through the process of data observation and analysis, the author finds that the Top 3 widely used adverbs in the corpus are: “not”, “so” and “now”. Besides, more adverbs of degree occur in the list of high-frequency adverbs.

(4) The study finds that some adverbs have certain semantic orientations. And when those adverbs connect with verbs, some typical semantic prosodies are created including positive, negative, neutral and mixed prosodies. For example, “wisely” shows positive prosody, “unfortunately” creates negative preference, and “carefully” has the mixed semantic prosody.

### Pedagogical Implications

The present study is particularly relevant to language teaching, and the findings can be employed in the classroom as it would make sense for both teachers and students. Firstly, knowing the appropriate use of lexical items may improve the learner’s English performance. Learners are supposed to aware of the importance of using adverbs, however, in practice, a large number of Chinese students have not realized the flexible functions of adverbs thus paying little attention to usages. Therefore, teachers should make more significant effects, like urging students to learn the specific usages of different kinds of adverbs. Only when they use adverbs as well as other words correctly, can they write very precise English and speak idiomatic speeches.

In this paper, the author explores some general using habits in public speaking, hoping to enlighten ESL learners more or less. When a learner begins to prepare for a speech, he may use a reasonable amount of various kinds of adverbs under native speakers’ guidance. Furthermore, his views, attitudes and feelings may be reflected by choosing appropriate adverbs. So, it’s a matter of studying laws of semantic preferences and following them.

Semantic prosody, which is an important part of linguistics, has not become a focus in previous researches of adverbs. To find the hidden rules at the same time is to identify the right collocates (Biber, 1999). In the rich and diverse lexical environment surrounding speech words, some adverbs have certain semantic prosodies while others do not share regular patterns. It is important, besides, that learners list commonly used verbs that integrate adverbs into semantic groups to express emotions conveniently. In public speaking, speakers need to use positive adverbs to speak highly of the excellent morals of people or extend sincere gratitude to them, while they tend to use negative adverbs to criticize the dark side of the society. ESL learners should have a good grasp of semantic prosody in the specific context to attract the attention of the audience.

Thirdly, the corpus provides sufficient evidence as to how to use the adverbs. As corpus involves important real examples, which offers a clear overview for the formation of semantic prosodies. It is much easier for learners to understand how adverbs connect with verbs and how the semantic preference is created instead of memorizing complex grammatical rules in books. The corpus-based and corpus-driven approaches can be adopted in the classroom, which may lighten the load of both lecturers and students. Teachers can extract words with concrete examples in the corpus and regard them as teaching materials while students can distinguish different words and digest them with the aid of corpus.

## VI. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper attempts to make a tentative study on features of adverbs in English speeches based on the corpus data. However, some restrictions also existed due to subjective and objective reasons. One of the limitations is that the author only analyzed a few aspects of lexical features. Due to the constraints of time and technical means, the research does not cover more information, for example, the origin of an adverb, the grammatical meanings and some individual usages. If possible, those will be valued in future studies.

With regard to semantic prosody, the discussion runs out of material. Since semantic prosody is a preferred usage of language by people, it may be changed more or less with the development of age, mind, knowledge of people and other outside factors like times, society and language itself. It is almost impossible to master idiomatic usages of all words, so it is not easy to explain every word's semantic prosodies. For future research, some authentic and definite theories about semantic prosody could be established. And researchers may study semantic prosody in special English which reflects language users' idiomatic choices.

Also, there are challenges with the corpus. First, the corpus is relatively small in size. Some researchers are based on foreign corpora such as BNC which provides a total capacity of 100 million words or a 450,000,000-word COCA corpus. Even the smaller BROWN covers 1014300 items. It is misleading if we do not verify the findings and rules in large-scale corpora. However, the accepted corpora for particular purposes have not appeared. For this reason, expert professionals and researchers need to build up a series of larger ESP corpora to obtain much more sophisticated research productions.

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# Motivating Language Learners during Times of Crisis through Project-based Learning: Filming Activities at the Arab International University (AIU)

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**Abstract**—Times of crisis and the critical conditions that Syrian students have experienced during the last six years have a significant influence on their level of motivation, their academic performance and their attitudes towards their study in general and language learning in specific. This study explores the effects of project-based learning through video making on students' motivation and attitudes towards English courses in comparison to the negative effects produced by the traditional teaching which is mainly based on textbooks. This research is carried out at Arab international university, Foreign Language Center. A total of 24 intermediate students from three different majors participated in the study. Data were drawn from a number of resources including group discussions and informal notes, student self-evaluation questionnaire, and students' performance results. The learning outcomes were remarkable. The motivational level and the attitudes of the experimental group in the second part of the course in which project-based learning sessions were held improved and witnessed a difference in performance comparing it to the first eight weeks of the course in which traditional teaching approach was implemented. Moreover, the learners have improved their linguistic skills when attempting to write the video scripts in addition to developing their oral presentation skills, team work, and their organization and planning skills.

**Index Terms**—motivation, students' attitudes and feelings, times of crisis, project-based learning, and documentary video production

## I. INTRODUCTION

According to Dornyei (1998, 2010), motivating students in English as a foreign language classrooms is not an easy task and it embeds various psycho-sociological and linguistic factors. While motivation is "such a complex phenomenon" (Petrides, 2006, p.2) that has different definitions (Liuliene & Metiuniene, 2006), it is used in this paper to refer to some strategies that can change students' negative attitudes towards learning English and increase their motivation in times of crisis.

Students' anxieties caused by crisis and war can greatly affect students' academic performance, their learning, and most importantly their motivation. Thus, instructors, along with administrations, are responsible for assisting those students to overcome these difficulties and to cope with the current difficult conditions. How to achieve this and how to motivate students in such situations is one of the main concerns of many teachers in Syria.

In this paper, students' viewpoints about this issue, that's their negative attitudes of English language learning and their lack of motivation were elicited. Depending on their responses, I was able to suggest and apply some strategies that assist in motivating students.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### **Students during Times of Crisis**

The term crisis in general is defined as a series of events that affect a certain country, such as "economic or financial collapses, epidemics, genocides, mass terrorism, natural disasters, political or civil unrest, and wars" (McVay, 2015, p.19). The Syrian crisis that started in 2011 produced most of the aforementioned events that affected the whole country in all different aspects of life including the field of education and created an 'education emergency' (Deane, 2016). Researches stressed the importance of education, but this field is "a second-order priority in conflict and post-conflict contexts" (Deane, 2016). Little importance is given to higher education when the issue of education is addressed in conflict contexts, and the main focus is on basic and secondary education (Deane, 2016). University students should be given a lot of attention and the higher education should be the focus of ministries and agencies in times of crisis because of two major factors: first, the higher education is an essential part to "the building of human capital" which is defined as "the accumulated stock of education, knowledge and skills" (Deane, 2016). Second, because it is considered a "platform for mitigating tension, and a mechanism of security protection" (Deane, 2016). The difficult conditions the are

usually caused by conflict unrest affect students in diverse ways, one of which is that learning becomes hard due to the hard times students experience (Shore, 2006). Another notable effect of the "intense feelings of fear, horror, or helplessness" is stress (Schwitzer, 2003, p.53). And it is often leads to adjustment disorder that makes people find it difficult to function at work, school, and even home.

Another typical reaction is "loss of motivation" (Maertz, n. d). Students in general become indifferent and careless about their studies. They turn into merely passive receivers of knowledge, and as (Shor, 2006) put it: "unhappy students rarely complain so often and so loudly in class; they just drop the class, or figure out how to get their A or B and sit through it".

There are different strategies and teaching practices that can be employed to deal with students during times of crisis and assist them to cope with their harsh conditions. In 2007, Therese A. Huston and Michelle Dipieto (2007) conducted a survey which revealed that students appreciate the fact that their faculties and instructors acknowledge the crisis and take an action about it in the classroom, such as "incorporating the event into the lesson plan or topics for the course" (Huston & Dipieto, 2007, p.21). However, bringing up the issue and mentioning the hard events can be "counterproductive for students" if nothing is done to support them (Chick & CFT staff, 2001/2013). Thus, the teaching practices should be adjusted according to the ongoing variables that are occurring (Shore, 2006).

Researchers suggest varied strategies when approaching difficult conversations (Chaitin, 2003). One of them is to allow students to set "the ground rules" (Chick & CFT staff, 2001/2013).. A thing that will help them to "share their thoughts, emotions, and ideas (and) find power at a time when the crisis has left them feeling powerless"(Chick & CFT staff, 2001/2013). Another strategy is that when the institutions show their commitment and care for the students by providing and facilitating the best services especially during times of crisis. Consequently, students' level of commitment and social integration will increase (Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004. P.73).

#### **Project Based Learning (PBL) Learning by Doing: An Overview**

Project Based Learning (PBL) is not a new approach and giving students projects to do is an old teaching practice (Thomas, 2000; Merkhham et al, 2003).Project based learning is mainly student –centered which leads to produce an end product (Bell, 2010).A common agreement regarding what constitutes PBL has not been reached yet in which most instructors incorporate PBL activities in their classes using different forms of projects and different contents (Moursund, 1999). However, it is agreed upon that PBL can be implemented individually or in groups, and it includes researching a topic and presenting it using different methods of explanations, such as diagrams, footages, images, etc. (Blumenfeld et al., 1991; Demirhan, 2002; Yurtlok, 2003; Gultekin, 2005).

**Characteristics and learning outcomes.** PBL, as suggested by research, leads to many positive outcomes for both students and instructors. These outcomes can be categorized as follows.

**Active engagement and motivation.** When implementing PBL, a high level of students' engagement is reached (Belland, et al., 2006; Brush & Say, 2008). This approach is different from the traditional, didactic approach that keeps students passive receivers of knowledge (Bell, 2010), and the "average noise level is much higher than in traditional classrooms" because students are actively engaged in group work and/or pair work. (Moursund, 1999, p.13). PBL gives the opportunity for all students including high achievers and low achievers to be actively engaged and to learn more than they do in traditional classes (Mergendoller, et al., 2006; Mioduser & Betzer, 2003).

PBL contributes as well in increasing students' motivation to learn (Blumenfeld et al, 1991). Instructors who implement PBL in their classes notice an improvement in students' attendance, participation and willingness to do assignments (Bottoms & Webb, 1998). According to Bell (2010), and Moursund, (1999). PBL is intrinsically motivating and this makes students work harder and be more willing to do extra challenging tasks while working on their projects.

Before commencing any project work, a careful planning to get started is essential (Bell, 2010; Moursund, 1999; Hakkarainen, 2011). According to the Moursund (1999), instructors shouldn't have high expectations of their students and before starting any project they should do what is called "a needs assessment" (p.49) to know the experience of students and their background information; for example, instructors can ask students about whether they have worked on any project before, time management, working with groups, etc.

**Collaboration.** Students can work on their projects in teams and "their joint collaborative efforts are often coordinated through technology" (Moursund, 1999, p.12).Working collaboratively results in many positive outcomes on students, one of which is learning to be more responsible because they are fully aware that they have to finish their allocated tasks on time. Holding responsibility towards colleagues "provides more motivation for students than if they were only responsible to the teacher" (Bell, 2010, p.40). Another positive outcome is that students interact more with friends and make new ones (Belland, et al., 2006; Lightner, et al., 2007). Also, in order to collaborate and cooperate successfully, students learn other fundamental skills like listening skills, respecting others, and self-evaluation (Bell, 2010). He stated that students "evaluate not only their projects, but also the success of social interaction" (P.41). Through collaboration students have the opportunity to learn from each other and to "provide constructive feedback to themselves and to their peers" (Moursund, 1999, p.13).

**Student-centered learning and authenticity.** Students have the freedom to choose their topics and "to shape their projects to fit their own interests and abilities" (Moursund, 1999, p.12).Thomas (2000) stated that "projects are students driven to some significant degree (and) realistic not school-like" (p.3-4). The roles of students who work on projects is

central in which they work almost autonomously in designing, solving problems and the process of making decisions. (Thomas, Mergendoller & Michaelson, 1999). Students are given the opportunity to plan, implement, and evaluate their projects that are related to real life beyond the classroom (Blank, 1997). So, project based learning is related to constructivism which is an educational theory based on the idea that students construct their new knowledge and building on their current context and skills (Fosnot, 1996). PBL usually engages students in real-world projects and consequently they learn both real world applications of skills and analytical thinking (Boaler, 1999).

**Video production-supported PBL.** This generation of students is overwhelmed by technological devices (Hofer & Owings-Swan, 2005), yet these technologies are not used as they should be used inside the classroom. Those students need a different model of teaching and learning that teach using technology more than the previous generation that mainly implement the traditional teacher-centered model of education (Mehlinger and Powers, 2002; Hofer & Owings-Swan, 2005). Many researchers come to an agreement that there is a need for more student-centered approaches (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 1999), and students need to contribute in constructing their own knowledge and understanding through their active engagement in the learning process. (Jonassen, 1991).

"Digital movie making offers an opportunity to harmonize the use of technology to support student centered pedagogy" (Hofer & Owings-Swan, 2005, p.104). Movie making is a PBL activity that can be defined as using multiple forms of media, such as photos, sounds, narration, images, etc. in order to deliver certain understanding. (Hofer & Owings-Swan, 2005, p.104).

Research has reported numerous outcomes of video making activities. First, Rayn (2002); Burn et al (2001); Hoffenberg and Handler (2001) pointed out that video making increases students' motivation and enjoyment. Second, it enhances students' creativity according to New (2006); Reid, Burn, and Parker (2002). Third, student-centered video projects are learner-centered and authentic (Kearney & Schuck, 2003). Fourth, Jonassen, Howland, Moore and Marra (2003) stated that video making promotes meaningful learning. Finally, video making increases students' understanding of the subject matter (Kiili, 2005; Strobel 2006).

#### **Aim**

As mentioned at the beginning of this research, one notable reaction to the current Syrian crisis is loss of motivation. Thus, the aim of this study is to motivate students in English language classrooms, to enhance their academic achievements, and to change their negative attitudes that they hold as a result of times of crisis and that is through using project based learning approach, mainly video making.

The significant of the study is its value to other teachers at the university to consider adopting project based learning activities after investigating its effects and benefits on motivating students.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### **Research Context**

The research is carried out in the Foreign Language Center at Arab International University in Syria. The center offers four English remedial courses; zero, elementary, pre-intermediate, and intermediate. Each class meets three times a week for 90 minutes over a sixteen-week semester. The courses focus on teaching academic English that enhances the four skills; reading, writing, listening and speaking. The objectives of these courses vary between teaching basic language skills and sub-skills, paragraph and essay writing, reading for literal comprehension and critical reading, and finally oral presentation skills. Each student does the placement test to determine their English level, and some are exempted based on their English placement test scores. These remedial courses are graded on a pass/fail basis, the scores of these courses don't affect a student's GPA.

Most students usually complain about the repetition in objectives from the elementary to the advanced courses. Instructors as well complain about students' weakness in using the language, and they also complain about students' lack of motivation and commitment.

#### **Participants**

A total number of 24 intermediate students at Arab International University participated in the study between 18 and 21 years of age. 6 students are majoring in Information Technology Engineering, 12 students are majoring in Business Administration, and 4 students are majoring in Architecture. The participants were divided into four groups.

#### **Procedures and Instruments**

The design of this research is both qualitative and quantitative. In order to cast light on the issue of motivating language learners during times of crisis, I draw on data gathering from group discussions and informal notes, students' performance results, and students' self-evaluation questionnaires.

Ethical issues were taken into considerations. We had the approval of the concerned university bodies to carry out the research, and the participated students were given a written permission to carry on their projects (documentary videos about the university in the temporary locations).

Project based activities took place in the second part of the course, over a period of 8 weeks in which students have one session a week related to the projects. In the first session, students had an introductory lesson (90 minutes) about the meaning of project-based learning, what they're supposed to do and how, the benefits of it, and the timeline of the process. The participated students were informed of the research purposes and how they would figure out the difference between the first part of the course which was mainly traditional learning based only on textbooks and the second part

which involved some project-based learning activities. Then, students were given some suggested activities that they could work on and they also shared their own ideas. Most of the students were interested in filming activities; making documentary films about their faculties, and they all agreed to work on the same theme.

Students worked in groups of six and they had the freedom to choose their partners. At the end of the session, they were asked to search for information about video production and one student who had previous knowledge about video making volunteered to give a presentation about it. Thus, the second session focused on sharing the knowledge acquired by students to tackle the task at hand. Students were also shown some examples of documentary films about some international universities.

In the other four sessions, students discussed their work and progress, the difficulties they face, and they were provided with the assistance as needed.

The participants took care of the whole video production process: writing the manuscripts, shooting, preparing the interviews' questions for both students and professors of the concerned faculties, arranging interviews' appointments, editing, and preparing the final presentation.

Other than the classroom meetings, each team created WhatsApp or Facebook groups for easy communication with each other, and I was added into them. They even arranged informal face-to-face meetings outside the classrooms in cafés to discuss their projects and their allocated roles.

At the end of the course, a final assessment meeting (4 hours) was organized, during which, students showed their videos and gave presentations about their learning process: the difficulties they faced, the learning outcomes they gained, their experience of working in groups, and the feelings they experienced while working on the projects.

Using different types of instruments to collect data helped in giving clearer views on the researched topic and making more reliable inferences and findings.

#### IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

##### **Group Discussion and Informal Notes**

A group discussion with students was held regarding the benefits they gained from the first four weeks of the course; their opinions of the teaching methods, their learning outcomes, and their attitudes. At the end of the discussion, they were asked to write down their preferences and what they like to have in the rest of the course. The discussion and the students' written feedback were around two main themes as follows.

**Negative attitudes towards learning English and motivation.** The majority of students agreed that they were not interested in attending their English courses and considered it an extra burden on their tight schedule. Some said that they could barely attend their main subjects due to the difficult circumstances of the country, and most of the time they put their life in danger the moment they left their homes. One of the students suggested that: "Attending English courses should be optional under these difficult conditions, or they should be temporarily cancelled until we return back to the main locations." Other students supported the English courses, but they complained about the temporary locations and the fact that they did not have a separated language center. One noted: "If there is an English language center similar to the main one back in Gabbageb, I think things will be better and we will love it and enjoy it more." However, a good number estimated highly the efforts paid by the university administration and the directorate of the Foreign Language Center to provide good services that facilitated the process of English learning. A student mentioned that: "Actually, I don't think the temporary locations form any obstacles. The classes have good equipment, such as PCs, OHPs, and even some faculties provide internet access in the classrooms." A few students raised an interesting point related to their emotional situations and the stress resulted from the current civil war and how it affected everything in their life even their studies. A student noted that:

"This crisis influenced us, it's not whether we love English or not, whether we are motivated or not. It's whether there's a meaning in everything in our lives. Miss, just look at our faces and you can see that we became like robot, like zombies! No feelings whatsoever."

At the end of the discussion, most students agreed to the suggestion of doing something new, some outdoor activities beyond the textbooks. Something that they would enjoy doing rather than being merely passive receivers.

**Content and teaching methods.** Students reported different viewpoints regarding the instructed course book, Pathways 3. A good number admired the series, its academic and scientific structure, but others complained about the density of the book content. They even went further and revealed that the textbooks were boring and not that enjoyable.

As for the teaching methods, students' responses indicated that they preferred having more interactive activities. Many options were proposed and the whole class agreed to undertake some project-based activities; making documentary videos about their faculties.

##### **Student Self-Evaluation Questionnaire.**

The questionnaire focuses on three main themes as mentioned below.

**PBL vs. traditional learning.** In the questionnaire, students gave high ratings for the statement measuring the types of teaching they prefer. (83.3%) agreed that PBL was better than the traditional teaching, whereas (16.6%) liked to cling into the "usual, safe and comfortable activities of the book" as one of the students put it. However, even those who preferred the traditional teaching agreed to the statement that said "I enjoyed the project activities more than those of the textbooks." (100%). Analysis of the questionnaire data, revealed that students were interested in the self-centered



learning offered by PBL as opposite to the traditional learning which was manipulated mainly by the instructor and the course book. Students rated favorably the fact that they were responsible for doing most of the projects' tasks. Most of them agreed with the statement "My partners and I were personally responsible for our video assignments" (33.3% agreed, 66.6% strongly agreed). Also, (83.3%) agreed with the statement that said "I have the freedom to plan, apply, assess, and be more creative." Interestingly, the analysis of the questionnaire showed that some students made use of their prior knowledge and turned to their own practical experiences to complete their assigned projects: "I was able to utilize my own experiences as starting points for learning in the PBL tutorials." (83.3% agreed). In the questionnaire, the majority of students enjoyed the collaborative mode of teaching (team work and pair work) which was limited in the traditional teaching. They agreed that the course was highly collaborative and cooperational and their collaboration, both in the PBL sessions in the class and in the video production teams, was connected with the sense of community, joy, and enthusiasm. Moreover, the questionnaire data revealed that students had improved their skills in and knowledge of team work, collaboration and cooperation (33.3% agreed, 66.6% strongly agreed).

**Students' attitude, commitment, and confidence.** The analysis of the questionnaire suggested that students changed their negative attitudes towards the English courses that they usually have to become more positive (66.3%), but a good percentage did not change their attitude (33.3%). In addition, the questionnaire indicated a change in students' attitudes towards the university at large. This was measured through the statement: "Our video assignment enabled me to appreciate the facilities provided by the university despite the difficult conditions." (50% agreed, 33.3% strongly disagreed, and 16.6% disagreed).

Many students agreed with the statement that measure their level of commitment: "Working on the projects increased my level of commitment." (66.6% agreed), but there is a good number that remained demotivated and indifferent (33.3%). Also, according to the questionnaire analysis, students became more confident to use English outside the classroom while working on their projects. (83.3%).

**Students' feeling.** The analysis of the questionnaire data indicated that a good number of students experienced positive feelings during their learning process and while working on their projects. This was measured through the statement: "Video assignments helped us to find power at a time of crisis and helped in reducing the stress." (66.6%). Those students also commented on this statement saying that they had feelings of interest and a sense of belongings. One student wrote: "such activities reduce the tension and the indifference that we are experiencing nowadays". Another student added:

We experienced nice feelings while working on our projects that we were able to go outside the classroom, to conduct interviews with professors and other students, to laugh while working on the videos, to notice the beauty amid these difficult conditions cause by this hideous crisis

An interesting comment said that: "forget about the mortars and the terroristic attacks, be a real student, there's a life outside.". However, some students were not positively influenced and did not have the same feelings as their colleagues (33.3%). Those students also provided further comments about the issue. One of them wrote:

"Working on the projects can't change the chaos of our mind caused by this ugly war". Another student added: "well! No, I still have that feeling of nothingness inside me, I'm still stressed, afraid, and living day by day. Not certain of anything around me!"

### **Students' Performance Results**

The activity results included the students' produced documentary videos on the university faculties in the original campus and the relocation to temporary buildings in Damascus because of the war.

**Video's summaries.** The videos' contents could be summarized as follows:

***The first video: a documentary on the Faculty of Informatics Engineering at Arab International University.*** A group of IT students produced a documentary of 5:40 minutes on their faculty. They started by presenting general information about the university with footages of the original campus and their faculty. Then, they presented the faculty departments, specialties, and mission. After that, they mentioned the circumstances that made the university move into safer temporary locations in Damascus. Two interviews were conducted; one with the Dean of the Faculty in which he introduced the faculty and encouraged the students to keep developing their language skills. The other interview was with a professor at the university.

***The second video: a documentary on the Faculty of Business Administration at Arab International University.*** A group of BA students produced a documentary of 8 minutes on their faculty. They gave general information about the University and specific details about their faculty supported by footages of both original and temporary locations. They mentioned the different specializations at the faculty, facilities and the provided services. Three interviews were conducted; two of them were with students discussing why they chose to study business and specialized in a certain branch. The third one was with the Dean of the faculty. He talked about his academic qualifications, the scientific agreements with international organizations and universities, and listed the events held at the faculty.

***The third video: a documentary on the Faculty of Business Administration at Arab International University.*** Another group of BA students produced a documentary of 2:27 minutes on their faculty. They immediately started talking about their faculty. They focused on the educational benefits offered by their faculties. Most of the footages were of the temporary locations in Damascus city. Two students were interviewed; one talked about the exchange students and the other mentioned the academic benefits she got from the faculty professors.

**The Fourth video: A documentary on Arab International University as a whole academic institution.** A group of Business and Architecture students worked on a documentary of 8 minutes on the whole university, its founders, different faculties, the university mission, original and temporary locations, events, services, developments, employees, and the academic staff. They conducted many interviews with different faculty members, Deans, employees, and students. They also interviewed the Head of the Foreign Languages Center at the university and talked about the services of the center, its staff and the academic curriculum.

**Videos' analysis.** These videos were analyzed according to six dimensions: planning and scriptwriting; content; technical elements; language and mechanics; oral presentations; collaboration and timeliness. The analysis is presented in the tables below.

TABLE.1.  
PLANNING AND SCRIPT DIMENSION

Dimension	Video 1 (accomplished)	Video 2(satisfactory)	Video 3 (below standard)	Video 4 (excellent)
<b>Planning and script</b>	*Students researched and wrote a good script. *There was a clear plan that was adhered to during production. *Group members defined their roles.	*Students need help to research and write a better script. *Most group members had roles. *The plan is a bit vague; they deviated from the task in the middle and towards the end of the video.	*Students need to research and write a better script. *Plan is not clear; students need to be reminded to stay on task. *Some group members had roles, but others performed very few tasks.	*The script is creative and clearly written. *All group members had defined roles. *They have a definite plan and steps that they adhered to during the production.

TABLE.2.  
CONTENT DIMENSION.

Content	V1:	V2:	V3:	V4:
	*There's a clear focus throughout the video. *The good explanation shows good efforts. *The supporting details are logical and help in understanding the project's main idea. *The images and the graphs relate well to the content.	*Fairly well documented and organized. *The focus is maintained throughout the video, but becomes unclear in some parts (students' interviews). *Good explanations show good efforts.	*Doesn't present the theme clearly. *Some of the supporting information doesn't seem to match the main idea or appears as a disconnected series of scenes. *The project has a focus, but it strays from it at times. *Less efforts of students' learning are reflected in the project.	*Strong message. The video covers the topic completely. *It includes thorough information and notable understanding of the topic. *The focus is clear. Excellent evidence of students' learning and efforts are reflected.

TABLE.3.  
TECHNICAL ELEMENTS DIMENSION.

Technical elements	V1:	V2:	V3:	V4:
	*The video was completed and contained all required items. *Editing wasn't done as it should be. *Audio and other enhancements were utilized but not for maximum effect. *There is smooth movement.	*The video was made, but it has very little if any editing. *There's little audio support. * Few photos are distorted, there are some technical problems, but the viewers are able to follow the presentation.	*The camera work is choppy. *The final production has technical errors. *The scenes are blurry. *Sounds and visual files have significant distortion. *The technical problems distract the viewers' ability to see, hear or understand the content.	*Camera is stable, smooth movements. *Images are well composed, sound and visual files are distortion free. *There're few technical problems, but none of serious manner.

TABLE.4.  
LANGUAGE AND MECHANICS DIMENSION.

Language and mechanics	V1:	V2:	V3:	V4:
	*Language is used properly. *The video includes 4-5 grammatical errors, misspellings and punctuation errors.	*The video includes 5-10 grammatical errors. *There're some misspelling and punctuation errors.	*The video includes more than 10 grammatical errors. *There're misspellings and punctuation errors.	*The language is used properly and effectively. *Grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization are correct. *No errors in the script/text.

TABLE.5.  
ORAL PRESENTATION DIMENSION.

Oral presentation	V1:	V2:	V3:	V4:
	*Fairly fluent delivery. Communicates ideas with proper voice. * Some mispronunciations. Introduced the project well and explained the steps and the difficulties they faced during production.	*There were some difficulties delivering the ideas and the projects' steps. * Some eye contact and poor voice projections. Somewhat confused. * Some mispronunciations, long pauses and vocal fillers. *No thorough responses.	*Great difficulties communicating the ideas and the steps that they've done. *Poor voice projections. *No eye contact, no introduction. Long pauses & mispronounced words. *Couldn't answer all questions.	*Well-rehearsed. *Communicated the ideas and the steps of the project very well. *Eye contact, voice, and pacing caught the audience's attention. *Responded to students' questions easily.

TABLE.6.  
COLLABORATION AND TIMELINESS DIMENSION.

Collaboratin and timeliness	V1:	V2:	V3:	V4:
	*Group members worked well with each other. *Took part in most decisions. *Students met and had discussions regularly. *Students selected group members depending on good working relationships. *Most project deadlines were met. *Those that were late didn't have significant impact on the final project.	*The final product is the result of a group effort, but only some members contributed effectively. *Students selected group members according to personal preferences. *Only a couple of meetings were held. *Many project deadlines were not met resulting in some impact on the final project.	*It was obvious that the project was created by one or two students only. *Meetings were not held. * Low level of respect was evident within the team. *Deadlines were regularly missed resulting in a significant impact on the final project.	*Students met and had discussions regularly (even sometimes outside the classroom after lessons). *All members of the team were part of the final project-effective teamwork. *All project deadlines were met.

When applying statistical calculations to the results at hand, it was found out that 50% of the learners had a clear plan and script to follow. 75% of the learners had good video content that coherently expressed their main ideas following a consistent theme. 75% of the learners were able to present their final product with less than 10 grammatical mistakes (including punctuation, spelling, and capitalization). 50% of the learners were able to present their project orally with minimum mistakes exhibiting good rehearsal. They also maintained a good eye contact, communicated their ideas clearly, and answered the audience's questions.

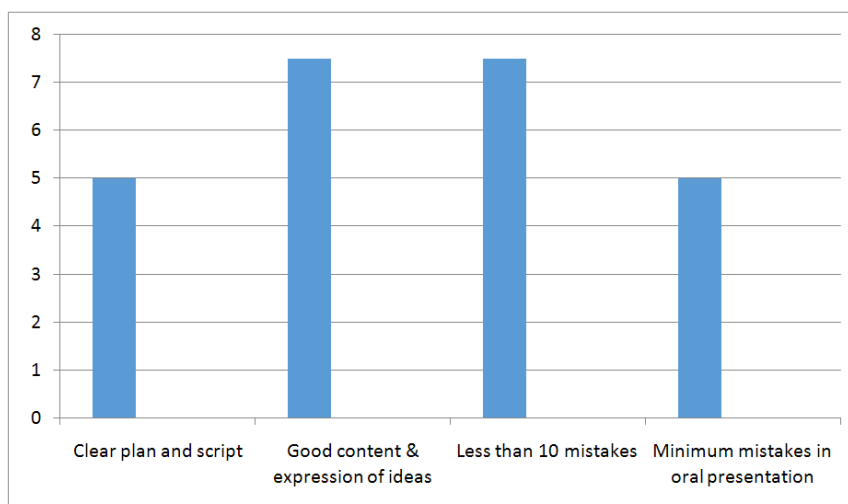


Figure.2. Percentages of learners meeting the four main linguistic dimensions of video production.

## V. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

There is a number of limitations spotted in the current research. First, the participants were not provided with proper initial training in collaboration and communication techniques which were stressed in (Johnson, 1986; Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Second, the instructor did not implement or force a general plan or time schedule for the filming activity (Koehter & Mishra, 2005). Third, both the learners and the instructor required further training with regard to using technology in filming sessions (Gibson, 1986; Norman, 1993). Furthermore, the number of the participants was relatively small. Finally, some university professors and students did not fully cooperate when they were required to. The participants found difficulties arranging interviews' dates and convincing the professors and students to take part in the documentary videos especially when they knew that they should speak in English.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study showed that implementing project based learning activities was of highly influential effects on motivating students who were affected by the crisis which is the main concern of this paper. It was clear that students' negative attitudes and feelings could be changed and turned into positive ones when you address the difficult conditions experienced by them and make the crisis part of the classroom's fabric and discussion. The filming activities have helped learners to acquire some important practical skills e.g. teamwork, organization and planning. Additionally, the linguistic skills have improved i.e. writing scripts which encompassed different aspects e.g. grammar, logical order, expressions of ideas, drafting, revising, spelling, and punctuation. Moreover, the activity has developed the learners' presentation skills which include: fluency in speech, correct pronunciation, tone of voice and clear delivery and communication of ideas.

APPENDIX STUDENTS' RATINGS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT BASED LEARNING ACTIVITIES DURING TIMES OF CRISIS.

Question	Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I prefer traditional learning to doing Projects	33.3%	33.3%	16.6%	
2. The PBL sessions motivated me to attend the E courses regularly	66.6%	16.6%		
3. Working on the projects increased my level of commitment.	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	
4. I enjoyed the activities of the project more than those of the textbooks.	16.6%	83.3%		
5. I have more positive attitude towards Learning English	33.3%	33.3%	16.6%	
6. Our video assignment enabled me to appreciate the facilities provided by the university despite the difficult conditions.	50%	33.3%	16.6%	
7. My partners and I were personally responsible for our video assignments	33.3%	66.6%		
8. Cooperation with my partners was successful	33.3%	66.6%		
9. I became more confident to use English outside the classroom	16.6%	66.6%	16.6%	
10. I have the freedom to plan, apply, assess, and be more creative.		100%		
11. Video assignments helped us to find power at a time of crisis.	50%	16.6%	16.6%	16.6%
12. We directed our own studying process in the PBL sessions.	66.6%	16.6%	16.6%	
13. I was able to evaluate my own learning during the course	83.3%		16.6%	
14. I was able to use my prior knowledge when working on the projects.	33.3%		33.3%	16.6%
Other comments:				

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# A Preliminary Study of English Movie Title Translation

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**Abstract**—As an important medium for cultural exchange, film has been attracting every nation's attention and thus plays a significant role in cultural exchange. Therefore, the translation of films, with the translating of the titles as the key, is viewed as a direct and easy way of introducing the foreign culture as well as spreading the national culture. A good translated film title not only makes the film more charming but also has its own specific features. The paper first analyses the two primary elements: cultural and language element and nonverbal element, which influence the translation of the film title. Then it presents some main theories on the translation of the film title. Finally it concludes several common methods of translating film titles by abundant examples, which include: literal translation, transliteration, free translation and so on. And this author believes that the phenomenon of one title with several translating versions is acceptable as long as they gain the audiences' satisfaction, the producer's agreement and the government's approval.

**Index Terms**—film titles, theoretical basis, literal translation, transliteration, free translation

## I. INTRODUCTION

In addition to the superb acting actors, philosophical dialogues and glorious pictures, with its poignant, the reason that a good movie attracts the tens of thousands of audiences lies in the attraction of the title. The film's titles are the brands or the trademarks of the films, because they provide information about the film for the audience by summarizing the central idea, revealing the theme, or offering some clue. A film's title is compared to the lintel of the movie. It must not only reflect the movie's central thought, but also must be brief, novel, and attractive. It is also likened to human eyes that reveal the individual personality, not only prominent, but also very lively, prompting imagination at first glance. In multitudinous film and television advertisement posters, the film's title is in the extremely striking position, to incite the interest to see the film itself.

## II. ELEMENTS DETERMINING THE TRANSLATION OF MOVIE TITLES

### A. Language and Cultural Elements

Each nationality's life style and the thinking mode have similarities as well as discrepancies. People may often peep at the nation's culture spirit and its special characteristics through its language structure, the glossary and the origin of the phrase. Here has the influence which the material environment brings, also existence of some restrictions brought by the social tradition custom practiced thousands of years ago and some other factors. Carefully examines from the angle of translation, the request of the translation is to manifest the cultural connotation which is included in the original text, in order to make the reader can think of something similar to psychological schema or inspired something. If the translation can make readers think of something associate to the turn of the past and the reality, the evolution of time and space and get the life philosophy and the life general knowledge for human's inspiration, then further to understand national characters and relations in the characters of the common human nature, at last the purpose of cultural exchange has been achieved, and the value of translation is in realization. So when we translate film's titles, we should pay attention to the language and cultural elements.

#### 1. Translation is Based on the Understanding of The Source Language

Even if a Chinese phrase and an English word have similar forms, they sometimes refer to different contents, carrying different connotations. For example: A famous psychology trembling film with fear "seven" 七宗罪 (qi-zong-zui) in 1995. This movie narrated the crime story which is extremely rich in philosophy thoughts by the impact of intense visual and the gloomy background: A crazy murderer considers himself as God, killing people on the ground of the seven capital punishments of the Catholic. These seven capital crimes refer to seven common errors committed by people, which are: Gluttony, Greed, Sloth, Lust, Pride, Envy and Wrath. Seven is an extremely mystical number in the religion, which finds the fullest expression in *The Old Testament*: God spent seven days creating Adam, took out Adam's seventh rib to make Eve; the original body of Satan was a fiery dragon with seven heads. The number "seven" recurs time and again in this movie: seven crimes, seven punishments, seven rains. The story took place in seven days, Even the end was decided by the criminal in the seventh day at seven in the afternoon. The ubiquitous "7" suggests the inevitable fate of the crime. If *Seven* is simply rendered into "七"(qi), the Chinese audience will be surely be bewildered. Therefore the movie's title is specified into 七宗罪 (qi-zong-zui) which points out the main idea of the story and the

main implications of “seven” in religion . For another example is *Devil 's Advocate* 魔鬼代言人(mo-gui-dai-yuan-ren). The original meaning of Advocate is: people who is for or supports someone’s thought, cause or the benefit, such as a defense attorney in the court. This is a phrase originates in the Roman Catholic Church. In history, there have been many persons of high moral character and of holy behavior, their impregnable behavior and the unwavering faith entitled them the names of saints or sages. But it is not an easy thing for anyone to obtain this title, because he must pass through several years of investigation when the Church makes every effort to appoint a priest or other clergy to tap whether the candidates have any slight defect to deprive them of the names. And this investigator is called Devil's Advocate. Because as illustrated in the film there is not an investigator who is nitpick, but the Alpacino is the Satan, so his investigator was Devil's Advocate.

## 2. Movie Titles Contain Rich Cultural Information

Film’s titles imply plenty of culture information and emotion, especially when they are idioms or literary quotations which include rich culture information, Often we cannot understand it through literal meaning of the word. For instance, “*Rambo: First Blood*” is always translated as “第一滴血”(di-yi-di-xue), but one has never realized that “The First Blood” is an English idiom which means “首战告捷(shou-zhan-gao-jie)”. Another example is the film *Ken Kesey* adapted from an autobiographical novel with the same title published in 1962. It is an description of mental hospital that brutally devastates human nature and the basic human rights of the patient. In the movie Indians bravely ran out the iron windows of the prison guard, breaking all shackles and fleeing to a new life. “*One Flew over the cuckoo's Nest*” has been translated into 飞越杜鹃窝 (fei-ye-du-juan-wo) while in fact “cuckoo's Nest” in English means “a madhouse”. So the rendering of 飞越疯人院 (fei-ye-feng-ren-yuan) is more accurate and vivid manifestation of the true meaning of the original film’s title and the true meaning of the movie. For another example: the movie *Dragon Heart* has not been literally translated into 龙的心(long-di-xin). Due to the negative association of the dragon in English with cruelty and devil, rather than Chinese association of prestige or even the king, the translation 魔龙传奇 (mo-long-chuan-qi) is more acceptable.

Due to cultural differences between the SL and the TL, some English movie titles will inevitably contain something peculiar to its own culture. Some mistranslations are caused by misunderstanding of cultural information in original titles. Therefore the translator should be aware of such cultural information, fully understand it, and properly translate it into the TL, to the understanding of the target audience.

## 3. Translation is Restrained by the Culture of the Target Language

Translation is not only a simple language conversion, but also the exchanges of social and cultural between the two countries. A forehead 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 we talked about the restriction of the source language to the target language. At the same time, the translation of the film’s title is restrained by the culture of the target language. The culture of the target language will inevitably choose to standardize and strengthen, exclusion, and additional self-culture to the culture of the source language. For instance: “*First Wives Club*”, the phrase “First Wives” in English means to gentleman's First Lady, but China's ancient culture actually had the concept of the big wife and some other wivies, many Chinese thought the film’s title should be translated literally as 大老婆俱乐部(da-lao-po-ju-le-bu), but what the movie narrated was how a group of wivies revenge their husbands who abandoned them and made them to get out of the joy of the marries. It should be translated into 发妻俱乐部(fa-qi-ju-le-bu) with more Chinese culture colour. For another example, one of hundred classical American films named “*The third man*”. In China “第三者”(di-san-zhe) is a word related to marital ethics, if the film title is translated into “第三者”(di-san-zhe), the Chinese audience will mistake it be a marital and ethics film. But in fact “*The third man*” in this movie refers to the third witness of a traffic accident, therefore the translating of “第三个人(di-san-ge-ren)” is more appropriate for Chinese to avoid misunderstanding. Moreover, the movie’s titles “*Love with My Father*” and “*The Wedding Night*” are translated in Chinese as 天伦乐(tian-lun-le) and 洞房花烛夜(dong-fang-hua-zhu-ye) respectively, which shows the respect for the Chinese culture.

## 4. Language is Changing with the Times

Languages are the organisms which grow unceasingly, can change along with the social culture development. On the one hand is tendency of preference of spoken language, such as “*Much Ado About Nothing*” which was previously translated as 庸人自扰(yong-ren-zi-rao) but now 都是男人惹的祸 (dou-shi-nan-ren-re-de-huo), “*The Portrait of a Lady*” with the previous rendering of 仕女图 (shi-nv-tu) but now 伴我一世情 (ban-wo-yi-shi-qing). On the other hand is a combination of Chinese and English in the translating of English movie titles. For example: “*Trueman show*” is translated into “真人(zhen-ren) Show”.

### B. Nonverbal Elements

#### 1. Function of Commercial or Advertisement of the Movie Titles.

The film’s title generally meets the audience before the movie open to play in the theater. A good title leaves profound impression on the audience, stimulating the audience’s strong desire for viewing. Without doubt the film’s title acts as an advertisement for the movie. In the traditional translation theory: the translation of the film’s title belongs to the text translation, actually it is a mistake. The translation of the film’s title should be the advertisement translation. There are two reasons: (1) “Film is a visual art, which is unlike other categories of art works. It can not, like books,

newspapers, display on the desk for exhibition .However, what often first attracts the audience is the film's title "(He Ning, 1,998p 37) the movie title is the movie's trademark and the advertisement. (2)Movie is a synthesis art, its cost is the highest in all of the artistic works. If we shoot a good film, it needs millions and millions, or even Billions of dollars for shooting funds, let alone the pay going to the actors and the actresses. The of photography equipment and high-tech means, that is, the cost of film developing isn't generally affordable for the average people. An author writes a novel at virtually no financial cost. Therefore he does not have to worry so much even if his novel does sell well. But if a movie maker cannot sell out enough copies, then he will suffer bankruptcy, therefore the movie producers must take into account the demand and the prospect of the market. Since the movie producer is undertaking the complete risk, not only should he carry out close investigations and verification before the shooting of the movie, but an attractive title is also necessary. Before the movie's debut, each department for selling the film surely carries on the large-scale propaganda activities. For the movie that brought from abroad, the film's title is the movie's trademark, it plays an important role in the success or failure of the movie. Thus the success of the translation, to a large extent, can be measured by how well it meets such expectations. The translation principles of being faithful to the original author and taking into consideration the trustee's benefit of the work, are the entirely different manners. They may agree with each other but it is also possible that they have quite big conflict.

## 2. The Stipulations of the Movie Publication Bureau to the Translation of the Movie Titles

Because the social system is different or influences of other political factors, each country may interfere in the translation of the film's title may be disturbed, for example the movie made in Hong Kong 黑社会(hei-she-hui) changes its name in the mainland as 龙城社会(long-cheng-she-hui).

### III. MAIN THEORIES ON THE TRANSLATION OF THE MOVIE TITLES

Determined by the above two main factors on the translation of the movie titles, we should stick to the following theories in the translation process

#### A. *Nida's Function Coordinated Theory*

The so-called function coordinated theory is enables the audience in target language to have same feeling when accepting the information to produce same feeling as the source language audience has. In the translation, focusing on the translation of the meaning and spirit of the original film instead of the corresponding form. Taking the translation of the film's titles True Lies for example: the film mainly describes a husband who is an agent for secret work and has to conceal his real profession to his wife and the friends and try to fight with the flagitious crime .The plait use the name of movie True Lies which seems like self-contradict to express how does he complete the mission ,for the sake of better work, to conceal his real profession for years , taking a lot of trouble at the presence of his wife to prevent her from worrying about him, and to work hard to protect the wife in the face the crime numerator. In the movie the husband lies to his wife out of the true love for his wife. The original name of the movie is an oxymoron , intriguing the curiosity of the audience. While translated into this:魔鬼大帝 in Chinese, which will make the audience do not know what the movie talk about, actually one may wonder who is 魔鬼大帝?Is a crime in the head of a group, or tactful brave special profession worker? The translated name have no relation with the original movie's name ,which makes the original meaning of the movie all gone, and will also mislead the audience to the wild guess of the film's contents, to mistake the action movie for a bloody demon .This kind of translation lose the informative function ,the esthetic sense function and the function of causes .If the name translated into 真实的谎言(zhen-shi-de-huang-yuan) in Chinese which choose the popular easily understanding phrase. Through the words "true" and "lies" which are seems self-contradict, the name of the movie is novel and special, which not only makes audience impress deeply, but also easily create curiosity. Through the above analysis, the true lies translated for into Chinese like this has already basic realized the function coordinated.when translate the text,the relation between receiver and the translated text should be similar to the relation between the original receiver and the original text. The translation of the movie title not only brings about the agreement between the form and the contents, more important, the function of the original name of the movie and the effect to the audience in original countries tends to equal the function of the translated name of the movie and the effect to the audience in other countries.

#### B. *Odore Savory's Readers Analysis Theory*

Famous British translation theorist Odore Savory presents some brilliant opinions that find no parallels before thus introducing a theoretical viewpoint, The original function of the translation is utility. Its function lies in removing the difficulties which the original text brings to the TL audience because readers does not understand it before. As an influential art, it faces the populace, so the film's title must be translated into both have nice form and good meaning, should be based on the appreciation of the audience, familiar to the audience, in words and the expressions easily accepted by the TL audience. For example: if the movie Notting Hill is translated for 诺丁山(di-nuo-shan), the ordinary audience may assume it as a mountain or as a person's name, which appears to be very cautious and an obscure for one to understand . But when it is flexibly translated into 摘星情缘 (zhai-xing-qing-yuan) the romanticism style of the movie is manifest, and the audience also guess right the general idea of the movie plot: the romance between a



common person and a star. The movie *Bodyguard* is of this kind too, which narrates a story that a bodyguard falls in love with his employer and how the bodyguard does his best to rescue the beautiful employer in danger. Translated the film title into 护花倾情 (hu-hua-qin-qing) not only has manifested the hero's status and his work, moreover, it has highlighted the movie's plot and the subject it refer to. Another case in point is the movie *Speed* translated into 生死时速 (sheng-si-shi-su). The westerner likes pertinent, thus such a name *Speed* which excites people from the beginning to the end by suspense. Although it is classic, if it is translated into Chinese "速度" it will sound plain and dull. Our Oriental has been extremely different. We use "生" and "死" those two Chinese characters to describe the mood all through this movie. By joining "时速" to corresponding "speed", the title reminds the people of the thrilling scenes.

### C. *Giving Full Play to the Advantages of the Target Language*

Because of the differences in language and culture, the mechanic translating of the movie title or word for word translation would make the vivid image in the film dry and tasteless when translated into the target language. One even risks not being accepted by the target language audiences. So we should bring into full play the advantages of the target language, employing the most beautiful and suitable language, and translate the original title into its the closest natural equivalent. Professor Xu Yuanchong established a new school in a book entitled "On Translation Art" published in 1984, according to his new translation viewpoint, we should be faithful to the original text's content, bring into full play of the target language may be the standards of the literature translation. (Xu Yuanchong 1984), The translator might as well ignore the merits of the target language, but giving full play to the merits of the TL results in a better translation. In other words, though the translated text and the original one are not very similar or each other in form, the reader of the target language can smoothly gain the same or the similar basic information of the original as the reader of the SL does. The basic information mainly includes the thought, the detailed facts, the condition and atmosphere and so on. This way of translation suits to all types of translations. Therefore, this is also suitable for the movie title translation. For example: The *Wizard of Oz* is translated into 绿野仙踪 (lv-ye-xian-zhong). This originates from Chicago journalist Lei Man Bao Mu's novel, later adapted into a musical play, and a movie version was produced in 1936. The meaning of the word "Oz" is scare and imaginary, an inconceivable strange fairyland. The film title purifies the novel 绿野仙踪 (lv-ye-xian-zhong) which was written by Li baichuan in Qing Dynasty. This book take the deity of the different mark as the main clue, and involves the general mood of society and human sentiment, so the translated title is an extremely appropriate flirt.

### D. *Chen Hong Wei's Divisions of the Functions of Movie Titles*

Chen Hong Wei divides the functions of movie titles into three categories. They are informative function, esthetic function and imperative function. Informative function means succinctly conveys to the TL audiences the implication of the original title and the content of the film; the esthetic function implies entertaining the TL audiences with beauty and attraction by the elaborate translated title; the two functions serves the imperative function. Psychologically, human beings are endowed with curiosity, a desire for anything fresh and novel, eager to get acquainted with them and easily influenced by them. The imperative function is to influence the mood of the audiences with an aim of their money through the informative function and the esthetic function. For example everybody is familiar with a Disney animation *Lilo Meet Stitch*, which tells a little violent thing in outer space. In order to escape penalty in its own star, *Stitch* crashes on the Earth by mistake, and after it lands on Hawaii it becomes the pet of the question girl *Lilo* by mistake, *Lilo* has lost the parents since childhood and laboriously fostered by the elder sister, but the American society want to carry *Lilo* away from the elder sister, giving unemployment of and inability to bring up *Lilo* as the reason. On the one hand, the outer space head office dispatches workers to arrest *Stitch*. *Stitch* becomes a fugitive and wants to escape captures by any possible means, doing a series of funny things. On the other hand the mistake arising out of chance brings joy to *Lilo*, and enables the sisters to reunite eventually. If we translated it to 利罗遇上斯蒂奇 (li-luo-yu-shang-si-di-qi), it will shed no light on the content of the film. But if it is translated into 星际宝贝 (xing-ji-bao-bei) or 小魔星 (xiao-mo-xing) it will do better in reflecting the essence of the film hence attract the audience. And like the movie "A Walk in the Clouds" ——云中漫步 (yun-zhong-man-bu) which describes the moving love story of a man and a woman in vineyard where permeate the air with the grape flower fragrance, in the movie the vineyard is named "the cloud" "云", the hero and heroine falling in love stroll in the garden with romantic and rich poetic sentiment. The translated name 云中漫步 (yun-zhong-man-bu) extremely suits the subject of a romantic love in the clouds, not only retaining the meaning of the original film title, but also rich in poetic and artistic flavor, which sparks romantic imagination on the part of the audience.

## IV. SEVERAL COMMON METHODS OF MOVIE TITLE TRANSLATION

### A. *Literal Translation*

Literal translation is exactly used when the foreign film's titles have corresponding words or expressions in Chinese, and the words or expressions are quite exquisite in Chinese, that is, they are more beautiful and more interesting. In the translation of the original film's titles we maintain its content and form. The method of the literal translation we use

frequently. For example: "A beautiful mind", "Chicken Run", "The love letter", "The Patriot", "Gladiator", "The General's Daughter", "Legends of the Fall", "Brave Heart" are translated into 美丽心情(*mei-li-xin-qing*), 小鸡快跑(*xiao-ji-kai-pao*), 情书(*qing-shu*), 爱国者(*ai-guo-zhe*), 角斗士(*jue-dou-shi*), 将军的女儿(*jiang-jun-de-nv-er*), 秋日的传奇(*qiu-re-de-chuan-qi*), 勇敢的心(*yong-gan-de-xin*); 防守反击(*fang-shou-gong-ji*), 喜剧之王(*xi-ju-zhi-wang*), 全职杀手(*quan-zhi-sha-shou*) are translated into "Defence and Attack", "King of Comedy" and "Fulltime Killer" and so on

### B. Transliterate

Transliterate is a way of writing out the close Chinese characters according to the pronunciation of the words and expressions, we use it very little in the translation of the film's title. Transliteration is the borrowing of the sound of the SL, frequently employed when titles are the place or personal names, especially when these names are familiar to the target audiences. Like Tarzan, Aladdin which are familiar to children are transliterated separately for 泰山(*Tai-shan*), 阿拉丁(*a-la-ding*); Also like *Harry Potter* 哈利波特(*ha-li-bo-te*) which was hot in each big movie theater. Others like 芝加哥 (*Chicago*), 金刚(*king kong*)(*Jin-gang*), 伊丽莎白(*Elizabeth*)(*yi-li-sha-bai*), 简爱(*Jane Eyre*)(*jian-ai*) 卡萨布兰卡(*Casablanca*)(*ka-sa-bu-lan-ka*)and so on

### C. Free Translation

Free translation is a way of choosing the words and expressions of the target language freely, so long as the translation version is based on the meaning of the original title. It does not call for the corresponding word-for-word transformation. For example: If the Disney animation *Shrek* is translated into 史莱克(*shi-lai-ke*), the Chinese audience will not be able to understand it, which does not describe the story neatly and thus fail to provide information and attract the audience. But when the translated title is added by the word "怪物" before it, the reference immediately becomes clear. So is a toy story translated into 玩具总动员(*wan-ju-zong-dong-yuan*), *Forrest Gump* into 阿甘正传(*A-gan-zheng-zhuan*), *Bathing Beauty* translated into 出水芙蓉(*chu-shui-fu-rong*) and so on. For other examples, *It Happened One Night*, *Entrapment*, *Blood and Sand*, *The Independent Day* are respectively translated into 一夜风流(*yi-ye-feng-liu*), 将计就计(*jiang-ji-jiu-ji*), 碧血黄沙 (*bi-xie-huang-sha*)and 独立日烽火 (*du-li-ri-feng-huo*).

### D. Providing a New Title

This method is a way to get rid of the original film title completely, in fact, to recreate a new name for the movie. For example, film *Oliver Twist* takes the hero's name for the original film title, narrates a London orphan's bitter experience. The translated name 雾都孤儿(*wu-du-gu-er*) factually and accurately describe the story. Frank and Jesse, icons, *Jumanji*, *Belphegor* (*Belphegor* is a mummy's name which was displayed in the Louvre) respectively translated into 乱世双雄(*luan-shi-shuang-xiong*), 真假公主(*zhen-jia-gong-zhu*), 勇敢者的游戏(*yong-gan-zhe-de-you-xi*)and 罗浮魅影(*luo-fu-mei-ying*). And "大白鲨(*Jaws*)(*sa-bai-sha*)", "怒海争风(*Master and Commander*)(*nu-hai-zheng-feng*)" are the examples of this kind.

### E. Combination of the Translating Techniques

Language in movie titles is creatively used. Certainly there are titles to which the four techniques above are not applicable. The combination of certain techniques is required. For instance, literal translation and free translation are often unified. Some cases in point are the Chinese translation of *Ghost* into 人鬼情未了(*ren-gui-qing-wei-lai*), in which "鬼" the character is the literal translation while "人"and "情未了" is an explication. This film title have fully manifested the lasting love between the hero and heroine. *The Waterloo the Bridge* 魂短蓝桥(*Hun-duan-lan-qiao*), in the movie Waterloo Bridge is the place where the hero and heroine meet and later part, reminding people of the Waterloo where Napoleon was defeated. In order to avoid the ambiguity, the translator uses the literal translation to the bridge to carry on the retention, discards the easily misunderstood word "Waterloo", according to its content, accommodating the folklore *the blue bridge meeting*, in addition "惊魂(*jing-hun*)" those two characters which both retain the fundamental mode of the old name, and appropriately expressed the original content, at the same time has avoided the ambiguity. For other examples: *Batman* 蝙蝠侠(*bian-fu-xia*)"and *Spiderman* 蜘蛛侠(*zhi-zhu-xia*). The literal translation and transliterates are unified." *Kills Bill* 杀死比尔(*sha-si-bi-er*)". Transliterate and Free translation, such as: *Congo*, *Robin Hood*, *Casper*, *Babe* are translated into 刚果惊魂(*gang-guo-ying-hun*), 侠道罗宾汉(*xia-dao-luo-bing-han*), 小鬼卡斯(*xiao-gui-ka-si*) and 小猪贝贝(*xiao-zhu-bei-bei*). Yet "(Death on the Nile) 尼罗河上的惨案(*ni-luo-he-shang-de-chan-an*)" is the combination of the literal translation, transliterates and the method of translating it to another name.

## V. CONCLUSION

The standard of translation is indeed decided by the different materials for translation. The functional translation theory holds that, each kind of styles has functions of its own. The translation of the film's title as a kind of the

advertisement translation, its function of translation or the purpose lies in attracting the audience of the target language to spend money on it. The movie will continue to enjoy a high popularity both as an important media of cultural exchanges and as a modern commodity. During the translation of English movie titles, in order to achieve an equivalent effect, the translator should always bear in mind principles of faithfulness, cultural awareness, and combination of commercial and aesthetic effects, and employ techniques appropriate to different titles. Only by doing so, will the titles fulfil their functions. So long as the translation of the film's title makes the audience to be satisfied, the film executive approves, the government agrees, various kinds of the translated names are acceptable.

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# A Study of Cultural Empathy in Foreign Language Teaching from the Perspective of Cross-cultural Communication

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**Abstract**—Cultural empathy is the central part in the whole system of cross-cultural communication. Meanwhile, cross-cultural communicative ability is extremely important in foreign language teaching. It plays a crucial role in multiple ways. This paper explores the relationship between the cultural empathy and cross-cultural communicative ability, aiming to build an effective foreign language training model to improve students' skills in cross-cultural communication. Through two investigations into cultural empathy and cross-cultural communicative ability obtained by sixty undergraduates from the English department at Zhejiang Ocean University, it further proposes that there is a positive correlation of the ability of cultural empathy with the cross-cultural communicative ability. This is of great guiding significance for foreign language teaching in China.

**Index Terms**—cultural empathy, cross-cultural communication, foreign language teaching

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. An Overview of Cultural Empathy in Cross-cultural Communication

With the booming development of globalization of economy and popularity of the Internet, cross-cultural communication between countries has become a common phenomenon at every moment in this world. It proposes a greater challenge to the foreign language teaching, especially the English teaching. It's known to all that English is the firstly-chosen in cross-cultural communication.

In recent years, China plays an increasingly active role in the international field which strengthens the position and influence of Chinese language and culture greatly. For the sake of introducing China better to the world, the needs of improving cross-cultural communicative competence are growing by leaps and bounds.

Cross-cultural communication between people of different cultural backgrounds always meets difficulties in many aspects. The two regions' social customs, ideals and beliefs may be completely different, and it is these different factors that create potential obstacles to cross-cultural communication. Misunderstandings between them are more likely to lead to serious cultural conflicts. In order to reduce unnecessary loss, the idea of cultural empathy is imperative.

Cultural empathy is extremely important in the system of cross-cultural communicative competence. It helps people to understand the culture from a totally different nation and try to give the suitable response to the person we are talking with. Under the function of cultural empathy, the cultural conflicts between the two communicators can be eased which is the prerequisite for effective cross-cultural communication.

### B. Organization of the Dissertation

The thesis is composed of three chapters in addition to an introduction and a conclusion.

Chapter One begins with a general literature review of cultural empathy both abroad and at home, with particular attention directed to the analysis of shortcomings of cultural empathy in cross-cultural communication.

Chapter Two is the main body of the thesis. It makes an investigation into cultural empathy obtained by college English majors in China, which comes to the results, discussion and findings.

Chapter Three mainly explores some suggestions on how to improve cultural empathy in foreign language teaching in China.

The last part is the final conclusion of the paper, which gives us an overall understanding of the relationship between students' ability of cultural empathy and their cross-cultural communication competence as well as the suggestions to improve cultural empathy competence.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter gives a general literature review of cultural empathy both abroad and at home, with particular attention

directed to the analysis of shortcomings of cultural empathy in cross-cultural communication.

#### A. *Cultural Empathy Abroad*

Empathy has a wide range of application in foreign countries. Among these, the most widely used are in psychology and education, especially the language training of foreign staff involved with foreign affairs.

Matthew Schertz, in the paper *Empathy Pedagogy* (Matthew, 2003), applied the theory of empathy to language teaching and appealed educators to pay more attention to the teaching system which can help students cultivate the ability of empathy.

Regina W. Nganga, in the paper *Impact of Cross-cultural Interaction on Counselor Trainees Development of Cultural Empathy and Intercultural Sensitivity* (Regina, 2008), applied the theory of cultural empathy to counselors' training which strengthen their ability of cultural empathy and improve their cross-cultural sensitivity. It is effective to solve problems generated by people from two totally different nations.

Young, a famous scholar in the University of Oklahoma, gained a high reputation in his study concerning with the theory of cultural empathy. He put forward ten axioms which were beneficial for American immigrants to adapt to the new surroundings.

Up to now, in foreign countries, although there exist plenty of suggestions of this theory, there is no complete learning system for students to master the ability of cultural empathy and to put it into the actual use.

#### B. *Cultural Empathy at Home*

In ancient China, although without an explicit concept of "empathy", there were a number of statements similar to "empathy" in nature, such as "realm" "mood" etc. They all share something in common.

In recent years, more and more scholars have attached great importance to the theory of cultural empathy. It was first introduced into Chinese aesthetics by Zhu Guangqian in the 1930s. And then Zhu developed it and formed his own view about empathy by combining it with the Chinese traditional philosophy---the unity of heaven and humanity. (Liu Jie, 2012)

He Ziran, in his article "Pragmatic Empathy in Daily Verbal Communication" (He Ziran, 1991) first brought the concept of empathy into the pragmatics, and he further subdivided empathy into pragmalinguistic empathy and sociopragmatic empathy in cross-cultural communication. (Liu Jie, 2012)

Gao Yongchen, in his paper "The Value and Cultivation of Cultural Empathy Competence in Cross-cultural Communication" (Gao Yongchen, 2005), carried out an in-depth analysis of the relevance between cultural empathy and cross-cultural communication, in which he put forward an idea "the unity of theory and reality". According to his opinion, the necessary way for cultural empathy was to maintain cultural diversity, equality and to firmly resist ethnocentrism, stereotypes and prejudice. (Liu Jie, 2012)

Wan Man, in his paper "An Analysis of the Phenomenon of Cultural Empathy in Cross-cultural Communication" (Wan Man, 2013), raised explicitly that cultural empathy competence was an important factor in successful cross-cultural communication. It can help us to build a good understanding of other nations' culture and shorten the psychological gap between different languages and cultures.

Nowadays, there are many research articles related with cultural empathy in China which point out the importance of cultural empathy competence to the study of cross-cultural communication. However, among these, only few articles are connected with the suggestions in foreign language teaching. There is still a vacancy in this area.

### III. TWO INVESTIGATIONS INTO CULTURAL EMPATHY AMONG ENGLISH MAJORS IN CHINA

This chapter is the main body of the thesis. It makes two investigations into cultural empathy among English majors in China, which comes to the results discussions and findings in the theory.

#### A. *Research Methodology*

So far there are few researches conducted to explore cultural empathy in foreign language teaching especially among English majors, and this paper tries to mend the gap.

In this chapter, in order to provide a detailed statement of the research methodology, research subjects, research questions, data collection and method of data analysis are elaborated.

##### *Subjects*

Participants of this research involved undergraduates from the English Department at Zhejiang Ocean University. Altogether sixty undergraduates were randomly chosen from grade 2015, 2016 and 2017. The proportional distribution of participants from the three grades served to ensure that the result of the test could reflect cultural empathy obtained by college English majors comprehensively. Factors such as age, gender and previous educational experience etc were not taken into consideration. Table 1 shows information about the participants.

TABLE 1  
DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS BY GRADES

GRADE	NUMBER	Gender
2015(juniors)	20	17 female/3 male
2016(sophomores)	20	15 female/5 male
2017(freshmen)	20	13 female/7 male
TOTAL	60	45 female/15 male

### Research Question

#### Research 1

This research is mostly based on the tests of Liu Lin (Liu Lin, 2004), which is to estimate the current situation of cultural empathy obtained by Chinese English majors.

The research is composed of two parts, twenty items for each. Questions in part one are designed to test students' performance of nonverbal behaviors such as gestures, space and time etc, while questions in part two are designed to examine their mastery of verbal behaviors such as exchange of greetings, addressing, asking for help or expressing gratitude etc in communicating with native English speakers. Each question is placed in a specific social context of daily communication. Participants who could achieve higher scores are believed to have a higher level of cultural empathy, and vice versa.

#### Research 2

In order to have a basic understanding of participants' cross-cultural communication competence, this paper adopts a test of Chen and Starosta, Intercultural Communication Scale (Chen and Starosta, 2000).

It is a five-point scale. 5=strongly agree. 4=agree, 3=uncertain. 2=disagree. 1=strongly disagree, and the scale in the essay includes thirty items, item 1 to item 8 for intercultural awareness, item 9 to item 18 for intercultural sensitivity and the rest for intercultural effectiveness. The specific information about the questionnaire is listed in the following table.

	Three perspectives	Factors of each perspective	No. of the item
ICC	Intercultural awareness	Basic factual information	3.4.5.8
		Deep structured cultural values	1.2.6.7
	Intercultural sensitivity	Interaction engagement	9.10
		Respect for cultural difference	11.12
		Interaction confidence	13.14
		Interaction enjoyment	15.16
		Interaction attentiveness	17.18
	Intercultural effectiveness	Behavioral flexibility	19.20
		Interaction relaxation	21.22
		Interaction respect	23.24
		Message skills	25.26
		Identity maintenance	27.28
		Interaction management	29.30

### Data Collection

Data were collected during a two-week period (from May. 13th to May. 27th). The researcher sent sixty sample tests via e-mail to sixty students from grade 2015, 2016 and 2017 in the English Department who had volunteered to participate in the research. All participants were asked to respond on a voluntary basis to the test and finish before the due time (May. 20th). A total of sixty replies were returned.

#### Method of Data Analysis

Data for the research 1 were all divided into three groups: freshmen, sophomores and juniors. The results were then classified and placed into table 2.

In table 2, the results of the socio-cultural test have been focused on the current situation of cultural empathy obtained by the participants. The full score is 100, with 2.5 scores for each item. The scores of the participants of different grades were classified into three categories---80-100, 60-80 and 0-60. The results of the three categories were then converted into a percentage.

Data for the research 2 were also divided into three groups: freshmen, sophomores and juniors. The results were then classified and placed into table 3.

In table 3, the results have been focused on the cross-cultural communicative competence of the three grades. The full score of the research is 5. The results of the three categories were converted into a percentage.

Table 4 combines the results of two researches into one graph, which mainly illustrates the relationship between cultural empathy and cross-cultural communicative competence.

### B. Results and Discussion

In this part, the paper mainly describes, analyses and discusses the general situation of the two researches.

TABLE 2.1  
GENERAL ANALYSIS OF THE SCORE

Total scores	100	Maximum	92.5
Number of the participants	60	Minimum	55
Number of test items	40	Mean	67.5
Score of one item	2.5	Standard deviation(STEDV)	1.628

TABLE 2.2  
SPECIFIC STATISTICS OF THE SOCIO-CULTURAL TEST(%)

Participants	Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors
Scores			
80-100	10	25	40
60-80	65	60	45
0-60	25	15	15

Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 show us clearly the overall situation of the socio-cultural test. From the statistics in the chart, we can find out that juniors have an obvious advantage in getting the high score in this test because of many years' accumulation of English cultural knowledge. By comparison, freshmen and sophomores have a low level of relevant knowledge on cultural empathy. However, there is one thing which is much the same. A large majority of all these three groups are in the second range of the score (60-80) and the mean score is 67.5. Besides, the standard deviation in these statistics is 1.628, which is small in the test. These two obvious features mean that there are no significant differences among the participants of all three grades in terms of their average level of cultural empathy, which can only be generalized as "mediocre". Chinese English majors' ability of cultural empathy still needs to be improved.

TABLE 3.1  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

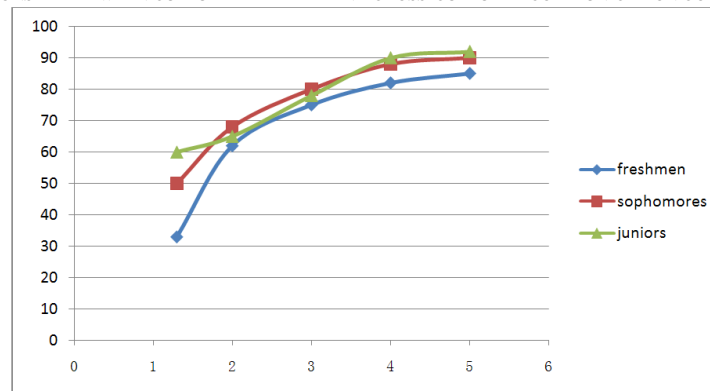
	Number	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	STEDV
Freshmen	20	1.30	4.23	3.33	0.84
Sophomores	20	2.70	4.50	3.51	0.46
Juniors	20	2.83	4.23	3.80	0.39
All	60	1.30	4.50	3.55	1.27

TABLE 3.2  
SPECIFIC RESULTS OF THEIR CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE(%)

Participants	Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors
Scores			
4-5(include 4)	5	15	15
3-4(include 3)	70	70	75
2-3(include 2)	20	15	10
1-2(include 1)	5	0	0
0-1(include 0)	0	0	0

Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 illustrate the overall situation of cross-cultural communicative competence of Chinese English majors in Zhejiang Ocean University. From the statistics in two charts, we can see clearly that juniors have a good command of cross-cultural awareness and they behave better than the other two grades in communication. The mean score of juniors among these is the highest. Besides, the standard deviation (STEDV) of three grades, respectively 0.84, 0.46 and 0.39, which implies there is no distinctive differences among the participants of their own grades in terms of the average level in cross-cultural communication. The overall standard deviation is 1.27, higher than others, which is reasonable because of the different starting points in English learning. More importantly, looking at the statistics, we can find there is a large gap between the worst and the best in cross-cultural communication. The minimum is 1.30, while the maximum is 4.50. Among the whole ICC test, a large number of all three grades' participants fall into the second range of score (3-4). It indicates that the average level of cross-cultural communication competence of English majors in China is at moderate level.

TABLE 4  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURAL EMPATHY AND CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE



As shown in Table 4, x-axis represents the score in ICC while y-axis represents the score in socio-cultural test. We can easily find a positive correlation of the ability of cultural empathy with the cross-cultural communicative competence. If the English majors want to improve the ability of cultural empathy in English learning, first of all, they should pay more attention to their cultural awareness in communication.

### C. Findings

What have been done in the previous chapter are two researches which aim to explore the relationship between the ability of cultural empathy and the cross-cultural communicative competence obtained by English majors in China. The two researches are of great practical value in that both of them provide significant suggestions for foreign language teaching in China. Based on the results and discussion above, the following conclusions can be drawn.

The ability of cultural empathy and cross-cultural communicative competence of English majors in China are generally at the moderate level (as shown in table 2 and table 3). It means that there still exist some problems while communicating with native English speakers. As we all know, compared with non-English majors, college English majors have rich experience in listening and speaking as they have received a long time of professional language training. English majors, therefore, are supposed to have better language skills and the ability of cultural empathy as well as their cross-cultural communicative competence should be better. However, the situation nowadays is obviously not. The main cause of this consequence is definitely the method of foreign language teaching in current education. We need to make great continuous efforts to achieve the goal of becoming a competent communicator.

More importantly, there is a positive correlation of the ability of cultural empathy with the cross-cultural communicative competence (as shown in table 4). It gives us the enlightenment of improving the efficiency in foreign language teaching. The ultimate goal of foreign language teaching is the development of students' cross-cultural communicative competence. (Ren Saixian, 2015) However, in today's English educational system, teachers pay more attention to vocabulary, grammar as well as the pronunciation. All of these are sure to be the essential language skills for an English learner, but these are not the most important part in English learning. The focus in foreign language teaching should be put on the cultural awareness, which we can say, the ability of cultural empathy. Therefore, it is reasonable if we claim that the cultivation of the ability of cultural empathy and the development of cross-cultural communicative competence should proceed simultaneously. The cultivation of cultural empathy deserves more attention from scholars and educators in the field of foreign language teaching.

## IV. SEVERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING CULTURAL EMPATHY IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Based on the results and findings, the following suggestions can be used in foreign language teaching and learning.

### A. Suggestions in Class

The main aim of learning a second language is to achieve successful communication with its native speakers through the use of cultural empathy. (Mo Liping, 2011) Cultural empathy plays an extremely significant role in foreign language teaching. It is an effective method to achieve successful cross-cultural communication, which should be the focus of the second language teaching. Therefore, it's important for college English teachers to try some useful ways to cultivate students' ability of cultural empathy in college English class.

#### To Appreciate Films

This reform of the teaching method is welcome among students. College English teachers should take full advantage of meaningful foreign film resources so as to create an exotic atmosphere for students to learn the language. More importantly, successful films can make students have a spiritual resonance and also can reflect the variety of life and culture in foreign countries. For instance, the film *The Scarlet Letter* is a typical representation of mainstream American culture. When students are quietly moved by the miserable life of the main character, Hester Prynne, who fought against the puritanism and struggled for freedom and personal worth and finally gained the glory of redemption, they are,



unconsciously, transmitting the core essence of mainstream American culture, which is characterized by some basic values such as the pursuit of individual freedom, self-reliance and an optimistic view of the future etc. Therefore, language teachers should realize that artistic forms, such as films, music, pictures etc., are more suitable for second language learners compared with volumes of textbooks on western culture as they can provide them with very vivid, specific and authentic descriptions of the target culture.

#### *To Employ Foreign Teachers*

Foreign teachers are good at the language knowledge as well as the foreign cultures. By the face to face communication, students can not only improve the ability of putting the language into actual practice, but also obtain directly the cultural knowledge of foreign countries. This kind of communication is the most straightforward and effective way in enhancing students' ability of cultural empathy and strengthening the identity of world culture.

#### *B. Suggestions after Class*

Practice is the best way to cultivate and improve students' ability of cultural empathy. It needs not only teachers' positive guidance in class but also students' positive participation in extracurricular learning. The following suggestions are helpful to improve English majors' ability of cultural empathy.

#### *To Encourage Extensive Reading*

Extensive reading is an extremely useful method while learning a second language. It not only helps learners to expand vocabulary, but also plays a crucial role in improving cultural identity and cultivating the ability of cultural empathy. To achieve this, we should encourage students to read freely and choose whatever they are interested in. By doing this, we are helping them to develop the habit of reading for enjoyment and interest and most importantly, to foster their motivation. Brown argues, "Our fervent quest in this language teaching business is, of course, to see to it that our pedagogical tools can harness the power of intrinsically motivated learners who are striving for excellence, autonomy, and self-actualization." (Brown, 2001)

After this, teachers should give their students essential guidance by providing them with a wide range of options and inspiring them to "dabble in" various fields like arts, sociology and anthropology etc. Extensive reading may not have obvious effect in a short period of time. However, all small progress will compose an integrated picture of the target culture in students' mind and thus their ability of cultural empathy can be improved.

#### *To Choose Suitable Teaching Material Compilers*

Cultural empathy plays such an indispensable role in learning English, thus when teachers select teaching materials, it is better for them to choose the materials which are full of abundant cultural background knowledge and then give tasks to students such as making conversations in the virtual cross-cultural communication situations or role playing of some famous stories. These teaching materials can help teachers and students themselves to cultivate and improve the ability of cultural empathy more effectively.

## V. CONCLUSION

Cultural empathy has an irreplaceable position in achieving successful cross-cultural communication. Successful cross-cultural communication with the native speakers is also the final aim of second language teaching. Thus, to cultivate and improve students' ability of cultural empathy is extremely important in second language teaching.

The paper has investigated the correlation between students' ability of cultural empathy and their cross-cultural communicative competence, explored the possible ways to cultivate and improve college students' ability of cultural empathy

Through a two-week-long experiment and with the data collected from two tests, the present study has proved that there is a significantly positive correlation between students' ability of cultural empathy and their cross-cultural communicative competence. Through several useful suggestions to cultivate and improve students' ability of cultural empathy, their communicative competence can be improved correspondingly which can eventually help the development of students' second language skills and achieve the ultimate aim of learning a second language.

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# CEFR-based Front-desk Staff's English Skills: A Case in Indonesian Hotels

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**Abstract**—This article analyses the English skills of front-desk staff on the accommodation business, particularly Listening, Spoken Interaction and Spoken Production skills. It is based on a qualitative descriptive research conducted in a medium-sized city in Central Java, Indonesia. The data are collected using self-assessment based on CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) Can-do statements, and crossed-checked in interviews and focus-group discussions. The research found diverse levels of Listening, Spoken Interaction and Spoken Production skills of front-desk staff, mostly A2 (Waystage Basic User), B1 (Threshold Independent User), and C2 (Mastery Proficient User). Besides, the results show that respondents are split in terms of consistency in perceiving their listening and spoken skills. It is also found that both hotel guests and front-desk staff use mobile translating applications to assist spoken communication, encouraging further studies to explore the role of mobile translating application in promoting the success of communication in accommodation business.

**Index Terms**—accommodation business, front-desk staff, spoken English skills, self-assessment, CEFR

## I. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 has allowed Indonesian workers to have more opportunities in international job market, and pushed them to face challenges in winning their jobs and careers. Ten ASEAN countries in 2015 started to implement 5 free flows, i.e. free flow of goods, free flow of services, free flow of investment, free flow of capital, and free flow of skilled labor (ASEAN Directorate General of Cooperation Ministry of Foreign Affairs RI, 2009). Indonesian workforce, consequently, must compete not only nationwide but also with other laborers internationally. Given that English is an intermediate language, their communication skills in English are crucial.

The tourism sector is one of the backbones of exports. The Indonesian government has formulated policies to facilitate international visitors and their temporary stay in Indonesia. This directly affects the accommodation industry as an important pillar of the tourism sector as visitors need accommodation. Therefore, the accommodation industry needs to increase the quantity of facilities to accommodate the growing number of tourists, as well as strengthen the quality of service in order to remain competitive.

Accommodation industry requires front-desk technical workers to be able to communicate in foreign languages as they are directly in contact with foreign guests. English is currently the most spoken language by visitors from Europe, US, Australia and Asia in the accommodation industry in Indonesia. This is also the case with other ASEAN countries such as Thailand as stated by Low & Pongsukvajchakul (2014), and Malaysia (Selke, 2013). The selected medium-sized city in Central Java, Indonesia, only has 5 starred hotels and 21 accommodation business of other types.

However, it is one of 5 cities in the province with the highest average length of stay of foreign guests, which is 2.64 nights (The Statistics Bureau of Central Java, 2016). The number of foreign visitors and the length of stay are likely to increase as a result of the favourable government policies and improvement of infrastructures such as highways. Along with this increasing potential, the skills of front-desk staff in spoken communication in English are increasingly unavoidable.

In Central Java (The Statistics Bureau of Central Java, 2016) front liners (receptionists, guest relations, public relations officers, other front-desk staff) are classified as technical workers with the largest proportion in the business, which is 40.42%. The 2015 statistics also show that the number of workers in the accommodation business with high school education builds the largest percentage of 54.52%. This indicates that most of the technical workers in the accommodation business has acquired formal learning of English to high school level only, besides, spoken or conversational English has not been practiced daily as a second language, nor has it been assigned in made-up learning environments in Indonesia.

The above background and figures suggest that there is a demand for front-desk staff to be able to communicate in English. In fact, Low & Pongsukvajchakul (2014) find that a front-desk officer must use 20 English functions orally to perform their duties. English skills, undoubtedly, are highly required in front-desk operation.

There are several tools to measure the level of English skills. Self-assessment is a tool which may also be applied to front-desk staff. Among them is Can-do statement self-assessment in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) which provides a self-assessment grid with detailed descriptions of four foreign language skills at 3 levels, each described in 2 sub-levels (Council of Europe, 2001). While Low & Pongsukvajchakul (2014) use a different self-assessment grid, Wang & Sun (2014), similar to CEFR, use can-do statements in a study to map English proficiency in accommodation business in Taiwan. This article analyses the front-desk staff's English skills, particularly Listening, Spoken Interaction and Spoken Production, in order to perform their duties. The skill levels are described in CEFR self-assessment grid.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *Front-desk Staff and Accommodation Business*

The accommodation business provides short-term accommodation in both accommodation and culinary services. The accommodation businesses are hotels, star hotels, non-star hotels, guesthouses, motels, tourist cottages, youth hostels, and homestays (BPS Provinsi Jawa Tengah, 2016).

The business involves front-desk attendants who are required to communicate effectively as they are the first to interact with hotel guests. Bardi (2007) mentions that the front-desk division at a hotel administers reservation officer, concierge, bell captain, front-desk officer, telephone operator, night auditor. The front-desk attendant's duties include: checking reservations, registering guests, assigning rooms, handing over keys, communicating with housekeeping staff, answering phones, providing information and directions on local tourist destinations, accepting payments, liaising between the hotel and guests and the local community. The cashier handles guest checkout and all payments. Reservation managers deal with room requests and special services as well as room availability (room inventory) using the hotel reservation module. They are also responsible for effective communication with the sales and marketing sections. Night auditors record financial transactions throughout the day and sometimes perform as front-desk staff at night. The telephone operator must know the guest's room and where the hotel staff is in case of need. He must also be able to deal with emergency situations. Bell captain, bellhop and door attendant handle guest baggage, introduce guests to the hotel environment, and give information about the hotel, local events and town activities. They also reflect the hospitality of the hotel. Concierge is placed in the hotel lobby to provide information about public facilities and entertainment around the hotel, for examples: transportation, tours, places of worship, cinema.

### B. *English Speaking Skills and Activities of the Front-desk Staff*

Front-desk staff on accommodation business must have English speaking skills. To be able to do his/her work, a front-desk staff member needs listening, reading, speaking and writing skills. Of these four basic skills, oral communication activities primarily involve listening and speaking skills, whereas written communication entangles reading and writing.

A study on Hotel employees in Taiwan by Shieh (2012) found that listening and speaking skills are more important than reading and writing. The same condition was true in Thailand, where twenty English oral communication functions are used quite intensively and intensively (Low & Pongsukvajchakul, 2014).

Despite the job requirement, the front-desk staff may have difficulties in communicating orally with guests. Iwai's respondents (Iwai, 2010) in Japan have difficulties expressing ideas orally in English, even though those skills are the most often used in their tasks. The most commonly used language functions at front-desk in Thailand (Low & Pongsukvajchakul, 2014) are: asking for information, offering/declining requests, praising, greeting, self-introducing, saying farewell, welcoming, thanking, saying congratulations, compromising problems, giving sympathy, blessing, excusing, shifting conversational topic, ending conversations.

Not only in Japan as revealed by Iwai (2010), a similar challenge is also found in Indonesia, as stated by Sukaesih & Junaedi (2011), that the level of English speaking skills of the employees in the service industry is below average whereas the ability is very important in their duties. Similar results are also found by Astika & Rani Setyo Sari (2013), that the hotel's front-desk staff admit their lack of ability to speak in English with foreign guests while the ability is very crucial in their work. Similar to Kuppan's finding (Kuppan, 2008) that there is a gap between required English skills and training received by employees before they work, Gondokusumo (2015) also finds that the ability of English-speaking hotel employees falls in the category of limited proficiency.

### C. *Can-do Self-assessment*

Assessment is required in order to identify and solve learning problems, evaluate learners' progress and improve their skills. Self-assessment can improve the motivation of learners as claimed by Blanche & Merino (1989). Ross (1998) also states that self-assessment is a reliable tool to measure language skills level and explains that self-assessment is an economical and practical alternative tool. Self-assessment also raises learners' awareness of their own abilities because it allows learners to better understand their weaknesses and strengths, and that they are the right people to define and

evaluate their own learning targets when reflective approaches are incorporated in the learning process (Bailey, 2015; Harris, 1997). A reference tool, therefore, is an essential apparatus in the process of self-assessment so that learners can define their proficiency.

While teachers, curriculum developers, writers of training materials and learners have different interpretations of the level of English skills called "beginner", "intermediate" and "advanced", especially about the range of skills covered in each level, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, abbreviated as CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) offers clear measures of language users' skills. It provides measures of language learner's skills agreed upon by the Council of Europe for learners of non-native European languages.

As shown below, CEFR concretely describes how skill levels are measured. The hallmark of the CEFR self-assessment is the use of Can Do statements as a more measurable indicator, compared to the beginner (or elementary), intermediate and advanced terms. The CEFR approach is used in determining the skill levels based on the ability in communication.

CEFR clearly defines a learner's language skill level in the following description:

Level			Description
Proficient User	C2	Mastery	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, <u>differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.</u>
	C1	Effective Operational Proficiency	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Vantage	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Threshold	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Waystage	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Breakthrough	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Source: (Council of Europe, 2001)

CEFR groups and describes listening, spoken interaction and spoken production skill levels as follows:

Listening	
Level	Description
C2	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
C1	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signaled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.
B2	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority
B1	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.
A2	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements
A1	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.

Source: (Council of Europe, 2001)

Spoken Interaction	
Level	Description
C2	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.
C1	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skillfully to those of other speakers
B2	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.
B1	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).
A2	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.
A1	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.

Source: (Council of Europe, 2001)

Spoken Production	
Level	Description
C2	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
C1	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion
B2	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
B1	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes & ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.
A2	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job
A1	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.

Source: (Council of Europe, 2001)

### III. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses the qualitative approach to obtain deep information about and to describe the level of spoken English skills of front-desk staff in accommodation business. This research follows four stages as suggested by Moleong (2010), namely: (1) preliminary work, (2) field work, (3) data analysis, (4) report writing. Each stage covers: a) Preliminary: deciding the focus, comparing the paradigms and theories, selecting and translating the instrument, literature study, contacting and getting approval from local association of accommodation business, initiating a talk with the accommodation business, b) Fieldwork: field observation, data collection through questionnaires, interviews, and discussions with key respondents and hotel managers, process and results of which were documented. c) Data analysis:

analysis, interpretation and checking of data validity. d) Report writing: preparation, submission and publication of research results.

#### A. Research Sites and Respondents

The research location is a medium-sized city in Central Java, Indonesia, where there are three accommodation businesses larger than 15 others. Six of those are selected to represent the business because of their highest occupancy rate and the number of foreign guests.

The purposive respondents comprise of two groups. The first is of the 23 front-desk staff members, and the second is that of the six managers of the accommodation businesses.

#### B. Data Collection

This is conducted through interviews and focus group discussions with respondents (front-desk staff and managers). Furthermore, the front-desk staff are asked to do the self-assessment on their English skills. Data are then classified based on the two groups of respondents: the front-desk staff and the managers.

TABLE 1.  
THE LIST OF HOTELS USED AS RESEARCH OBJECTS AND CODES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

No.	Name of Hotel	Code
1	Hotel L A	UA1
2	Hotel G W	UA2
3	Hotel K A	UA3
4	Hotel D E	UA4
5	S W Guest House	UA5
6	W P Guest House	UA6

Source: FGD (2017)

### IV. FINDINGS

The findings are a compilation of data obtained from the interviews, focus group discussions, and CEFR assessment conducted with 23 front-desk officers and six managers. The assessment of listening and spoken production skills in English of the front-desk staff is explored using CEFR's self-assessment. This information is then cross-checked with that of managers.

#### A. The Skill Levels

The CEFR self-assessment generates a statement of the front-desk officers' English skills. In terms of listening skills, 2 front-desk officers rate themselves at Breakthrough Basic User Level (A1), 3 people rate themselves at Waystage Basic User Level (A2), 8 people at Threshold Independent User Level (B1), 3 people at Vantage Independent User Level (B2), 1 person at Effective Operational Proficiency Proficient User Level (C 1) and 6 people at Mastery Proficient User Level (C2).

In terms of spoken interaction, 3 front-office officers rate themselves at Breakthrough Basic User Level (A 1), 6 people at Waystage Basic User Level (A2), 6 people at Threshold Independent User Level (B1), and no one rates themselves at Vantage Independent User Level (B2). Two people judge themselves at the Effective Operational Proficiency Proficient User Level (C 1) and 6 people at Mastery Proficient User Level (C 2).

For the spoken production, 2 front-desk officers rate themselves at Breakthrough Basic User Level (A 1), 10 people at Waystage Basic User Level (A2), 5 persons at Threshold Independent User Level (B1), and none at Vantage Independent User Level (B2), none at Effective Operational Proficiency Proficient User Level (C 1). Six (6) people put themselves at Mastery Proficient User Level (C 2).

It is also noted that six (6) participants consistently assess themselves at Mastery Proficient User Level (C2) in Listening, Spoken interaction and Spoken production skills.

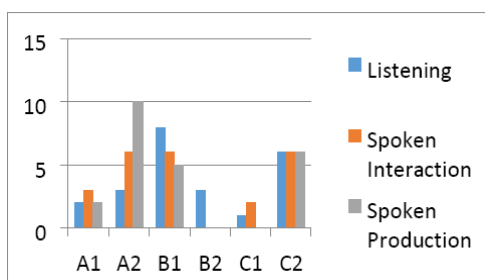


Figure 1: FO Staff Self-assessment

The CEFR assessment by managers results in a statement of the English skills of their front-desk staff. In terms of listening skills, 1 manager assess his staff at Breakthrough Basic User Level (A1), 1 person at Waystage Basic User

Level (A2), 2 people at Threshold Independent User Level (B1), none at the Vantage Independent User Level (B2), none at Effective Operational Proficiency Proficient User Level (C 1), while 2 people rate their staff at Mastery Proficient User Level (C2).

In terms of spoken interaction, 1 manager assess his staff at Breakthrough Basic User Level (A1), 1 person at Waystage Basic User Level (A2), 1 person at Threshold Independent User Level (B1), 2 people at Vantage Independent User Level (B2), none at Effective Operational Proficiency Proficient User Level (C 1), and 1 person assesses his staff at Mastery Proficient User Level (C2).

In the spoken production, 1 manager considers his staff to be at Breakthrough Basic User Level (A1), none assesses his staff at Waystage Basic User Level (A2), and 4 people judge his staff at Threshold Independent User Level (B1). No one considers his staff to be at the Vantage Independent User Level (B2) nor at the Effective Operational Proficiency Proficient User Level (C 1), and 1 person assesses his staff at Mastery Proficient User Level (C2).

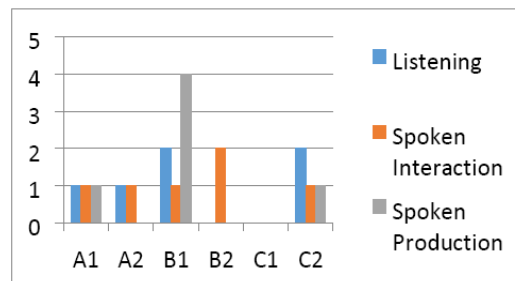


Figure 2: Managers' Assessment of FO staff English Skills  
Source: Managers' Assessment (2017)

### B. The Facilitating Technology

Both front-desk officers and guests as communicant and communicator make efforts to succeed in communications. Making use of communication technology is one of the efforts.

The advancement of mobile telecommunication technology has provided various facilities for business. This also improves the quality of communication at the accommodation businesses. The advancement and availability of mobile telecommunication technology allows better interaction between the front-desk staff and guests coming from different countries. International guests who visit the city use English either as a first or foreign language to communicate with front-desk officers. In fact, some guests speak limited English. Nevertheless, they can still interact successfully by utilizing the translating application installed in their smartphones. Both parties find mobile translating application very useful when encountering difficulties in communication.

This is conveyed by the UA-2 respondent, as follows:

*"Today, the tourists are easy to communicate with our FO staff. In front of the FO they just write down what they want to convey and press the translate button and show it to our staff. And if our staff answered, they also asked our staff to write it on their mobile phone and translated in their language. Tourists from Korea or Taiwan and others do so. This greatly facilitates communication."*

Both UA-2 and the Chairman of the local association of accommodation business explain that technology does facilitate communication between people speaking different languages. Besides, English used at front-desk has minimum technical content. As a result, front-desk staff hardly face difficulties in communicating with the guests. Furthermore, English is also one of the recruitment criteria. Respondent UA-1 conveys it as follows:

*"The staff has been selected based on their English communication skills. So very rare there is a problem in communication between our guests and the front-desk staff."*

The use of mobile translating application is a form of the front-desk staff's creativity to solve communication problems with international guests. In the absence of electronic or assisting digital translating applications, the Chairman of the local association of accommodation business suggests practical support such as a booklet containing basic conversational hotel communication.

This is stated by the Chairman as follows:

*"Please provide assistance to us or to each hotel to help with English communication. It can be in a practical form, a booklet, for example, to help the front-desk staff communicate in English, it should be easy to understand and memorize."*

The respondents' perceptions of the need for the use of such communication guides in English are also confirmed by other participants in the discussions.

## V. ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH SKILLS

The data show that results of the self-assessment on listening skills are confirmed by the managers. Both the front office self-assessment and the manager's assessment of their staff listening skills indicate the listening skills of the front



office personnel at the Threshold Independent User Level (B 1) and at the Mastery Proficient User Level (C 2). Thus the self-assessment of front office personnel in listening skills is validated by the manager's judgment.

Unlike that of listening skills, the results of the self-assessment of front office officers on spoken interaction skills spread over Waystage Basic User Level (A 2), Threshold Independent User Level (B 1) and Mastery Proficient User Level (C 2). Meanwhile, the manager's assessment of his staff's strongest interaction skills is at Vantage Independent User Level (B2). Thus the self-assessment of front office officers of spoken interaction skills does not get an affirmation of the manager's judgment.

Front office staff assess their spoken production skills at Waystage Basic User Level (A 2), whereas managers rate their staff's skills at the Threshold Independent User Level (B 1). This suggests that managers judge their staff to be one level higher than the staff's own perceptions of their spoken production skills. Nevertheless, different results appear in higher skills assessment. At this level, the front office staff's judgment at the Mastery Proficient User Level (C 2), showing firmness and confidence, is not confirmed by the managers.

The interview reveals that those at B1 and B2 in Listening skill tend to place themselves at A1 and A2 in Spoken interaction and Spoken production skills. Interestingly, those who assess themselves at C2 in Listening skills also rate themselves at C2 in both Spoken interaction and Spoken production skills. The diverse yet consistent results of self-assessment on these skills indicate that self-esteem may influence the result of self-assessment. This is in line with what is pointed out by Kalanzadeh, Mahnegar, Hassannejad, & Bakhtiarvand (2013), that self-esteem significantly correlates with verbal performance. Meanwhile, the deviant results on both spoken interaction and spoken production between self-assessment and manager's assessment imply a number of possibilities. Firstly, the front-desk staff users (managers) have a positive perception of their staff's skills, but they may not have the competence to signify the spoken skills at a more advanced level. Secondly, they may not care enough of their staff being at C levels as the hotel front-desk operation has run properly with no complaints from the visitors. Thirdly, the front-desk work does not require interaction and production skills at C levels so the front-desk staff's highest ability remains undetected. Besides, the presence of mobile translating application has likely contributed to these possibilities, as it is stated in the interview and discussion,

*"They just write down what they want to convey and press the translate button and show it to our staff. And if our staff answered, they also asked our staff to write it on their mobile phone and translated in their language."*

The results of the staff's self-assessment on listening, interaction and production skills show that they are at the middle levels of Waystage Basic User Level (A 2) and Threshold Independent User Level (B 1). This shows similarities with the results of research conducted by Astika & Rani Setyo Sari (2013), i.e. that the hotel's front-desk officers in the city admitted their lack of ability to speak English with foreign guests, whereas the ability is much needed in their work. This also confirms the results of research by Gondokusumo (2015) who finds that the ability of English-speaking hotel employees in another city falls in the category of limited proficiency (Score between 49-59 out of 100).

On the contrary, the findings of this research are different from that of a similar research conducted in another city in Indonesia. Sukaesih & Junaedi (2011) map the staff members' English proficiency in the service industry and find that employees' ability in spoken production variables is less or below average, where inadequate skills result in communication obstacles. Sukaesih & Junaedi (2011), however, also note a gap in the results between the managers' assessment of their front-desk staff and the staff's self-assessment.

## VI. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This CEFR based self-assessment finds diverse levels of Listening, Spoken Interaction and Spoken Production skills of front-desk staff. The most common levels of Listening skills are Threshold Independent User (B1) and Mastery Proficient User (C2), while those of Spoken interaction and Spoken production skills are Waystage Basic User (A2), Threshold Independent User (B1), and Mastery Proficient User (C2).

Despite the diverse skills mentioned above, the results show that there are two groups of participants: one perceiving their spoken skills at somewhat lower than their listening skills, and the other perceiving their listening and spoken skills at the same level, that is C2.

It is also noted that visitors use translation devices to communicate with the hotel staff, where the mobile translating applications have contributed to communication success at the front-desk, leaving some of the staff's skills undetected. This study is limited by the lack of detailed information on the level of skills actually required by the working situations. Another limitation is that it does not investigate the background English training that the staff has received, although some information about the recruitment criteria and their level of general schooling has been obtained.

Given the above limitations, further research should explore the English skill levels required in a similar working situation. Regarding the increasing use of mobile translating applications, it is suggested that the use of technology to assist face-to-face communication at workplace be further researched.

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# ESP Course Construction for Transportation Majors

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**Abstract**—Since the traditional College English can no longer adapt to the current situation, its development has become the focus of the society. ESP has recently been paid more attention, whose goal is to develop the students' comprehensive language skills required in future career and academic research. ESP teachers should not only follow the rules of English language, but also think about how to use English language to promote the study of professional knowledge. This study provides a design of ESP course for transportation majors in Shandong Jiaotong University. It is constructed from the perspectives of learners' needs, objectives, content selection, teaching methods, and assessment.

**Index Terms**—ESP, College English, transportation majors

## I. INTRODUCTION

With the economic globalization and the rapid development of higher education in China during recent years, the society has increasingly favored compound talents with both professional knowledge and good English communication skills. At the same time, the transformation of some local colleges into applied technology colleges is imminent. So the issue of how to cultivate college students' English communication skills has been put forward in discussing the direction of college English reform.

ESP stands for English for Specific Purposes, which originated in the 1960s and refers to English related to a specific occupation or subject based on learners' demands for specific purposes, such as Engineering English, Computer English, etc.. The concept of ESP was first mentioned in the book *Language Science and Language Teaching* by Halliday, McInish and Stevens (1964): "English for civil servants; for policemen; for officials of the law; for dispensers and nurses; for Specialists in agriculture; for engineers and fitters." In 1969, the first seminar of ESP was held internationally. After that, the term also experienced a change from English for Special Purposes to the current English for Specific Purposes.

From the 1960s till now, many countries has established a relatively complete system for ESP research. At each stage of ESP development, there are representative figures and works. Although there is still no agreement on the concepts and branches of ESP, ESP curriculum design, textbook compilation, and curriculum design are relatively complete in many European and Asian countries and regions, and ESP teaching is gradually entering the mainstream. However, in China, most universities do not have relevant experience to train students in ESP.

Regarding the classification, originally ESP was classified by Mackay & Mountford (1978). Mackay & Mountford (1978) drew a tree diagram of English language teaching, which divided English language teaching into English as mother tongue, English as foreign language and English as a second language. English as foreign language can be divided into General English (GE) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Then they divide General English into three categories: primary, secondary, and tertiary/adult, and ESP is divided into English for Science and Technology (EST), English for Business and Economics (EEB) and English for Social Science (ESS). Each category is further subdivided into English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). Jordan (1997) mainly focuses on the ultimate purpose and language use environment of learners and divides ESP into EOP and EAP, and EAP is further divided into ESAP and EGAP.

College English is mainly General English in China now. There is professional barrier for College English teachers, and so we need a transition for students to prepare for the start of professional learning and future work.

## II. STATUS QUO OF COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING

At present, with the improvement of English teaching standards in primary and secondary schools, senior high school graduates has made significant progress in English. Some senior school students' English level has been equivalent to CET-4. But many experts and scholars suspect our current English teaching is just a simple continuation of high school English teaching, without qualitative breakthrough, and so it is undoubtedly a waste of resources. In 2007, the Ministry of Education promulgated *College English Curriculum Requirements* which clearly defines the objectives of College English teaching. The objectives include developing students' English comprehensive abilities, especially their listening and speaking skills so that the students can effectively communicate in English in their future studies, work, and social interactions. At the same time, they can also enhance their independent learning ability and improve their

comprehensive cultural qualities to meet the needs of China's social development and international exchange. This goal can be seen that the direction of College English teaching in China in the new stage is clear and it is moving toward the goal of practicality.

Then how to keep the current College English teaching in accordance with the needs of students and help students achieve better development in their respective professional fields? During recent years, in the process of exploring integration of College English teaching with students' professional knowledge, ESP has received more and more attention as a teaching direction to the combination of content and language. Many researchers, experts and professors in China, such as Wang Shouren, Liu Runqing, and Liu Fagong, have mentioned ESP. Liu Runqing (1996) pointed out that the English teaching in the 21st century tend to combine the professional content and English language. Some scholars mentioned that we need to make strategic adjustments to College English teaching. The main task is to decentralize general English teaching to secondary schools so that students can focus on professional English learning when they enter colleges and universities. However, how to help students transit from General English to professional English, and how to set up different English courses for the integration between subject content and language for different majors has confronted College English researchers. Wang Shouren and Wang Haixiao (2011) have analyzed the survey results of college English teaching in China, and proposed that college English teaching should strengthen the classification guidance and propose different solutions according to different types of schools, their positioning, levels, and school characteristics.

This paper is in favor of the idea of classified guidance, especially for local colleges and universities transitioning to applied ones that can be pragmatically oriented, integrated closely with careers or future studies. Ensuring that students are able to acquire the English skills necessary for their future work during school time should be the main goal of College English teaching.

### III. CONSTRUCTION OF ESP COURSE FOR TRANSPORTATION MAJORS

The orientation of our university is to train compound applied talents. The main purpose of College English teaching is to strengthen the language output skills of students. Emphasizing the cultivation of language output skills firstly requires the determination of the purpose of English teaching. According to the learning demands and development direction of different learners, the research group assume that the ESP courses for transportation majors should be divided into ESAP English (such as English for automotive majors, English for marine majors) and EOP English (such as English for auto majors). ESAP courses emphasize language skills training and professional knowledge acquisition. EOP attaches great importance to developing students' English application ability in the context of traffic industry. The difference determines that the curriculum designer should select different types of ESP teaching materials. The teaching model should be established for both classroom learning and practice learning according to the cultivation objectives. The assessment should be established from the perspective of satisfying the talent cultivation requirements.

#### A. Course Design

The goal of College English teaching has shifted to improve students' English comprehensive practical ability. On the other hand, with the improvement of English teaching level in primary and secondary schools, College English credits have been greatly reduced, from the original 16 to 12 or 8. Compulsory credits have been reduced to allow students to devote their energy to studying other English courses so that the English language ability can be fully developed.

The demand analysis model of Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) incorporates seven aspects from the students' individual information to the Curriculum requirements. According to their theory, this study randomly selects some undergraduate students from different disciplines as the survey subjects to help research group to know about students' opinions on the current College English teaching and their expectations towards English learning. The results are as follows:

Firstly, on the current College English teaching. Most students are not satisfied with current College English teaching and the dissatisfaction are reflected in the following aspects: (1) Curriculum settings: The curricular arrangements are unsatisfying. College English classes are mainly for the freshmen and sophomores in the first two academic years. In the following two years, English learning mainly relies on students' self-study by themselves. When the seniors decide to go for postgraduate study, they will mostly concentrate on the knowledge for the exam and ignore the points that are in line with the future study work. (2) Teaching content: College English teaching is still aimed at the CET-4. The teaching materials used by various majors are the same, and the contents of the curriculum are also the same. The teaching mainly concentrates on the grammar, vocabulary and discourse comprehension of the texts, and lacks the cultivation of students' comprehensive language ability and the promotion of specialized knowledge. (3) Teaching methods: College English classes lack various teaching methods. Although teachers will give some extra learning materials as supplements, the classroom teaching outcome is not good, resulting in low enthusiasm for students to learn English. (4) The result of learning: Most students think that they rarely use English in the current learning environment. The main purpose of learning English is to pass the CET-4 exam. More than half of the students think their speaking and listening ability are poor, and they do not possess the ability to read foreign documents.

Secondly, attitudes to ESP course. Many students assume that the content of current English learning materials should be academic English that is related to their majors. They hope through the study of ESP course, they can

exchange professional information in English, which indicates students hope to apply the specialized English knowledge they have learned to later professional work or study. This is in line with the characteristics of ESP, namely, clear goals, strong pertinence, and high practical value. Only a few students think learning ESP is useless, because their General English is not good, let alone ESP. It can be seen that most students are aware of the importance of ESP for their future career development, and they are positive about learning it.

From the above survey, it can be seen an effective college English course should be oriented to meet the professional learning needs of students. The traditional college English teaching pays more attention to basic knowledge and is separated from the students' professional disciplines. This teaching model obviously can not meet the students' needs in the professional development, nor can it meet the mission of colleges in the cultivation of compound talents in the new era. Therefore, it is particularly necessary to incorporate ESP into the teaching of College English and try to construct an ESP curriculum that meets the professional development of students.

### *B. Teaching Objectives*

The teaching objectives of GE is to develop the students' skills in reading, listening, speaking and writing, whereas ESP strengthens the English foundation and highlights students' professional skills through reading English reference materials.

Based on the above demand analysis, we have determined that the overall teaching objectives of ESP for transportation majors are: (1) To help students grasp the specialized background knowledge and the latest development trends of the respective majors, and master the basic industry English terminology based on the learners' demand analysis, the training objectives of different transportation majors, graduates' career and capacity requirements; (2) To develop students' ability of using English to acquire information. This will lay the foundation for the continued study of professional and cutting-edge knowledge. After analyzing the learners' demands and learning ESP-related language theories, the ESP teaching tasks are drafted for different majors.

Basic requirements for curriculum: Ability to use English as a medium to complete the tasks of collecting, organizing, and presenting relevant professional information. Presentation methods include oral presentations, question and answer discussions, and written reports.

Teaching focus: Design diversified tasks based on the needs of the target job and academic requirements.

Teaching methods: Flexible teaching methods can be used to complete the task according to the actual situation.

Assessment methods: Formative assessment and summative assessment are combined. In the teaching, students should display their assignments in various forms and teachers evaluate the task as part of the formative evaluation. The final evaluation is performed at the end of the semester.

### *C. ESP Content Selection*

In the ESP teaching process, the course content must be selected carefully, which best reflects the needs of students and the principles of efficient teaching.

The ESP curriculum is based on the analysis of teaching objectives and learners' demands, with a greater emphasis on language in target context, rather than simply teaching vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure and other language points. The selection of the course content must conform to the following principles:

(1) Learner-centered. There are two types of goals for undergraduate students to accept college education: employment and academic studies. In the process of determining the content, the learners' aim must be analyzed carefully at first. Then ESP teachers can select the content according to the needs of learners, which should not only be relevant to the knowledge, the content of the subject knowledge, but also to the learners' level.

(2) Authentic material. Authentic materials may come from different sources: video clips, real interactive scene recording, TV show excerpts, newspapers, pictures, etc.. As to ESP, the authentic materials should be the ones happening in future professional workplaces or learning situations. The use of authentic materials is to enable classroom activities to simulate real communication and promote the transfer of knowledge. In our process of compiling teaching materials, the teachers are required to contact the student internship enterprises, trying to combine the actual situation with guidance from professionals. The self-edited textbooks are closer to the real employment situation of the students, and they are also adjusted according to the learners' real demands or the learner's feedback.

According to the above principles, in the design of the textbooks for ESAP students in our university, we pay attention to the academic and professional practicality. For the ESAP students, we focus on improving students' academic English literacy, and so the design is based on professional tasks and case studies, etc.. Through learning, students understand how professional knowledge is expressed in English and possess the ability to complete tasks. In this way, they can read the original materials in English, speak in English, and report and exchange information on personal research in English.

At the same time, ESAP textbooks also instruct students new direction of science and technology development through teaching materials, and prepare students for future technological progress. For example, automotive English requires students to accurately understand and translate various English accessories, electronic control systems, typical faults and other English materials. We train students to read the car repair-and -operation guide, make oral reports on the mechanical components of the car engine, chassis parts, automotive electronic control systems and typical faults, to present information on how to improve the function of engine or other components. We also provide English

professional information on repair and maintenance of imported car equipment to help students keep up with the international trends.

EOP textbooks are different from ESAP textbooks. EOP regards the working environment and requirements as a context to emphasize the application of language skills in work. The ultimate goal of the course is to develop students' ability to complete tasks in a specific work environment using English as a medium. The language requirements cover the vocabulary, grammar and discourse of the specific activities of the industry. Therefore, the content of the textbook must be centered around the target requirements of the position with practicality. The context of the situation highlights the training of skills, combining professional knowledge with practical operations, helping students get a systematic understanding of the professional knowledge in specific fields. Through role-play, case analysis and other activities, they can carry out targeted exchanges to achieve the goal of communicating with clients, better integrating English knowledge into real work. For example, in the auto service industry, English communication is provided for positions such as automobile sales and after-sales, automobile insurance, automobile maintenance technology, and automobile beauty. In response to these positions, the textbooks for students are to consolidate the basic knowledge, help students master the English terminology of auto parts and the basic skills of exquisite communication services in English.

However, the self-editing textbooks are more complicated in design. It is difficult to develop materials that reflect the real context based on the English teachers' own abilities. On the other hand, it is time-consuming, laborious and hard to obtain professional guidance, so it takes the College English teachers a lot of energy and time to undertake this task.

#### *D. Teaching Method*

Only when the learners see the relevance between the knowledge and their needs, can they be motivated. For EOP students, the academic requirements for them are not high. Oral exchanges are frequently used in the future workplace, so it is mainly to develop students' communication skills, therefore, the course design can adopt a learning-centered approach and focus on cultivating the students' workplace exchange service capabilities. Therefore, oral presentations, role-playing, and simulations are more practical.

For ESAP students, the main point is to develop academic English reading and writing and use English to read their academic papers and communicate with others. ESAP students usually have a relatively higher English level and have achieved a certain degree of professional knowledge. The ESAP course can be designed to enhance learners' academic skills through skills-centered approach. For these students, teachers can use deep-end teaching strategies, which can enable students to complete certain tasks. The advantage is it imitates the students' real academic atmosphere, which is usually associated with activities such as case projects, presentations, and simulations.

#### *E. ESP Assessment System*

The traditional College English teaching is dominated by summative assessment methods, ignoring the formative assessment of students' ability to think critically, solve problems, cooperate and communicate. It does not enable students to achieve comprehensive development. But ESP is for future development, it needs to fully evaluate the students' learning process. The formative assessment combines the students' practical skills and the acquisition of professional knowledge.

In the formative assessment of EOP, teachers can create some real contexts to test students' professional English communication ability with clients. The purpose of the real task simulation is to measure students' English proficiency in the real situation tasks. As it is assessed in real-life scenarios, not only can students assess their comprehensive language proficiency, but also can assess their abilities and language communication skills.

In the formative assessment of ESAP, students can be required to finish some papers, which are closer to real academic activities and can comprehensively examine students' ability to use English. In order to complete the dissertation, students will show their advantages in the high requirements for reading and writing and academic ability. After finishing the paper, they also will be asked to display and communicate with others on the assignment. All these can be summed as part of the total grade.

#### *F. ESP Teacher Team Building*

Nowadays, many universities face a problem in teaching ESP, that is, the faculty is not professional enough. Although College English teachers have a solid basic knowledge of language, they lack the knowledge of relevant professional fields. However, although professional teachers have rich professional knowledge, they lack language skills and have no relevant experience in College English teaching.

The professional competence of ESP teachers is closely related to the successful implementation of ESP courses. ESP teachers need possess certain qualities including career enthusiasm, ability to develop and manage courses, productivity, relationship construction and the understanding of the students' needs. In fact, there is still controversy in the academic community about the qualities that ESP teachers need possess. Many people believe that ESP teachers must understand the target workplace and have the ability to teach students professional or academic knowledge, thus, a qualified ESP teacher needs three kinds of knowledge: language, education, and professional content. Of course, the most controversial thing for ESP researchers is the level of discipline that ESP teachers should have. Under actual circumstances, we assume that the most important thing for ESP teachers is language teaching ability, plus certain professional knowledge. It is not necessary for ESP teachers to become proficient in professional fields.

With the development of College English education, the teaching ability and academic level of Chinese College English teachers have been greatly improved. At present, they can be qualified for the ESP teaching to non-English majors. ESP teachers can listen to the bilingual lessons given by the professional teachers, sum up the basic knowledge that they can grasp, figure out their questions and ask the professional teachers for help. Then, based on the level of personal knowledge, ESP teachers adopt appropriate classroom activities to help students acquire the ESP knowledge and make students' knowledge positively migrate.

Ellis & Johnson believes that the theme and task design of ESP should be language skills training to promote the development in careers. The aim is to further develop English language skills, expand specific professional English vocabulary, familiarize with the stylistic features and language expressions, and lay a good foundation for transition to bilingual courses and full English major courses. The two scholars assume that if students have certain relevant professional foundation at this time, they can also learn ESP and use the existing professional basic knowledge and skills to promote the improvement of English. In this way, College English teachers can become qualified ESP teachers with a certain amount of training. ESP teacher training includes two aspects: language training and professional training. The former refers to the improvement of language skills, and the latter refers to the knowledge structure, teaching methods and professional English style characteristics of certain profession. In the specific training, we should also pay attention to the following questions: First, ESP teacher should change their mindsets. Some teachers are reluctant to engage in ESP teaching, they are not interested in the new majors involved, and lack the spirit of further study. At this time, these teachers should be aware of the urgency of the reform of College English teaching. Fully enthusiastic commitment to this work can keep up with the requirements of the times. Second, the transformation of the role of teachers. In traditional College English teaching, students are passive recipients in most classes, but in ESP classes, teachers should not only be a good lecturer and a participant in classroom activities, but also should accompany and encourage student, evaluate their behaviour and study results.

In our ESP teaching, College English teachers actively seek to establish contact with relevant professional teachers, listen to their suggestions on textbook writing and learning, conduct regular group teaching and research activities, and provide a good external promotion environment, conduct action research to solve practical teaching problems. This has greatly improved the teaching level of teachers and broadened their horizons. After the training, many teachers can actively exchange their experiences and apply various appropriate teaching methods to teaching, which can improve the teaching level.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The ultimate objective of ESP teaching should be to develop the students' comprehensive language skills needed to complete the target tasks in the target profession and subject research. In ESP teaching, demand analysis is the key to curriculum construction. The choice of ESP content must involve both language knowledge and subject knowledge. ESP learning should follow the basic rules of language learning. It is necessary to consider how to use English language to promote the ESP knowledge in consideration of the original foundation of learners. Meanwhile, the development of the curriculum is a synthesis of various methods used throughout the curriculum design.

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# On Chinese Cultural Penetration in College English Reading Teaching

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**Abstract**—English reading teaching in college is an important aspect in cultivating students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, as well as a vital way to cultivate students' ability of using language. Many scholars have proved that language teaching and culture teaching are inseparable in reading teaching. The cultural penetration in English is emphasized by language researchers. However, a number of teachers pay more attention to words and difficult sentences in English reading teaching, they ignore Chinese traditional culture factors in reading materials and the importance of the traditional Chinese culture teaching in college. college stage is a key period of language learning. At this period, they should gradually understand Chinese traditional culture. It is a prerequisite for college students to strengthen their Chinese cultural knowledge in English learning. However, there are a few studies on the penetration of traditional Chinese culture in college English reading teaching. According to this situation, the author consults many literature surveys of recent years. From the viewpoints of students, teachers and teaching materials, the paper shows the present situation of the Chinese cultural penetration in college English reading teaching. According to the results of study, the paper puts forward some relevant teaching principles and approaches about how to conduct Chinese cultural penetration in English reading teaching.

**Index Term**—cultural teaching, college English reading, Chinese cultural penetration

## I. INTRODUCTION

Language is closely related to the culture. The college English teaching is not only closely related to the English-speaking country culture, but also is closely associated with the Chinese traditional culture. Recent years, it attracts widespread attention about Cultural Penetration in college English teaching. However, there is a bit of attention about Chinese cultural penetration in college English reading. It goes against cultivating students' cultural awareness. Because the cultural penetration in English teaching process is very important, and this importance will never be superseded by other Chinese teaching process. College English curriculum standard clearly points out that cultural consciousness is the assurance of appropriate use of language. It puts forward improving the understanding ability of the students' cultural knowledge, enhancing the students' intercultural communicative awareness and improving the ability of cross-cultural communication. The importance of the implementation of cultural teaching has attracted more and more attention in college English learning.

The paper shows current situation of Chinese cultural penetration in college English reading 1, the relationship between language and culture, principles and approaches of Chinese cultural penetration and so on. In college English reading teaching, students should think and understand Chinese culture with English thinking. What's more, students ought to survey the Chinese culture from different visual angle so that they can see more cultural exchanges and collisions about Chinese and western culture in English reading teaching process.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter mainly introduces some relevant studies of English reading teaching and culture teaching at home and abroad. Through literature search, the author finds that many scholars have studied the cultural penetration in English teaching process. The typical scholars and their ideas are as follows:

### A. Foreign Literature Review

From 1960s, many foreign linguists have discussed the English reading teaching process from different aspects in order to enrich teaching forms and methods in college English reading teaching process. In 1921, American linguist Edward Spire wrote a book named language. From this book, readers know that language is closely related to culture. He says "language cannot exist without culture, that is to say, it cannot be inherited from society, a variety of practices and beliefs. And these practices and beliefs of the overall determines are from the nature of our lives" (1921, p34). Language is the carrier of culture. It bears the weight of cultural information, refracting the characteristic of thought.

What's more, Michael Byram (1989) put forward three cultural teaching approaches: comparison method, knowledge transfer method and the method of field investigation. At present, comparison method and knowledge transfer method have gotten widely use, but the third method is still exploring. In 1990, Bachmann came up with his idea about relationship of culture and language: If readers only pay attention to language but don't know about social culture



background of it, which is equal to someone who has seen thousands of trees but has never seen a forest. As a result, it's hard for reader to comprehend language totally correct and use language properly.

Larry Smith (1971) pointed out that there were four sources of information in reading: visual sources, auditory sources, syntactic sources and semantic sources. And the information of these four sources is often repeated. If reader can make full use of other three formation sources, the visual demand will be reduced. According to this theory, American linguist Goodman (1934) believed the process of reconstructing meaning was shown by the reader according to the graph described by the author. According to description of Goodman, reading seems to be one-way communication activity. But in fact, reading is a two-way activity that affects the connection between the reader and the author.

Lado (1964) points out the relationship between language and culture. He thinks that it is impossible to teach a good language without the knowledge of the relevant background information. In the present English reading teaching, many teachers only pay attention to language knowledge (vocabulary, grammar, sentence pattern analysis, etc.) teaching, ignoring cultural knowledge teaching. In order to cultivate students' interest in learning English, English teachers should make a clear teaching goal because cultural teaching is an important part of English teaching. And cultural teaching plays an important role in English reading teaching. Lado (1967) publishes a book named *Language teaching: A scientific Approach*. In this book, he points out that the rich cultural background information should be embedded in foreign Language Teaching. Teachers cannot reach prospective Language teaching goal without mastering the cultural background information. Language is a part of culture. Therefore, without understanding the patterns and norms of culture, it is impossible to really learn the language. He thinks it's a key way about the local language culture in the culture teaching.

### B. *Domestic Literature Review*

In 1980s, Xu Guozhang made a speech named "The Cultural Connotations of Words and English Teaching", which is the beginning of cultural penetration at home. YuangChunBo. (2017) as a representative scholar of the Chinese cultural penetration in English teaching, he thinks improving Chinese cultural penetration in English teaching is a good way of inheriting and carrying forward the Chinese excellent traditional culture, enhancing cross-cultural communication and training dialectical culture awareness of students. For the deficiency of Chinese cultural penetration in English teaching, teachers should adjust contents of English textbook properly. At the same time, improving teachers' quality is necessary in senior high school.

HuangJianBing (2013) thinks language is closely related to the culture. While teacher teaches language, he should penetrate culture knowledge in language teaching process. It is useful to train the cross-cultural communication ability of students with combining language teaching and culture teaching. PeiYan. (2014) explains "cultural barriers to reading comprehension". This concept is divided into three types, namely, high-level cultural barriers, mass cultural barriers and deep cultural barriers. He thinks cultural barriers exist in all aspects of reading teaching process and language materials. Learners making full use of these methods can help themselves overcome the cultural barriers in reading comprehension, these three methods are establishing and strengthening cultural consciousness, increasing the sensitivity of cultural differences and training intercultural thinking with a planned way of system culture".

In a word, although domestic scholars' research can promote the development of Chinese cultural teaching and language teaching in theory and practice, the study of Chinese cultural teaching is hysteric. Although we have already emphasized the interaction between native language culture and target language culture, we are still relatively backward in theory creation and research methods. Democratic Chinese cultural teaching mode is still only at the level of the result, so the research on cultural teaching has a long way to go.

## III. CURRENT SITUATIONS OF CHINESE CULTURAL PENETRATION IN COLLEGE ENGLISH READING TEACHING

### A. *The Relationship between Language and Culture*

Language and culture are closely related to each other, the learning of language inevitably involves different cultural background information. Language is the carrier of culture, it inevitably contacts with different culture in the process of learning a language, especially in English reading teaching process. About cultural penetration, reading barriers of reading comprehension not only exist in knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. The cultural background knowledge in the article may also affect the correct understanding of the article.

On the one hand, language is the carrier of culture and the material expression form of culture. The expression of culture can't be separated from language. The formation of the human mind about a language must be conducted by forms of language expression. Therefore, human thinking process is reflected in language with vocabulary and sentence structure. Among them, vocabulary is the most obvious tool for carrying cultural information. In addition to some core words in the language, many vocabularies contain specific cultural information, which is called "culture-loaded words". In addition, idioms, allusions and proverbs are closely related to the cultural traditions of certain ethnic groups. Sentence structure and discourse structure in language also reflect the way of thinking of one nation in a way.

On the other hand, culture is the base of language, and language cannot exist without culture. In other words, culture is the foundation about formation and development of language. Cultural development and change is the driving force of language formation and development. The famous American anthropologist Smith(1983) said a famous saying that "language has a base, and speakers of a language belong to a race or several race. Any language cannot exist without

culture, that is to say, any language cannot be separated from social life. Instead, it depends on social customs and cultural beliefs." Famous British linguist Lyons (1983) argues the restriction of language system. The language system is a kind of "underlying structure", namely the human common physical characteristics and the original structure of the world. In dictionary, Penetration means when something or someone enters or passes through something, especially when this is difficult. Chinese cultural penetration of English reading teaching in college means that teachers use a variety of teaching methods penetrate cultural knowledge to students, such as history geography, local conditions, customs, daily life and so on. All of these is related to knowledge of Chinese traditional culture. The new teaching materials of college English reading teaching are associated with nature, society and humanity with cultural content, which has a considerable breadth and depth. Each reading article reflects a certain cultural knowledge.

#### *B. Current Situation of English Reading Teaching in High School*

The English reading class in high school pays more attention to the students' reading skills training, because reading skills training can be very effective to make students grasp the knowledge of English. At the same time, it can enhance the reading comprehension ability of student and strengthen the learning ability of English subject. Although senior English reading teaching can make students get effective promotion, however, there are many problems in actual English teaching process. And it's hard to reach the ideal teaching effect. Last but not least, these problems make high school students have some resistance to reading teaching, which is very bad for high school English reading teaching. First of all, many teachers ignore the students' main role. In the present stage of English reading teaching, many teachers still keep the traditional thoughts. They think that teacher is the only key player in the classroom and the teacher authority is most important. The high school English teacher in English class is very responsible, because their English reading teaching process can be done very well. But for students, it's not good, because they do not have an independent thinking. This way of teaching can only let students remember the words, grammar, some basic language knowledge, and the formation of its systematic framework. However, it is a non-active learning process for students, which cannot improve students' learning interest and English level. Then, a lot of teachers ignore the cultivation of students' learning interest. In the current college English reading teaching, many teachers hold a view that textbooks are the authoritative books that enable students to rapidly improve their scores. Therefore, the teacher does not want the students to spend their time and energy on reading after class, but spend a lot of time in textbooks and various exercises. The long and repetitive sinking into a tedious sea of questions leads students feel resistance to Chinese culture in English reading teaching. As a result, students' interest of learning Chinese culture is reduced. Last but not least, a number of teachers ignore the Chinese culture in English teaching process. English is not only a subject, but also a language with profound cultural heritage. However, in English reading teaching, many teachers only pay attention to the teaching of knowledge content but ignore the cultivation of English national culture awareness. In English reading teaching, one of the disadvantages is that students can grasp the meaning of words and sentences, but it is difficult to understand the thought of the whole article. So it's necessary to improve Chinese cultural penetration of English reading teaching.

The theme of college English reading teaching materials is extensive. It relates to English country's political history, geography, physiognomy, folk customs and biographies, but it less involves in addition to the target language countries and cultural knowledge, especially information about the culture with Chinese characteristics. About Chinese elements in the English teaching material, The author makes detailed research and analysis from four books of New Horizon College English .According to the date analysis, although 30% content involves the Chinese elements, it concentrates mainly on exercises which is about Chinese culture. So it is unevenly distributed and the content range is too narrow in the textbooks. In addition, Chinese cultural elements in English teaching have been neglected for years. Therefore, English learners can only be embarrassed when they encounter situations where they need to express Chinese culture in English. The student is an important factor of Chinese cultural penetration in college reading teaching too. Most students have few interests in Chinese culture. Cultivating interest of learning Chinese excellent traditional culture is necessary. So changing the traditional concept of teaching in English reading class can make students learn more knowledge. On the contrary, in the traditional classroom, the teacher using traditional teaching methods makes many students feel listless in class, as a result, the learning efficiency is very low. Cultivating students' interest of Chinese culture can make students learn English knowledge spontaneously and learn English national culture and English knowledge independently. From the process of cultivating students' interest of Chinese culture, students grow their cultural experiences, as well as appreciate the charms of the Chinese culture. At the same time, it increases students' interest of learning English and improves the efficiency of English learning.

### IV. PRINCIPLES OF CHINESE CULTURAL PENETRATION IN COLLEGE ENGLISH READING TEACHING

#### *A. Practical Principle*

Chinese cultural penetration is very important in senior high school. There are some principles should be followed when teacher penetrates Chinese culture in English reading teaching 1. Practical principle requires the practical application in English reading teaching process, for example, cultural import contents should be closely related to the details of the reading materials. Besides, cultural contents not only are involved in daily communication, but also take into account the career of students in the future. Of course, there are some other factors. So on the one hand, students

don't think the relationship between language and culture is too abstract and empty. Instead, it is closely associated with language communication practice. On the other hand, Chinese cultural teaching can inspire students' interest in learning both the language and Chinese excellent traditional culture.

In order to promote Chinese cultural penetration of English teaching reading, teacher should use different ways so that to reach a good teaching efficiency. The practice in English reading teaching refers to that the cultural teaching in the classroom should not only be limited to the teacher's explanation, but also should increase the interaction between teachers and students. A simple teacher's explanation of cultural knowledge may make students feel monotonous and dull so that cannot receive good teaching results. In addition, the teaching method should have characteristics of the diversity of culture. For example, in order to make students feel more immersive atmosphere of Chinese culture. Teacher can let students watch some relevant slide shows, videos, films and so on.

#### *B. Periodic Principle*

The content of cultural penetration should be carried out under guidance with the principle of gradual progress. Because the learner's cognitive development is distinguished, which is a process from simple to complex. The content of the reading material culture teaching should be based on students' language level and accept ability. What's more, Chinese cultural penetration should be from the simple to complex level. The content of specific cultural event is a general cultural theme, which is the social culture of the target language comprehensive understanding.

In particular, in the primary stage of English reading teaching, Chinese cultural teaching just stay on surface of culture, such as vocabulary, idiom, grammar and discourse, all of these should be explained. In the intermediate stage of teaching, the emphasis should be placed on middle-level culture. In another word, cultural background knowledge and non-verbal communication should be paid more attention. In the advanced stage of English reading teaching, the key point should be placed on strengthening the deep culture, namely the analysis and comparison of cultural phenomena.

#### *C. Appropriate Principle*

Appropriate principle is related to teaching contents and teaching methods. In terms of teaching content, cultural items should be considered as representative purposes. It should be explain in detail that the content is representative and belongs to mainstream culture. What's more, it should deal with the cultural content of the relationship between the diachronic and synchronic. English reading teaching should put emphasis on the synchronic culture on the contemporary culture, introducing some appropriate contents, as a result, students can understand some cultural customs and traditions through this way.

The content of English reading teaching is broad and complex, but the teaching time is limited. So the teacher's explanation is selective and limited. Therefore, in addition to the teacher's explanation, teachers should pay more attention to the interaction with students. Then, teacher should encourage students to do a lot of extracurricular reading practices. And at last, teacher should increase the accumulation of cultural knowledge. Especially in practice, teacher should create the opportunity to practice so that students are able to apply what they have learned in real or simulated situations with Chinese cultural knowledge. It's also a good way to deepen students' ability of understanding cultural knowledge and to improve learners' intercultural communicative competence. Furthermore, it stimulates students' enthusiasm to participate in and improve the effect of cultural teaching of English reading process in senior high school.

#### *D. Comparative Principle*

Comparative principle refers to comparing native culture and the target language culture during the cultural teaching. Teachers in cultural comparison should pay more attention to cultivating the cultural tolerance of students, as well as improve understanding ability and open learning attitude. It is a useful way to deepen students' understanding of the target language culture and native culture. At the same time, it's an effective approach to understand the cultural orientation of different countries and nations. In addition, the cultural comparison also should have the thought of cultural relativism, because Chinese and foreign cultural differences are not cultural criticism, but a way to understand the cultural differences and to deepen the understanding of native culture.

Comparative method is also a very important mean for Chinese cultural penetration of English reading teaching in senior high school. There are differences between Chinese and western culture in language communication, such as non-verbal communication, thinking mode and values. Only by contrast can learners discover the distinction of the mother tongue and the target language, discovering the similarities and differences between the language and culture, removing the reading obstacles and improving the ability of English reading comprehension.

### V. APPROACHES OF CHINESE CULTURAL PENETRATION IN COLLEGE ENGLISH READING TEACHING

#### *A. Improving Teachers' Cultural Awareness*

In order to strengthen Chinese cultural penetration of English reading teaching and reach a good teaching result, people should make effects from different ways such as teacher, students and teaching materials. Teacher should improve Chinese cultural awareness. And students should be given more attention to their subjectivity. What's more, cultivating students' interest of Chinese culture is very important. Finally, textbook should be increased more Chinese cultural elements.

First of all, improving teacher's Chinese cultural literacy is very important. Teachers should establish a correct attitude towards Chinese cultural teaching. For example, teachers should handle the relationship between language teaching and cultural teaching, as well as set up the correct view of language and culture. Moreover, teachers ought to become excellent book readers. Teachers have a positive attitude towards the implementation of cultural teaching in reading. As a result, learners can actively integrate cultural teaching into language teaching in the course of English teaching process.

However, in some schools, many teachers are not aware of the importance of Chinese cultural teaching, and Chinese cultural teaching is not really implemented in English reading teaching. On the one hand, in the process of implementation about Chinese cultural teaching in English reading class, teachers must realize the relationship between language and culture, as well as the relationship between language teaching and cultural teaching. On the other hand, teachers should focus on cultivating the neutral cultural learning attitude in the process of introducing Chinese and foreign cultures, which is to give learners the idea of cultural relativity. It also shows that the imparting of cultural knowledge includes both English culture and Chinese traditional culture.

### *B. Cultivating Students' Cultural Interest*

Firstly, students should be given enough subjectivity. The teacher should pay attention to the students' subjectivity in the teaching design. The teacher is only the guide and instructor of the student. At the traditional class of English reading teaching, it is impossible to bring the new teaching method into the classroom, because it breaks the outdated thinking of the teacher as the authoritative subject and the central role of the English teaching class. In English reading teaching class, it is a teacher's job that guide students and help students learning independently.

Secondly, students should expand reading after class or participate in intercultural communication activities in extracurricular time. Furthermore, students should actively improve English expression ability to Chinese culture. Teachers can arrange extra-curricular reading related books of teaching materials. For example, Beijing Wuzhou Press published a dream of red mansions story (English version) in 2012. Peking University Press published Society and Culture in Ancient China. Learners obtain information from reading, and through a series of activities such as internal organization in the brain, assimilation, integration, processing, the most information will eventually come into their own knowledge or skills.

In addition, students can use their spare time to participate in intercultural exchange activities, such as strengthening interaction with foreign students. Cross-cultural communication activities can make learners cultivate consciousness of cross cultural communication under the unconscious. It's a good chance of experience across culture and the development field of vision. At the same time, it can stimulate learners' cultural learning interest and reduce the fatigue feeling of classroom learning, laying a good foundation for future learning.

### *C. Increasing Chinese Cultural Elements in English Teaching Materials*

In the first place, the user has rights to adjust teaching materials properly. Some teaching materials, whose combination of cultural content and language content is not enough. In response to this question, reading materials should involve as much as possible about Chinese culture-related tasks, activities, and practices. Through this way, students have more opportunities to express their views about Chinese culture, and the learning of language culture can be connected with their own life experiences, enriching their learning experience.

Furthermore, the content of the textbook should be more relevant to the knowledge of Chinese excellent traditional culture. Because cultural imparting not only includes the culture of English-speaking countries, but also involves Chinese excellent traditional culture. In addition, learners should write some articles according to reading materials. Writing articles can make learners related to the real life according to learned knowledge in the classroom.

Chinese cultural penetration is usually done through the input and output of language learning. Chinese cultural input in English reading teaching refers to selecting English materials related to Chinese culture for students to read. Chinese cultural output refers to the study of reading can set the feedback evaluation on the related topics, such as questions, requiring students to talk about the understanding of reading materials about the Chinese excellent traditional culture, or to know the difference between Chinese and western culture, etc. For example,

"How many forms of Tang does the text talk about?"

"What are the features of Tang poetry?"

"What are the features of Tang poetry?"

Such topics are answered by the learners to cultivate and improve their level and ability to express the relevant knowledge of tang poetry in English.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The paper mainly focuses on Chinese cultural penetration in college English reading teaching. In this field, not many people are concerned about this topic. Through this study, the author believes that some educational professors and college English teachers will pay more attention to improving their cultural awareness of English reading teaching. What's more, the paper puts out some approaches about how to conduct Chinese cultural penetration in college English reading teaching. For example, teachers should improve cultural awareness. And students ought to cultivate cultural

interest. Furthermore, textbooks are supposed to increase some Chinese cultural elements. The author hopes that the paper can also apply to the later research about English listening teaching, English speaking teaching, English writing teaching and so on. In other words, the research field of culture teaching can be extended to all aspects of the college English teaching.

This paper mainly uses the literature method, so it is still on the theoretical level and has not been carried out in practice. In addition, the level of the teacher is different, the level of the students is different, and the understanding of Chinese cultural penetration is different, so there is still a deficiency in this aspect.

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# The Effect of Writing Practice on Improving Speaking Skill among Pre-intermediate EFL Learners

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**Abstract**—The productive skills of a language are writing and speaking which share resembling elements. However, there has been rare endeavor to examine the effect of writing practice on the speaking improvement of the learners. This study investigated the effect of writing practice on improving speaking skill among pre-intermediate EFL learners. To this end, the researcher selected two pre-intermediate intact classes and randomly assigned them in two equal groups; one experimental group (n=25) and one control group (n=25). Then, both groups were pretested through a Key English Test. Afterwards, the respondents of the experimental group received the treatment which was learning speaking skill through writing practice. The control group was deprived of the treatment and they were taught in the classroom using traditional methods of teaching. After 20 sessions of treatment, the two groups were administered another sample of the Key English Test as post-test. Data were analyzed by Paired and Independent Samples t-test. The results indicated that not only writing proficiency, but also the speaking proficiency of the experimental group had significantly improved. The findings revealed that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group ( $p < .05$ ) on the post-test.

**Index Terms**—practice writing, writing proficiency, speaking proficiency, EFL, pre-intermediate learners

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Preliminaries

Developing the four principal skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing is indispensable for learning a new language; therefore, rehearsing the four modalities in differing degrees and amalgamation is a benignant way of teaching a foreign language (Oxford, 1990). As indicated by Jordan (1997), in learning a second language it is stressed that all the language skills ought to be worked on simultaneously and concentrating on one skill should not cut off learning the other skills. The language learning skills have been segregated into two primary groups containing receptive (listening and reading) and productive (writing and speaking) skills. Inspecting the interrelatedness among the ingredients of skills in every group as well as their reciprocal influence can result to the advancement of their factual usage in practicable teaching processes. This research chiefly centralized on the productive skills and the one-directional impact of writing practice on the speaking performance was investigated.

Speaking is characterized as the interpersonal function of language through which meaning is created and transmitted (Hughes, 2013) and “writing is an approach to yield language you accomplish naturally when you speak” (Meyers, 2005, p. 2). Hinkel (2013) claimed that acquiring an appropriate level of linguistic bases is essential for developing writing skill to empower students to overcome a range of lexical and grammatical skills needed for writing progression. According to Silva (1990), writing commonly pursues a standardized form of grammar, structure, and vocabulary which is inextricable from the structure of spoken sentences. As a result, writing practice not only aggrandize students’ vigilant notification of the sentence structures while speaking but promote their speaking proficiency. El-Koumy (1998) carried out a study interrogating the influence of dialogue journal writing on EFL students’ speaking proficiency, in which the findings uncovered the considerable performance of the experimental group. He appends that multiple investigations have dealt with writing skill from various perspectives but not presuming it as a means of speaking proficiency growth. Considering the resembling syntactic models in writing and speaking, the relevance between writing and speaking has been surveyed (Cleland & Pickering, 2006). Furthermore, Zhu (2007) demonstrated that high proficiency students write and speak better than low language proficiency ones. Regarding the extant relationship, the current study tried to examine the impact of writing practice on speaking development of pre-intermediate level students through the following questions.

### B. Objectives and Significance of the Study

There have been rare similar studies which examined the effects of writing practice on improving Iranian EFL learners' speaking skill. Therefore, the main objective of the present study is to inspect the possible impacts of writing practice on Iranian EFL learners' speaking improvement. This study aims to enhance Iranian EFL learners' speaking through teaching them to practice writing more.

The findings of the present study may help Iranian EFL learners to be more fluent speakers through practice writing frequently. The current study can contribute to the existing literature on speaking instruction by examining the role of practice in writing. The results of the current study can encourage English teachers and material developers to provide the students with their favorite topics to maximize their learning. In addition, results of this study may convince English instructors and material developers that one source of L2 English speaking problems is the lack of practice in writing.

### C. Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study is an attempt to answer the following research question:

**RQ1.** Does writing practice have any significant effect on improving Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' speaking skill?

**RQ2.** Is there any significant difference among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' speaking improvement who practice writing frequently than those who did not?

This study is designed to test the following null hypothesis:

**HO 1.** Writing practice does not have any significant effect on improving Iranian EFL learners' speaking skill.

**HO 2.** There is not any significant difference among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' speaking improvement who practice writing frequently than those who did not.

## II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### A. Second Language Writing

"Writing is a mandatory gadget for learning and communicating. We utilize writing as an inductor to collect, maintain and extend information" (Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald, 2013, p. 5). As the result of various metamorphoses in opinions toward writing practice and its momentous role for second language learning, miscellaneous pedagogical approaches are suggested by diverse scholars (Matsuda, 2003), as well as a number of theories to protect teachers' genuine training and comprehending of L2 writing. The theories are viewed as components of a jigsaw and the goal of a modern theory is not to substitute the antiquated one but to function as a supplement (Hyland, 2003). Matsuda (2003) alludes that the approaches consist of writing as sentence-level structure, writing as discourse-level structure, writing as a process, and writing as language utilization in context. However, the categorization proposed by Hyland (2003) comprises of some more dimensions consisting of concentrating on language structure, text function, content (themes and topics), creative articulation, writing processes and genres and contexts of writing. The classifications reveal that guided writing is embedded into the first phase, writing as sentence-level structure. At this stage writing is assumed as a product that concentrate on text units, vocabulary selection, grammatical specifications, content, organization and cohesive instruments (Hyland, 2003). A proficient teacher requires to be able to teach sentence structures such as grammar, punctuation, capitalization, etc., and teaching these skills can simplify learning the sentence constructions in addition to boosting the quality of the entire text (Graham et al., 2013).

Moreover, Matsuda (2003) claims that controlled composition was likewise suggested at the first step and Pincas (1962) accentuates the significance of controlled and guided composition in similar stage in order to barricade mistakes happening owing to L1 to L2 transmutation. Matsuda (2003) also believes that controlled writing was produced out of behavioral and habit formation theory of learning, in which the emphasize was on the sentence level progression through replacement exercises (p. 19) that can obliterate the possibility of making mistakes (Pincas, 1982). Above all, Hyland (2003) elucidates training writing skill in four distinguished phases. The first phase entitled acquaintance tends to teach some grammatical structures and words. Via the second phase which is controlled writing, learners accomplish sentence-based activities. In the third phase writing happens based on a sample text which is named guided writing, and the last phase manages open writing exploiting the taught patterns. He likewise believes that task-based writing assignments by performing workouts suchlike complete in the gaps can be assisting and useful to controlled writing, and they can upgrade the students' attention on attaining accuracy and preventing mistakes (Pincas, 1982; Matsuda, 2003).

### B. Interrelation between Writing and Speaking

Albeit writing and speaking are two segregate skills of language with special discrepancies, they both belong to the taxonomy of productive skills and because of sharing many similar members they are very much interdependent (Jordan, 1997). Writing appears too hard for students and learning to compose is even more intransigent. A teacher requires to create a convenient perimeter for learners to cheer them to compose and prepare them with obvious objectives and sensible expectances of what they aim to write (Graham et al., 2013). Weissberg (2006) believes that students can enhance their language skills in addition to their social interplay skills through vital writing practice, since oral and written skills share the identic strategies such as topic choice and giving remarks.

Writing can facilitate comprehension and reminiscing of the learning purpose. (Graham et al., 2013). Nation and Newton (2009) remark that, written input can be a very authoritative factor to patronize speaking. In a study on the impact of written input on communication, Newton (1995) discovered that all the vocabulary utilized by learners for negotiation are the ones present in their written input. The advancement of verbal working memory of the oral proficiency can straightly affect the quality of the writing assignments (MacArthur et al., 2008).

Concerning the relation among writing and speaking, Cleland and Pickering (2006) administered an examination in which they attempted to explore the mechanisms utilized in writing and speaking building distinctive syntactic examples, however they characterized syntactic priming as the propensity of the speaker to reduplicate formerly utilized syntactic structures. Applying three various tests with the utilization of syntactic priming, findings demonstrated that the syntactic operation rooted in both spoken and written production were similar. The consequence of their investigation is congruent with MacArthur et al.'s (2008) results that "There is a considerable interrelation between the sophistication of grammar or syntax in terms of density and embedding used in speech and writing" (p.172).

Zhu (2007) carried out a research in which the relationship between speaking and writing skill in college-level students was contemplated. In their examination the syntactic development of 10 college-level ESL students currently studying in an American university was decomposed both in speaking and writing, and the consequences revealed that there is a positive connection among college-level ESL students' speaking and writing proficiency. The result demonstrated that high skilled students had both superior writing and speaking potency than the low proficient ones. The common crucial cognitive potencies among writing and oral language makes the two especially related to each other (MacArthur, Graham, & Fitzgerald, 2008).

Generally, going through diverse studies related to writing and speaking skills, it was indicated that numerous researchers have worked on these two skills independently or in some instances concerning their help to throughout language learning, but none of these researches examined the reciprocating connection among writing and speaking. In general, theoretically it is believed that there is a noteworthy relationship among writing and speaking skill (Brown, 2001; Bygate, 1987; Luoma, 2004; Nation & Newton, 2009; Newton, 1995; Rivers, 1981; Zhu, 2007) but empirically the sole and the most pertinent study is the one carried out by El-Koumy (1998), in which he propounded the impact of dialogue journal writing on the speaking proficiency of the learners. Thus, this examination intended to explore the effect of writing practice on speaking improvement of pre-intermediate EFL learners, which has seldom come to the focus of consideration in studies administered by other researchers.

### *C. Empirical Background*

Rausch (2015) in a study researched the possible relation among speaking and listening skills for English learners. In addition to the analysis of standardized test consequences in these areas, pre- and post-test findings and student studies were checked to specify the impact of teaching in discursive speaking on students' potency to write contentiously. Discoveries contained:

1. English learners would be best served by premeditated layout of speaking training which utilizes scaffolding and analysis of instances to train standard academic language models and heuristics.
2. Such deliberate teaching of speaking seems to be transmissible, also profiting English learners' writing skills. However, while students are able to outstretch skills relating to critical analysis and organization, they will require extra training on skills, for instance, spelling and other conventions, which are monopolized to writing.
3. Instructing rhetoric through applying speaking amplitude additionally exhibits the merit of accentuating the requirement for lucrative schematization. The time-bound nature of speaking, which doesn't permit for considerable pausing or reconsideration, obliges learners to adopt beneficent planning propensities that, when exchanged to writing, become extremely advantageous.

Furthermore, Fathali and Sotoudehnama (2015) utilizing a pretest-posttest controlled group plan in a quasi-experimental approach examined the impact of guided writing practice on the speaking proficiency of Iranian EFL students. Two elementary intact classes which were arranged based on the institute's placement test were chosen for the examination. The homogeneity of the students was investigated via Key English Test (2007) as the pretest of the research, and the classes were randomly divided into the experimental group (n=26) and the control group (n=26). The experimental group was furnished with 10 guided writing worksheets in the last 15 to 20 minutes of the class, while the control group went through the method of a usual institute class in which they dealt with workbook activities within the aforesaid time. The quantitative analysis of the posttest utilizing an independent samples t-test demonstrated that not only writing proficiency, but also the speaking proficiency of the experimental group had outstandingly developed. Furthermore, at end of the semester a semi-structured interview investigated the experimental group learners' attitudes toward the function of writing practice in enhancing their speaking skill. The content analysis of the interview transcriptions uncovered that the learners keep positive attitudes toward the guided writing worksheets at the end of the term, though they did not have the identical attitude at the outset.

## III. METHOD

### *A. Participants*



To carry out this study, two intact pre-intermediate classes were selected from a private language institute in Ahvaz, Khuzestan, Iran. The two intact classes were randomly assigned into the experimental (n=25) and the control group (n=25) of the study. Albeit they were specified to this level based on the institute's rigid criteria and placement test, in order to make sure of the homogeneity of the participants in the two groups regarding their writing and speaking potency, which were the major focus of the study, they all participated in the speaking and writing parts of a sample of Cambridge Key English Test (2007). The participants were all male and their age range was between 13 to 16. The first language of all participants was Persian.

#### *B. Instrumentation*

The writing and speaking parts of Key English Test (KET) was applied as the pre-test of the study. Cambridge examinations cover all four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing. They are planned around four necessary qualities: validity, reliability, impact and practicality.” (University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, 2008, p. 2). Speaking section has two parts (Interview, Collaborative task) which must be taken it with another candidate. There were two testers. One tester talks to student and the other tester listens. Both examiners give scores for students' efficiency. The writing section has four parts (Word completion, Open cloze, Information transfer, Guided writing). Although the reliability of KET has been previously surveyed and approved by the University of Cambridge, the researchers once more investigated the reliability of the speaking section, the main concern of the study, through the parallel speaking tests of the study. The reliability was found to be 0.96, which showed the test to be reliable for the present study (Larson-Hall, 2010).

Finally, another sample of writing and speaking sections of KET was performed as posttest of the study to examine the impact of treatment, i.e., writing practice on speaking skill. Also, the reliability of the posttest was also checked resembling to pretest and it was .091.

#### *C. Data Collection Procedures*

In the first step, 50 homogeneous pre-intermediate participants were selected and randomly divided into two groups- experimental group and control group. Then both groups were pretested through a test containing the writing and speaking sections of the sample Key English Test (2007). Students of both experimental and control groups were at pre-intermediate level and they studied Interchange of Cambridge University Press. After that, the researcher practiced the treatment on experimental group which was using writing practice. Both experimental and comparison groups passed a period of 12 sessions, in which each session lasted about 70 minutes. In a typical institute class, the teacher teaches the student's book for about 70 to 75 minutes, and during the remaining time students can work on the workbook exercises or any additional activities provided by the teacher to improve second language learning. The workbook exercises contain a diversity of activities suitable with vocabulary and grammar structures of the targeted unit. Furthermore, during the treatment, the researcher provided multiple extra assignments for experimental group on writing including writing about 150 words on a topic and then practice it for speaking. In each session, one topic was given to the whole group and ask them to write whatever they know about it; then after practicing it, they should speak what they have written. In another activity, the researcher gave a text to students and asked them to summarize it, then speak whatever they understand from the text. Moreover, the researcher gave a sequence of pictures which the student must write a short story and finally every student loudly spoke what he wrote. It is worth mentioning the many activities including writing model texts such as letters, postcards, and personal information writings were also performed in the experimental group.

The control group of this study elapsed a typical institute class and dealt with their workbook exercises for about 25 minutes at the end of each session, whereas the experimental group learners were prepared with various writing activities during the last 25 minutes at the end of every session. At the end of the term the writing and speaking section of another sample of the Key English Test was utilized as the posttest of the research. The writing and speaking tests were all registered, transcribed and scored based on Cambridge ESOL examination instruction for speaking at the pre-intermediate level. To make sure about the reliability of the speaking scores, pre-test and post-test transcriptions were rescored by another teacher who was present in the exam sessions as well. In order to examine the internal consistency of the two sets of scores by the two raters, Cronbach Alpha coefficient was utilized (Dornyei, 2007). Internal consistency of the scores were affirmed by the Cronbach Alpha 0.913 for the pre-test scores and 0.963 for the post-test scores respectively.

#### *D. Data Analysis Procedures*

After gathering the data through the above-stated instruments, the scores of each group were calculated and compared with each other. The data were analyzed with the help of SPSS (Statistical Firstly, in order to check the normality of the data, Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test was applied. Package for Social Science) software. Then, Independent and paired samples t-test were also applied to get the final results.

## IV. RESULTS

In order to analyze the gathered data, the SPSS software version 25 (Statistical Package for Social Science) software was used. First of all, it is worth mentioning that the normality of the distribution of both pretest ( $Z= 1.248$ ;  $p =0.089$ ) and posttest scores ( $Z= 0.793$ ;  $p =0.556$ ) was checked through One-sample K-S and the findings revealed that test distribution was normal.

TABLE 1.  
GROUP STATISTICS (PRE-TEST OF BOTH GROUPS)

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
Pre-test	Experimental group	25	15.0000	2.72336	.54467
	Control group	25	15.2800	2.03142	.40628

In table 1, the descriptive statistics of both groups is presented. The means of both groups are almost equal. The control group's mean score is 15.2800 and the experimental group's mean score is 15.0000. This means that both groups are somehow similar since they are homogeneous at the beginning of the treatment.

TABLE 2.  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST (PRE-TEST OF BOTH GROUPS)

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
<b>Equal variances assumed</b>	3.374	.072	-.412	48	.682	-.280	.679	-1.646	1.086
<b>Equal variances not assumed</b>			-.412	44.39	.682	-.280	.679	-1.649	1.089

Table 2 shows the scores of both groups on the pre-test. Since the Sig (.682) is greater than 0.05, the difference between the groups is not significant at ( $p<0.05$ ). In fact, they were at the same level before receiving the treatment.

TABLE 3.  
GROUP STATISTICS (POST-TEST OF BOTH GROUPS)

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
Post-test	Experimental	25	26.4400	1.60935	.32187
	Control	25	21.8000	2.30940	.46188

Table 3 displays the descriptive statistics of both groups on the post-test. The means of the groups are different. The experimental group's mean score is 26.4400 and the control group's mean score is 21.8000. This means that the experimental group outperformed the control group on the post-test.

TABLE 4.  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST (POST-TEST OF BOTH GROUPS)

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
<b>Equal variances assumed</b>	1.792	.187	8.24	48	.000	4.640	.562	3.50808	5.77192
<b>Equal variances not assumed</b>			8.24	42.8	.000	4.640	.562	3.504	5.775

Table 4 demonstrates the post-test scores of control and experimental groups. Since the Sig (.000) is less than (0.05), there was a significant difference between the mean scores of post-test in both experimental and control groups. The experimental groups got better scores on the post-test. It can be concluded that the treatment had positive effects on the performance of the experimental groups on the post-test.

TABLE 5.  
PAIRED SAMPLES STATISTICS (PRE AND POST-TESTS OF BOTH GROUPS)

Pair 1	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Exp. Pre	15.0000	25	2.72336	.54467
	26.4400	25	1.60935	.32187
Pair 2	15.2800	25	2.03142	.40628
	21.8000	25	2.30940	.46188

Based on the descriptive statistics in Table 4.5, the mean scores of the experimental group on the pre and post-tests are 15.0000 and 26.4400 respectively. The mean scores of the control group on the pre and post-tests are 15.2800 and 21.8000 respectively.

TABLE 6.  
PAIRED SAMPLES TEST (PRE AND POST-TESTS OF BOTH GROUPS)

Paired Differences		Mean		Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation		Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Exp. Post – Exp. Pre	11.44	2.873	.574	10.253	12.626	19.90	24	.000
Pair 2	Cont. Pre- Post	6.52	2.709	.541	5.401	7.638	12.03	24	.000

In the table above, paired samples t-test is used to compare the pre and post-tests of each group. Since Sig (.000) is less than 0.05, the difference between the post-test and pre-test of the experimental group is significant. So, instruction was effective in the experimental group. Moreover, as Sig (.000) is less than 0.05, the difference between the post-test and pre-test of the control group is also significant.

## V. DISCUSSION

After analyzing the data and obtaining the results, the researcher arrives at the discussion section to answer the question and compare and contrast it with the previous studies. So the question of the present research is answered below.

### **RQ1. Does writing practice have any significant effect on improving Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' speaking skill?**

This study focused on the possible effect of writing practice on Iranian EFL learners' speaking skill. The students' pretest and posttest scores on speaking were analyzed to see if there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups in terms of speaking improvement. The results of the descriptive statistics of the groups indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group on the posttest measure of speaking improvement.

In order to test whether this difference between the groups is large enough to reject the null hypothesis at the significance level of .05, an independent samples t-test was used. Upon reviewing the results of the independent samples t-test, the experimental group turned out to significantly outperform the control group after the intervention, indicating that the writing practice activities were successful in enhancing Iranian EFL learners' speaking while answering grammar tests. Hence, the null hypothesis of the study that "writing practice does not have any significant effect on improving Iranian EFL learners' speaking skill" was rejected at .05 level of significance.

Results of the posttest indicated the positive effect of writing practice on both writing and speaking ability development of the learners. Based on the results of the study, the authors now believe that writing practice is beneficial, not only in support of writing proficiency, but also in speaking enhancement at the pre-intermediate levels of language proficiency. Furthermore, the findings of the study support the previous study carried out by El-Koumy (1998) who checked the impact of dialogue journal writing on EFL students' speaking skill, in which results demonstrated that the experimental group equipped with dialogue journal writing, considerably outperformed the control group regarding speaking development.

According to Rivers (1981), absence or lack of systematic practice in primal stages of language learning can bring deficiencies in advanced levels. Since pre-intermediate level students are repeatedly persuaded to work on writing high-handedly, they usually state themselves via connective phrases and extravagant types of native language. As a result, Hyland (2003) stresses the significance of the four stages of familiarization, controlled writing, guided writing and ultimately open writing in the process of instructing and rehearsing writing skill, and he take to account this hierarchy as an indispensable factor for learners' writing advancement. Accordingly, it is essential to pay attention to the appropriate way of writing practice from the primary stages of language learning in order to hamper fossilization of inaccurate forms.

Concerning the connection among writing and speaking, many researchers believe in resemblances and discrepancies between these two skills. These comparisons and contrasts contain both theoretical (Brown, 2001; Bygate, 1987; Chastain, 1976; Jordan, 1997; Luoma, 2004) and practicable dimensions (Cleland & Pickering, 2006; El-koumy, 1998; Hyes, 1988; Zhu, 2007).

It is believed that although writing and speaking are two segregated skills, they both belong to the productive skills of language and they share some identical elements, these two skills are related to each other but with diverse ways of production (Cleland & Pickering, 2006; Oxford, 1990). Although numerous scholars trust in the diversity among spoken and written language theoretically, this study as a practicable one showed that writing can be fruitful for the

progression of both writing and speaking proficiency. In other words, the theoretical differences between writing and speaking have not functioned as impediments in contributing one to the other.

**RQ2. Is there any significant difference among Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' speaking improvement who practice writing frequently than those who did not?**

In order to arrive at a logical answer to the second research question, the obtained data were analyzed through independent and paired samples t-tests. According to results presented in result section, there was a significant difference in speaking scores among experimental group using writing practice and control group which received instruction directly and conventionally by the teacher. Based on obtained results the means of two groups were different. Based on the result section, there were significant differences between the two groups. The results of the post-test may show the difference between the two groups in case of the use of writing practice. The experimental group of writing practice instruction outperformed the group of traditional instruction. It shows that the use of writing practice might be of more use than the use of traditional concerning speaking improvement. So, the second null hypothesis was rejected. Generally, the results showed that the experimental group's scores were higher than the control group's score which shows the positive effect of writing practice instruction on speaking enhancement.

The findings of this study are in line with Fathali and Sotoudehnama (2015) who checked the impact of guided writing practice on the speaking proficiency of Iranian EFL students. The quantitative analysis of the posttest utilizing an independent samples t-test demonstrated that not only writing proficiency, but also the speaking proficiency of the experimental group had outstandingly enhanced.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The major concern of the present study was to explore the effectiveness of writing practice training on speaking proficiency of the EFL students. Findings of the current study revealed that writing practice can affect both writing and speaking improvement of the pre-intermediate EFL learners significantly. It can be deduced that, writing practice not only can help writing proficiency, but can also be highly beneficial in advancing speaking proficiency of pre-intermediate learners. Through the consequences of the speaking post-test, it was manifested that students had progressed significantly utilizing accurate grammatical structures and vocabulary items. Hence, the findings of the study can urge the EFL teachers to train predestinated grammatical structures via writing practice, in order to hinder the fossilization of fallacious structures which may occur through speaking practice. The study can likewise notify the EFL teachers about the importance of the interrelation among language skills and the significance of consisting writing practice in the syllabus of language teaching classes even at the pre-intermediate levels. Moreover, the result of the present study can work as a guideline for material developers in designing English course books and stress the merits of consisting various types of writing practice for pre-intermediate level students.

Further studies can also be performed for adults and higher levels of language proficiency with other types of writing. It is worth noting that the learners of this research were only males and carrying out a further examination with female students may result into various results.

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# The Significance and Inheritance of Huang Di Culture

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**Abstract**—Huang Di culture is an important source of Chinese culture. It is not mechanical, still and solidified but melting, extensible, creative, pioneering and vigorous. It is the root of Chinese culture and a cultural system that keeps pace with the times. Its influence is enduring and universal. It has rich connotations including the “Root” Culture, the “Harmony” Culture, the “Golden Mean” Culture, the “Governance” Culture. All these have a great significance for the times and the realization of the Great Chinese Dream, therefore, it is necessary to combine the inheritance of Huang Di culture with its innovation, constantly absorb the fresh blood of the times with a confident, open and creative attitude, give Huang Di culture a rich connotation of the times, tap the factors in Huang Di culture that fit the development of the modern times to advance the progress of the country and society, and make Huang Di culture still full of vitality in the contemporary era.

**Index Terms**—Huang Di, Huang Di culture, Chinese culture

## I. INTRODUCTION

Huang Di, being considered the ancestor of all Han Chinese in Chinese mythology, is a legendary emperor and cultural hero. His victory in the war against Emperor Chi You is viewed as the establishment of the Han Chinese nationality. He has made great many accomplishments in agriculture, medicine, arithmetic, calendar, Chinese characters and arts, among which, his invention of the principles of Traditional Chinese medicine, Huang Di Nei Jing, has been seen as one of the greatest contributions to Chinese medicine. Therefore, Huang Di culture, which has brought the descendants of Yellow River all together, has been taken an important source of Chinese culture for granted. The reason why Chinese civilization has lasted for 5000 years has been in the process of the continuous modernization of Huang Di culture, and moreover has been given the different connotation in different times. Since modern times, people have begun to refer to our everlasting culture on this land as a Chinese culture. From the perspective of the whole cultural system, Huang Di culture is the nickname of Chinese culture. Contemporary Chinese culture is the modernized Huang Di culture. Further study of the culture of Huang Di is of great significance for strengthening cultural confidence and for gaining the boundless power of national rejuvenation.

## II. THE CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE OF HUANG DI CULTURE

### A. *Huang Di Culture Is the Root of Chinese Culture*

The Chinese civilization has formed a rich and unique traditional Chinese culture for five thousand years, and the traditional Chinese culture is a powerful spiritual force to promote the development of Chinese society. Huang Di culture is the root of traditional Chinese culture. The Chinese civilization has been extended for five thousand years just because the root, Huang Di culture, has never dried up and its spirit have always occupied an important position in the minds of Chinese people. Since ancient times, Chinese people have called themselves the descendants of the Chinese people, viewing the Central Plains as the hometown of their souls, where the capital of Yan Huang is founded. The unification of China appears in the period of Huang Di. He is a great achiever of the Chinese civilization, and the influence of Huang Di culture has penetrated into time and space. His descendants have established more than 70 countries in various places, and produced more than 600 surnames. In the overseas, there are four great surnames known as “Chen Lin half sky, Huang Zheng row Street”, whose surname ancestors are all descendants of Huang Di. (Wang Quanying, 2017)

### B. *Huang Di Culture Is the System of Keeping Pace with the Times*

Many people have simply mistaken Huang Di culture for a culture of the Huang Di era. This understanding is unscientific and does not insist on looking at problems from a comprehensive and developmental perspective. In fact, Huang Di culture has been developing, and in a broad sense, Chinese culture is Huang Di culture. Its consistent development with times is also the fundamental reason why the Chinese nation and Chinese culture can last for 5000 years. If Chinese civilization is compared to a gigantic tree, Huang Di culture is the solid root of it. Confucian culture, Taoist culture, Mohist culture, Legalist culture and so on, are all integral parts of Huang Di culture and branches of it. In modern times, we generally call this big tree Chinese culture, so we can use this root, Huang Di culture, to express the

whole Chinese culture. Huang Di culture was first expressed in several aspects such as “golden mean” culture, “harmony” culture, “root” culture, “governance” culture. In the process of historical development, Huang Di culture has gradually developed into a cultural system covering all aspects. (Li Yanping, 2001)

### C. *Influence of Huang Di Culture Is Universal*

From the viewpoint of truth, the influence of China on Huang Di culture has not been fully understood. As a time-honored cultural symbol, Huang Di culture is the spiritual sustenance of Chinese at home and abroad. The values and concepts of “loving kindness, viewing people, upholding integrity, respecting justice, admiring harmony and seeking common ground” are rooted in the culture of Huang Di. (Li Yaozong, 2010) General Secretary Xi Jinping has repeatedly stressed the importance of building a community of human destiny to provide China's programs and Chinese wisdom for human development, which requires us to dig out spiritual food from Huang Di culture. Toynbee, a famous British historian, also said that what the world needs most now is the essence of Chinese civilization---harmony. If China can not replace the West and become the dominant factor of mankind, the future of the entire human race is pathetic. (Toynbee, 2016)As he pointed out that Harmony is, indeed, the main content of Huang Di culture. However, in the past, we paid more attention to the influence of Huang Di culture on the root and kinship. In fact, Huang Di culture is an effective carrier for promoting public diplomacy and has a strong reference for global governance.

## III. THE INHERITANCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF HUANG DI CULTURE

### A. *The Inheritance and Development of the “Root” Culture*

Huang Di is the creator of Chinese culture, and Huang Di culture is the root of Chinese culture. The splendid civilization of the five thousand years in China is developed on the basis of Huang Di culture. Under the leadership of Huang Di, our ancestors carried out farming, planting mulberry, raising silkworms, inventing characters, and creating a country. Gradually, they formed common customs, a common way of life, a common language and a stable community in a common living area. The community is Chinese nation. The Chinese nation has grown and developed to form the Chinese nation today. The culture of "root" in Huang Di culture mainly includes the cultural roots of ethnicities, characters, surnames, and original canons. Nowadays, with the rapid development of the times, people often get lost and confused: who am I, where do I come from, where do I go? The uneasiness of the soul in lack of conversion prompts people to look for their own roots, and trace them back to the source of Huang Di culture eventually. Xinzheng, Henan Province, the birthplace and the capital of Huang Di, is the important origin of Chinese civilization. The worship of the origin of civilization can allow Chinese to find a haven for their own souls. Therefore, in recent years, the Chinese people at home and abroad set off a cultural “root-seeking boom”. (Sun Zhaogang, 2014)The root seeking boom can enhance the sense of identity and sense of belonging of the descendants of Huang Di to the motherland. And it can strengthen the cohesion of the country, and bring all the Chinese around the world together to contribute to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

### B. *The Inheritance and Development of the “Harmony” Culture*

In the era before Huang Di, there were constant conflicts between clan and tribe. Huang Di built the first harmonious society in China's history, whose connotation mainly covers four aspects: the harmony between man and man, man and nature, man and society and tribal harmony. There are specific descriptions of the harmonious society built by Huang Di in *The Three Ancient Tombs Emperor Xuanyuan Political Code and Huainan Zi The Hades for Reading Classics*. This is enough to show that Huang Di put the thoughts of “harmony” into practice and laid the foundation for us to build a harmonious society today. On the basis of the “harmony” culture of Huang Di, Chinese traditional culture has further enriched the thoughts of “harmony”. *The Book of Changes* says: “reserving the universal harmony” and “all nations are tranquil”. “The universal harmony” is the highest state of “harmony”. *The Book of Documents* clearly put forward the concept of “concord with all nations”, that is, “harmony among all States, the people are changing in time”. They believe that all countries live in harmony, and the people in the world will become friendly and harmonious. Dong Zhongshu, a great Confucian scholar in the Han Dynasty, believed that “heaven and man should be merged into one”. Harmony is more important to the world of today. Toynbee once said with concern, “human beings have mastered the highly technological and civilized means that can destroy themselves and their civilization. At the same time they are in the camp of politics and ideology that are extremely opposed. The most important spirit is the essence of Chinese civilization—harmony.” (Tian Guangqing, 1980) Therefore, we must unswervingly implement the concept of harmonious development, actively build a harmonious society, and strive to achieve the goal of a community of the common destiny of mankind.

### C. *The Inheritance and Development of the “Golden Mean” Culture*

Many documents show that Huang Di's birthplace is located in Xinzheng today, and the central area of his activities is in Mount Jvci. It is the place where Huang Di, the ancestor of the Chinese civilization was born, the capital of Xuanyuan was established, and gained fame and fortune. It is the focal point of the cultural relics and monuments of Huang Di. It is a national shrine for the Chinese descendants for thousands of years who go to pilgrimage and seek the roots of their ancestors. In the middle of Zhongzhou, the Central Plains and China, it is the birthplace of the Chinese

character “zhong (middle)” and one of the birthplaces of the Chinese nation. In the eyes of the Chinese ancients, it is the center of heaven and earth. When Mr. Ji Wenfu talked about the humanistic spirit of the Central Plains more than 70 years ago, he held that the traditional spirit of building Henan is characterized by “Ping Zheng Tong Da”. It is almost “middle”. “Middle” has the meaning of the “center” of nation, “right”, “unbiased”, “middle” in things. It can profoundly express the attitude, collectivism and patriotism of Henan people. After a long period of historical experience, the spirit has condensed into a solid, unique, conscious and lasting spiritual temperament. It mainly includes characteristics such as simplicity, loyalty, responsibility dedication, advancement, and tolerance. To carry forward the spirit is of great significance for the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the realization of the Chinese dream of great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. It can encourage the Chinese children to be hard, open and enterprising, dare to sacrifice, take on their courage, and eventually become the strong power for realizing the Chinese dream. (Mao Jian, 2014)

#### D. *The Inheritance and Development of the “Governance” Culture*

The strategy of ruling the country during the reign of Huang Di mainly includes the following three aspects, which still has important reference significance for our political development today. The first is to put people prior to everything. The core of Huang Di culture is people-oriented thought, which is also the main core of Chinese culture. Huang Di once pointed out that the issued order which was only acceptable to the people can be obeyed by them. Only when the ruler is selfless and loving can the people respect the ruler. Huang Di was close to the people, loved the people, paid attention to the law of nature and the public opinions, all for the benefit of the people. In order to solve the problems of the people, he ran through the whole country and educated the rulers of future generations to live up to the earth and heaven and care about the lives of the people. The thinking is of great significance for today’s emphasis on putting people first, serving the people wholeheartedly and adhering to the people-centered development thought. It is an excellent component of Huang Di culture, so we should vigorously carry forward and inherit it. The second is to govern the country by virtue and law. To rule the country by virtue is to govern the country with benevolence and righteousness. Huang Di encouraged the people to be honest, to act with benevolence and to do righteousness. And it asked the ruler to treat the people benevolently instead of ruling them cruelly. To govern the country by law is to formulate legal provisions to regulate behavior, which is an important means of governing the country. Huang Di pointed out that the source of law is Tao. The function of law is to measure right and wrong, regulate people’s behavior, and punish the violators to regulate order. Law enforcers need enforce the law strictly to ensure its sanctity. The strategy of governing the country by law we are pursuing today is also based on the Huang Di culture and the whole traditional culture, and the core socialist values have also been developed on the basis of ruling by virtue, so they have profound cultural heritage and sound foundation. With the development of times we should constantly give new meaning to the era of ruling by law and virtue. The third includes three measures. First, officials are elected by the people. The officials in the Huang Di period mainly include three categories: one was the national leader, which was produced by election. And Huang Di was elected as the emperor by the tribal leaders of the country after the defeat of Chi Yu. The other is the chief officials who assist Huang Di, that is, “seven assists” (seven resourceful saints in ancient time), which are produced on the basis of the recommendations of the various tribes. There is a functional official created by appointment. The second is democracy in political affairs. That is to say broadly and widely to the people, so that the people can speak freely and supervise the rulers to ensure the implementation of benevolent government. Huang Di has set up a special place for the people to discuss politics, and actively listened to the voices of the people. The third is the implementation of the incorruptible politics. Huang Di believed that greed for pleasure and unrestrained accumulation of wealth will lead to the scourge. In order to maintain political stability and achieve the goal of a unified society, Huang Di and officials had made six chapters on saving money and property, which requires officials to build a model of frugality in all aspects and create a clear and clean political environment for the people. The “rule” culture formed during the period of Huang Di had a great influence on later generations and had different emphasis and manifestations at different historical stages. (Qing Hongyuan, 2013)

### IV. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WORSHIPPING HUANG DI

The ancients said, “Affairs of state, worship and military matters.” (Zuo Qiuming, 2016) In ancient China, there was a saying that “God does not care for things but sacrifices his people offer, and the people do not worship non-clan.” (Zuo Qiuming, 2016) During the evolution of the 5,000-year-old Chinese civilization, sacrifices have always been a matter of strict hierarchy. Huang Di is the common ancestor of humanity, the root of blood and the soul of the Chinese people. Legend has it that after the death of Huang Di, people at that time set up temples and altars to worship Huang Di with various exquisite artifacts. According to the inscription, during the Warring States Period, Tian family of Qi State saw Huang Di as a distant ancestor for sacrifice. After the reunification of the Qin Dynasty, emperors of all the following dynasties inherited the tradition of offering sacrifices to Huang Di as one of gods. It can be said that people in different historical periods have never ceased to worship Huang Di. It can be seen from this that the worship of Huang Di is of great significance to the development of the Chinese nation.

#### A. *Strengthening National Identity and Cultural Identity*



Identity is the premise of unity. Without identity, there is no solidarity. Identity is the foundation of unity. Without identity, unity is the water of nowhere and the tree without roots. General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed it “to strengthen the recognition of the great motherland, the identity of the Chinese nation, the identity of the Chinese culture, and the identity of the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics.”(Xi Jinping, 2014) Cultural identity is the basis of ethnic identity, and ethnic identity is the premise of national identity. A nation without cultural heritage, a nation without its own identity, is hard to develop. It is also difficult to stand alone in the forest of nations in the world. Fei Xiaotong pointed out: “the Chinese nation, as a self-conscious national entity, has emerged in the confrontation between China and the Western powers in the last hundred years, but as a free national entity, it has been formed in the course of thousands of years of history.”(Fei Xiaotong, 1989) In the process of the formation of the Chinese nation, the sacrifice to the cultural ancestor of Huang Di played an irreplaceable role in making people together in hearts. As a pious ritual, sacrificing Huang Di is helpful for the Chinese people to enhance their recognition and understanding of the general characteristics of the history and present situation, national memory and national symbols. March 3 of the Chinese lunar calendar is the birthday of Huang Di, the first ancestor of the Chinese nation. Mount Juts is the place where Huang Di was born and his tribe lived. In the Central Plains region, since ancient times, there has been the tradition of “February two, the dragon rises, and March three, the sacrifice of Xuanyuan”. Since 2006, Henan has consecutively held the grand ceremony for worshipping Huang Di in his hometown with the theme of “the same roots, the same forefather, the same origin, peace and harmony”. Every year millions of compatriots from all over the world come to Xinzheng to worship Huang Di. With the continuous expansion of the influence of Huang Di's hometown worship ceremony, the Chinese descendants at home and abroad have raised a craze for worshipping the ancestor. The grand ceremony of worshipping the ancestor awakened the recognition of the Chinese people at home and abroad to the hometown of the Chinese people in the Central Plains, and enhanced the common national memory of the Chinese at home and abroad. The promotion of the ancestral ceremony of Huang Di in Xinzheng into the national level one is beneficial to further expand the influence of sacrificing for Huang Di, to unite the global Chinese more widely, to strengthen the ethnic identity, the national identity and cultural identity, and to enhance the cohesion and centripetal force of the Chinese nation.

#### *B. Realizing Cultural Self-confidence, Cultural Self-conscious and Cultural Self-strengthening*

Culture is the soul of a nation and a country. If the culture is prosperous, then the country will be prosperous. And if the culture is strong the country will be strong. Without a high degree of cultural self-confidence and cultural prosperity, there would be no great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Cultural confidence is a more fundamental, broader and deeper self-confidence. Cultural consciousness determines the future and destiny of a nation and a political party. The self-reliance of culture is the basis and destination of cultural self-confidence and cultural consciousness. The aim is to make our culture have strong attraction and influence, strong vitality and creativity, strong strength and competitiveness. The outstanding Chinese traditional culture, which has been developed from Huang Di culture with a history of more than 5000 years, has accumulated the deepest spiritual pursuit of the Chinese nation and represents the unique spiritual mark of the Chinese nation. In order to realize cultural self-confidence and cultural self-improvement, we must first have a full and correct understanding of Huang Di culture, the source of our culture. In recent years, Zhengzhou City has done a lot of fruitful work in carrying forward the culture of Huang Di. In particular, the grand ceremony for worshipping our ancestor Huang Di held in hometown, has promoted the influence of Huang Di culture. The worship ceremony insisted on innovating and developing in the inheritance. It combines classical music and traditional culture, and incorporates various sacred ritual movements such as treading, worshipping, respecting heaven and wiping face, so that Chinese who participated in the worship from all over the world can be touched with awe and solemnity. Additionally, they will inspire their admiration for and worship of national culture in the depths of the soul. This is cultural consciousness. As an intrinsic spiritual power, cultural consciousness is the ideological basis and prerequisite for promoting cultural prosperity and development. The awakening of a nation is, first of all, cultural awakening. “Today, what really determines the process of social development is neither capital nor land and labor, but culture.” It can be said that whether there is a high degree of cultural self-confidence and cultural consciousness is not only related to the revitalization and prosperity of the culture itself, but also determines the future and destiny of a nation. As a cultural symbol, Huang Di has become a spiritual bond that unites the Chinese people around the world. Realizing cultural self-confidence, cultural self-consciousness and cultural self-reliance, objectively requires us to highlight the ritual sense of worshipping Xuanyuan Huang Di. This is the realistic basis for raising the ceremony of worshipping Huang Di in his hometown Xinzheng to a national-level one.

#### *C. Gathering the Great Power for the Realization of the Dreams of National Rejuvenation*

A nation has its own national dream. A country has its own national dream. Achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the greatest dream of the Chinese nation in modern times. In the past more than 100 years, especially since the founding of the Communist Party of China, through hard struggles and unswerving efforts, we have continuously made new and brilliant achievements in the realization of the Chinese dream. And a vigorous China is standing high in the east of the world. Today, we are closer to the goal of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation than at any time in history, and we are more confident in and capable of achieving this goal than at any time in history. To achieve this goal, we must follow the path of China, must carry forward the spirit of China, and must unite China's strength. As the ancestor of the Chinese nation, Huang Di has become a spiritual force that unites the Chinese nation

firmly. Every year, the grand ceremony attracts many Chinese at home and abroad to seek their roots and ancestors. Their hearts are more closely attached together in the activities of praying for the prosperity of China and wishing for peace in the world, and they have gathered together into great power to revitalize China. The Chinese dream is a national dream and a dream of every Chinese. As long as each of the descendants of Huang Di is united, and strives to achieve a common dream, the power to realize the dream is immense. It is necessary to summon people to form a strong sense of mission through pious rituals or worship activities, which in turn will unite people and form synergies. General secretary Xi Jinping asked to “establish and standardize the etiquette system, organize various forms of commemorative celebrations, disseminated the mainstream value, and enhance the sense of identity and the sense of belonging”. The worship ceremony in Huang Di's hometown, Xinzheng, is the worshipping activity that can enhance the sense of belonging of Chinese throughout the world. We should stand on the height of the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and raise Huang Di's hometown Xinzheng as “the national sacrifice”, and build the hometown Xinzheng into “the holy land of the Chinese people and the spiritual home of the Chinese nation”. We should give full play to the important and unique role of the worship ceremony, to unite the Chinese people at home and abroad to the maximum and to bring together the great power of realizing the Chinese dream.

#### D. Promoting the Inheritance and Development of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture

Culture is the blood of the nation and the spiritual home of the people. Chinese culture originated from the Huang Di culture has a long history and splendid glory. The excellent traditional Chinese culture, bred in the development of more than 5000 years of civilization, is the rich nourishment of the Chinese nation. It is the fertile cultural soil for the roots of the socialism with Chinese characteristics. It is the outstanding advantage for the development of contemporary China and plays an important role in the continuation and development of Chinese civilization and the advancement of human civilization. Henan, the birthplace of Huang Di, is an important birthplace of the Chinese nation and the Chinese civilization. The State Council has approved the construction of the Huaxia Historical and Cultural Heritage and Innovation Zone in the Central Plains region with Henan as the core, which is of great significance for promoting the inheritance and development of excellent traditional Chinese culture. In recent years, we have been committed to building a global cultural shrine for Chinese people at home and abroad, and strive to make Henan the main bearing place for the mental homeland and spiritual hometown of the Chinese nation. The tenth Party Congress of Henan Province clearly proposed “building an important cultural highland in the country”, and “speeding up the establishment of a global Chinese holy land” as a specific goal. Henan is the main origin of the Chinese surname and the location of the major counties. According to statistics, 78 of the top 100 surnames originated in Henan; more than 90% of the Chinese surnames are from Huang Di and his descendants.(Ren Min, 2015) After being promoted to the provincial worship, the worship ceremony in Huang Di's hometown Xinzheng played an indispensable role in inheriting and developing the fine traditional Chinese culture. At present, the worship ceremony has become a major event of great concern at home and abroad every year. It has brought a great reputation to Zhengzhou and triggered waves of “Henan fever” and “root-seeking fever” at home and abroad. The reason why such a hot effect is produced is that, as a cultural symbol, Huang Di culture carries the concentrated expression of the Chinese people's ideas, customs, lifestyles and emotional styles. To carry forward the fine traditional Chinese culture, in any case, cannot avoid it. Raising the provincial worship ceremony to the national one will help to inherit the ways of life of seeking common ground while reserving differences and keeping harmony in differences.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Huang Di culture includes politics, economy, military, science and technology, culture and art, customs and ideology. It is not a mechanical, solidified culture, but a culture of fusion, initiative, radiation, extensibility, pioneering and vitality. Obviously, we have an insufficient understanding of the importance and influence of Huang Di culture at present. To promote the inheritance and development of the Huang Di culture, we must have a correct understanding of the rich connotation of Huang Di culture and correctly understand the inheritance and the process of modernization of the Huang Di culture.

The Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation cannot be achieved without cultural strength and spiritual support. Huang Di culture is the source of Chinese culture and the carrier of Chinese spirit. We must combine inheritance with innovation, keep absorbing the fresh blood of the times with confidence, openness and creativity, endow Huang Di culture with the rich connotation of the times, explore the factors that are suitable for the development of the modern era in Huang Di culture to promote the progress of the country and society, so that the Huang Di culture is still thriving in the modern world.

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# On Zero Translation in Howard Goldblatt's Translation of *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*\*

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**Abstract**—Zero Translation, mainly referring to transference and transliteration, is inverse translation. This study, by way of parallel texts analysis, discussed the application of Zero Translation in the English version of *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* translated by Howard Goldblatt, and its enlightenment on transmission of Chinese literature. It is found that Relative Zero Translation is commonly used in translating cultural-specific items, partly due to the huge difference between English and Chinese. Moreover, Zero Translation is complementary to other translation strategies. These translation strategies always work together to facilitate target language readers to better comprehend the source language culture behind the target text.

**Index Terms**—Zero Translation Theory, *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*, Howard Goldblatt

## I. INTRODUCTION

Up to now, Mo Yan is the only native Chinese that has been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. After his winning the prize, a number of specialists and scholars started to research on translation of his works as well as the chief translator of his works, Howard Goldblatt, for his translation made it possible for Mo's popularity in the West. However, researchers tend to lay more emphasis on the translating style and cultural perspective, few have associated the translated version and translation strategies involved with the translator's view.

In this context, this paper brings in a new perspective—Zero Translation, and aims to explore how this concept is applied in the translation of *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*, one of Mo's masterpieces. Zero Translation, mainly referring to transference and transliteration, is inverse translation. Translators, by employing source language items in target texts, take target language readers to the source language culture, thus enable those readers to explore and experience the source language and culture on their own, with the aid of background knowledge of their own culture. It reflects the subjectivity of translators, and a more equal view of cultural exchanges. In the present study, the author investigates the use of Zero Translation in translation of names, cultural specific items, onomatopoeic words and so on to discuss in detail how Howard Goldblatt applied Zero Translation in translation of the grand work and how the concept sheds light on the transmission of cultures in today's world.

## II. *LIFE AND DEATH ARE WEARING ME OUT* AND HOWARD GOLDBLATT

*Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* is the first book recommended by Mo Yan himself as a primer, as it fully represents Mo's writing style and his exploration of "novel consciousness." Elaborating on grave issues including land reforms and peasantry problems, this work is featured by oriental surrealism. In the story, the leading character named Ximen Nao was a landlord, shot and killed unjustly. He experienced the cycle of reincarnation. After each biological death, his physical body was changed consecutively into a donkey, an ox, a pig, a dog, a monkey and finally an infant with a big head. It was through his eyes, or precisely the eyes of different animals that tremendous changes and reforms were witnessed in the rural area of China from the year of 1950 to 2000.

The translator of that novel is Howard Goldblatt, a bilingual sinologist and translator who has dedicated himself to translating and recommending Chinese modern and contemporary novels since 1970s, which has greatly facilitated the transmission of Chinese culture. His proficiency in Chinese has been embodied not only in speaking but also in reading

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and writing. He has published a remarkable amount of translated works, among which seven are translated versions of Mo Yan's works (Lv, 2011). Professor Goldblatt claimed on different occasions that Mo Yan has been his favourite contemporary Chinese writer. In 2008, Mo Yan, together with *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*, was awarded the 1<sup>st</sup> Newman Prize for Chinese literature, thanks to the English version translated by Howard which came out the same year. This work has also been listed among the world-class literature recommended by *Washington Post*.

As Myriam Salama-Carr puts in *Translating and Interpreting Conflict*, the translator's visibility has increased in a very real professional sense then, and translators welcome that visibility, as well they should (2007). Professor Goldblatt has made efforts to reinforce his visibility in the translation with the art of "creative treason". However, as a prudent translator, Professor Goldblatt never abuses domestication to cater to readers despite his reader-oriented tendency. Mo Yan once praised him for his preciseness, "I received more than one hundred letters and numerous calls from Professor Goldblatt...We held discussions repeatedly on just a single word or something I mentioned in my novel that he was unfamiliar with..." (2000, p.170). These remarks reveal that Professor Goldblatt is a responsible translator who regards loyalty to the original work as his unshrinkable obligation. In this paper, Professor Goldblatt's role as a cultural transmitter is focused on and how he employs Zero Translation to help transmit the source language culture is studied.

### III. ZERO TRANSLATION THEORY

#### A. Development of Zero Translation Theory

Though the concept was first put forward by Professor Du Zhengming in 2000, there has not been a consensus on the denotation and connotation of Zero Translation. Professor Du holds that Zero Translation equals to non-translation, and contends that non-translation reflects a translator's translation purpose, which suggests his own cultural standpoint (2000). Professor Qiu Maoru contends that Zero Translation is caused by the difference of expressing methods and social cultures between source language and target language, defining Zero Translation as "deliberately translating the items in source language without the help of the words and expressions in target language." (2001, p.26) He states that Zero Translation includes transference, transliteration as well as ellipsis. Professor Liu Mingdong classified Zero Translation into Absolute Zero Translation and Relative Zero Translation. According to him, Absolute Zero Translation consists of ellipsis and transference, whereas Relative Zero Translation includes transliteration, sound-meaning combination translation, complementary translation, image translation, literal translation with notes, and adaptation (2002).

It is not until 2011 that Professor Luo Guoqing made a systematic summary and proposed Zero Translation Theory with his academic work *The Study on Zero Translation*. He in this work first came up with the idea of inversion comprehension being the essence of Zero Translation and Zero Translation View, which is regarded as a great innovation in this field. It symbolized a new stage in the development of Zero Translation.

Luo gives a comprehensive definition to Zero Translation. In a narrow sense, Zero Translation refers to transference, which is a process in which a source language item is used in a translated text and with its source language meaning. This form of translation is also called Absolute Zero Translation or Pure Zero Translation. In a broader sense (that is, to "take" target language readers to the source language culture to better understand the translated text), Zero Translation also includes relative transliteration (Relative Zero Translation). Besides, there are variations of Zero Translation in practice, including borrowing, citation, annotation, pseudo-translation and code switching (Luo, 2011). In essence, Zero Translation is inverse translation. Translators, by employing source language items in a translated text, take target language readers to the source language culture, enable those readers to explore and experience the source language/culture on their own, with the aid of background knowledge of their own culture.

According to Luo, what lies behind different types of Zero Translation strategies is translator's zero translation view (2011, p.21). This view holds that cultures are equal and can be integrated so that they are translatable. No culture should domineer over other cultures. Translators with this view do not always resort to domestication to please target readers, instead, they, when translating cultural specific items, adopt source language items in target texts so that target readers are given a chance to glimpse into the original source language culture and appreciate it for its own sake.

On translators' part, such an effort echoes the appeal made by Lawrence Venuti, that is, to curb the traditional domestication of translation and allow foreign influences to infiltrate translated texts (Venuti, 2008). Venuti argued for a paradigm shift in the way translators consider their role—from invisible to visible. Translators, by employing zero translation strategies in translating cultural specific items, attempt to take target readers to the source culture to have a look rather than make them understand another unique culture only in their most familiar way. This is also in accordance with the need of globalization and cultural exchanges.

#### B. A Problem and a Suggested Solution

However, despite the fact that Zero Translation theory provides a new perspective to viewing cultural transmission in translation, it is not flawless. Professor Luo states in *The Study on Zero Translation* that the first use of Zero Translation item should be accompanied by some context for readers to digest. But when the Zero Translation item is familiar to readers, it can be used alone without any text (2011, p.54). Then he gives two examples to illustrate his point. One is "A soothsayer, steeped in the art of *feng shui*, advised the clan to invite a family named Ding to live in their midst." by Zhu Tianwen in *Newsweek*, 2002. The other is "清华要控制 MBA 招生规模..." cited from *China Youth Daily* in 2001. The

former is deemed as ineffective Relative Zero Translation for the lack of necessary explanation whereas the latter as effective Absolute Zero Translation for readers are more familiar with the word MBA and no text is needed. As a matter of fact, *feng shui* has already been included in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED). “Every new word to be entered into the *Oxford English Dictionary* will generally undergo a ten-year verification, in which the universality and frequency of use is fully considered.” said Fiona, the senior editor of OED in an interview with *Global Times* (Zhang, 2014). This shows that a great many native readers of English are capable of using the word *feng shui* with ease, that is, they are reasonably familiar with it. And it seems questionable to reckon zero translation of *feng shui* as ineffective.

Here comes the question: how can a translator judge whether target language readers are familiar with a source language item? Professor Luo did not mention this in his book, which makes his illustration somewhat disputable. The author suggested that some authoritative media (and dictionaries) should be resorted to serve the purpose. In this paper, the author judges whether a Chinese item is familiar to English readers with the help of *Oxford English Dictionary*(OED).

#### IV. APPLICATION OF ZERO TRANSLATION: A CASE STUDY

##### A. Application of Zero Translation to Principal Character's List

It is well-known that the most prominent feature shared by Chinese names and English names is the sequence of given name and family name. Contrary to that of English people, Chinese people normally have their family names positioned right before the given names, which always carry some special expectations or significance. Most of the characters' names created in this novel conform to this principal, that is, family name plus given name, and some examples of principal characters are listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1

西门闹	Ximen Nao
蓝解放	Lan Jiefang
白氏	Ximen Bai
迎春	Yingchun
吴秋香	Wu Qiuxiang
蓝脸	Lan Lian
黄瞳	Huang Tong
西门金龙	Ximen Jinlong
西门宝凤	Ximen Baofeng
黄互助	Huang Huzhu
黄合作	Huang Hezuo
庞虎	Pang Hu
王乐云	Wang Leyun

As shown above, Howard Goldblatt adopted Relative Transliteration by adopting Hanyu Pinyin directly in translating the characters' names. As Luo Guoqing pointed out in his book *The Study on Zero Translation*, in C-E translation, using Hanyu Pinyin, the Chinese phonetic alphabets, to transcribe Chinese characters should be termed as a kind of Relative Transliteration rather than Transliteration, for “Hanyu Pinyin represents accurately the pronunciation of Chinese characters despite some distinctions between Pinyin and International Phonetic Alphabet”(2011, p.22). For example, it is hard to match equivalent phoneme in English to initials like “zh”, “ch”, “sh”, “j”, “q”, “x” and finals like “ian”, “iong” in Chinese. Also spelling and pronunciation like “yuan”, “xian” cannot be found in English, either. Based on the above differences, for English readers who already know Hanyu Pinyin, such relative transliteration facilitates them to be closer to the source language culture with little difficulty.

Nevertheless, those new to the Hanyu Pinyin system may get into trouble when trying to pronounce and memorize these names. In view of this, Howard Goldblatt attached “A Note on Pronunciation”. As he holds the opinion that most letters in the Chinese Pinyin system are pronounced roughly as in English, only the main exceptions are listed (see Table 2). In this way, he leads the English readers to Chinese contexts and help them understand Chinese items as well as Chinese culture.

TABLE 2

C (not followed by h)	<i>ts</i> as in <i>its</i>	( Ma Liangcai)
he	<i>u</i> as in <i>huh</i>	( Huang Hezuo)
ian	<i>yen</i>	( Lan Lian)
le	<i>u</i> as in <i>luh</i>	( Wang Leyun)
qi	<i>Ch</i> as in <i>cheese</i>	( Wu Qiuxiang)
x	<i>Sh</i> as in <i>she</i>	( Wu Qiuxiang)
zh	<i>J</i> as in <i>jelly</i>	(Huang Huzhu)

##### B. Application of Relative Translation to the Characters' Names and Appellation

In translating characters' name and appellation, the translator used Relative Zero Translation. In some cases, he added

the literal meaning right after the relative transliteration to emphasize the character's special trait, identity, or the hidden meaning of the name. In other cases, he translated the name directly into Pinyin, enabling target readers to comprehend fully with the help of the context. Look at the following examples:

- (1) Source Text: “西门闹” (Mo, 2012, p.3)  
Translated Text: “Ximen Nao, whose name means West Gate Riot” (Goldblatt, 2012, p.3)
- (2) Source Text: “蓝脸” (Mo, 2012, p.11)  
Translated Text: “Lan Lian, or Blue Face” (Goldblatt, 2012, p.13)
- (3) Source Text: “西门金龙” (Mo, 2012, p.12)  
Translated Text: “Ximen Jinlong, or Golden Dragon” (Goldblatt, 2012, p.14)
- (4) Source Text: “西门宝凤” (Mo, 2012, p.12)  
Translated Text: “Ximen Baofeng, or Precious Phoenix” (Goldblatt, 2012, p.14)
- (5) Source Text: “蓝解放” (Mo, 2012, p.16)  
Translated Text: “Lan Jiefang—Liberation Lan” (Goldblatt, 2012, p.19)
- (6) Source Text: “互助” (Mo, 2012, p.17)  
Translated Text: “Huzhu—Cooperation” (Goldblatt, 2012, p.21)
- (7) Source Text: “合作” (Mo, 2012, p.17)  
Translated Text: “Hezuo—Collaboration” (Goldblatt, 2012, p.21)

Analysis:

With the literal translation placed right after the translation item, these examples are considered as good practice on Relative Zero Translation. Example (1) points out the leading character's personality trait. The word “闹”, which is the core of the name, refers to the quality of being dynamic and noisy in Chinese. It draws a conclusion on all the torture and chaos Ximen Nao has experienced during his circle of reincarnations. So the translator utilizes the English word “riot” as a semantic equivalence of “闹”. Example (2) shows the relation between Lan Lian's name and his appearance. Examples (3) to (7) reveal the nature and conditions of society through the characters' names. It's easy to see that when these characters' names first appear in the main text, additional information provided by literal translation plays a significant role in promoting the apprehension of readers and avoiding the missing of cultural features.

- (8) Source text: “黄瞳” (Mo, 2012, p.9)  
Translated text: “Huang Tong” (Goldblatt, 2012, p.11)

Analysis:

Huang Tong is described in the novel as a “young scamp” who “had yellow hair, yellow eyes, giving the impression he entertained evil thoughts”. Through lines Chinese readers can easily connect his appearance with his name “黄瞳” as “Yellow Eyes” and tell that he is a negative figure. In translation, the translator adopted Relative Zero Translation and gave no explanation to “Huang Tong” since the following sentences in the source text explained clearly this character's physical features. Embedded in the context, this example is effective and concise.

### C. Application of Zero Translation to Chinese Culture-specific Items

Cultural-specific items are scattered throughout this original version of *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out* and no equivalents can be found for them in English. Even to make them understood by English readers is by no means easy. Goldblatt applied relative zero translation skillfully, enabling target readers to figure out the meaning with the help of either the linguistic context or the concise explanation given by the translator.

- (9) Source Text: “什么干儿子、干兄弟，屁!” (Mo, 2012, p.100)  
Translated Text: “‘Dry’ son! ‘Dry’ brother! Shit!” (Goldblatt, 2012, p.119)

Analysis:

“干” in these Chinese expressions represents close relations between people, not the state of being dry. “干爹” or “干娘” in Chinese refers to a nominal father or mother who actually has no duty on fostering their “干儿子” or nominal son. Such a relationship is Chinese-characteristic. The translator did not translate them into “nominal son” or “nominal brother”, instead he borrowed the basic meaning of “干” and combined it with “son” and “brother”, such sense loans created apparently ridiculous terms “‘dry’ son” and “‘dry’ brother”. The quotation marks used here suggest this is no simple literal translation. The use of relative zero translation is ingenious since (together with the context) it reflects the nature of such a relationship—which, involving neither blood ties nor fostering, is not reliable at all.

- (10) Source Text: “一个惯于装神弄鬼的风水先生马智伯” (Mo, 2012, p.13).

Translated Text: “Ma Zhibo, a *feng shui* master who was given to putting on mystical airs” (Goldblatt, 2012, p.14).

Analysis:

As aforementioned, *feng shui* has been included in OED and widely used in English-speaking countries. It is defined as “(in Chinese thought) a system of laws considered to govern spatial arrangement and orientation in relation to the flow of energy (chi), and whose favourable or unfavourable effects are taken into account when siting and designing buildings.” Its closest equivalent in English is “geomancy.” Instead of translating “风水” into “Chinese geomancy”, the

translator applied relative transliteration, reflecting his respect towards source language culture.

(11) Source Text: 女人们盘腿打坐在我家炕上(Mo, 2012, p. 99)。

Translated Text: The women's hindquarters wore out the mats on our sleeping platform, the *kang* (Goldblatt, 2012, p.118).

Analysis:

The *kang*, commonly seen in the North of China, is "a heatable bed made of earth or brick." Howard Goldblatt briefly translated it as "sleeping platform" and attached its Pinyin, providing readers with a sufficient context to fully comprehend the term.

(12) Source Text: “你就是观音菩萨下道场。”(Mo, 2012, p.526)

Translated Text: "...you're the *Guanyin* Bodhisattva come to earth." (Goldblatt, 2012, p.524)

Analysis:

In OED, the definition for the transliterated word *kuan yin* is "the goddess of compassion in Chinese Buddhism". *Guanyin* (the Pinyin form for *kuan yin*), together with the context "Bodhisattva", makes the term accessible to English readers. So it is among one of the effective examples of Relative Transliteration/Relative Zero Translation.

(13) Source Text: “他善拉京胡，能吹唢呐。”(Mo, 2012, p.28)

Translated Text: “He's quite a musician, plays both the two-stringed *erhu* and *suona*.” (Goldblatt, 2012, p.33)

Analysis:

The definition of *erhu* is found in OED as "a Chinese two-stringed musical instruments held in the lap and played with a bow", but there is no definition for *suona*. As a traditional Chinese musical instrument, *suona* enjoys less popularity than *erhu*, either in China or around the world. In view of this, the translator is advised to attach "a Chinese horn" to "*suona*", which will facilitate target readers in understanding this unique cultural item.

#### D. Application of Zero Translation to the Unit of Measurement

To reflect the genuine life of Chinese People, Mo Yan employed Chinese unit of measurement rather than units of international units system. Goldblatt resorted to Relative Zero Translation/Relative Transliteration to preserve the local flavor of the source text, as shown in the following examples:

(14) Source Text: “俺要走了，离家还有十五里呢。”(Mo, 2012, p.34)

Translated text: “My home's fifteen *li* from here, so I'd better get going.” (Goldblatt, 2012, p.41)

(15) Source Text: “...十斤红糖，十斤白糖。”(Mo, 2012, p.226)

Translated text: “...ten *jin* of brown sugar and ten *jin* of refined sugar...” (Goldblatt, 2012, p.250)

(16) Source Text: “一角，两角，三角硬币...”(Mo, 2012, p.526)

Translated text: “One *jiao*, two *jiao* and three *jiao* coins...” (Goldblatt, 2012, p.524)

Analysis:

In the OED, "*li*" is defined as "a Chinese unit of distance, equal to about 0.5 km", and *jiao* as "a monetary unit of China, equal to one tenth of a yuan." These two words now is comparatively familiar to English people, so they can be used alone as Relative Zero Translation items. No definition of *jin* is found in the OED, which suggests this unit of measurement is not so widely known among western readers. The translator applied Relative Zero Translation to it, believing target readers can figure out its meaning easily with the help of context.

#### E. Application of Zero Translation to Onomatopoeic Words

Onomatopoeic words phonetically imitate, resemble or suggest the sound of things or actions, which increase the appeal of language. Onomatopoeia differs between languages since the symbolic properties of a sound in a word are restricted in part by a language's own phonetic inventory. After examining the translation of onomatopoeic words throughout the novel, the author finds the translator applied Zero Translation where the equivalents or similar items were unavailable or where the source language item suggested the uniqueness of a thing or an action.

(17) Source Text: “轻轻一抖，便发出哗哗唧唧的声响。”(Mo, 2012, p.19)

Translated Text: “So all you have to do was shake it gently for it to produce a *huahua langlang* sound.” (Goldblatt, 2012, p.22).

(18) Source Text: “...并同时喊出了‘哈咧咧咧——’”(Mo, 2012, p.125)

Translated Text: “...and shouted as one: ‘*Ha lei-lei-lei*’”(Goldblatt, 2012, p.147)

(19) Source Text: “想不到单干，竟使我成了个人物。哈哈，哈哈哈哈哈。”(Mo, 2012, p.102)

Translated Text: “I make a name for myself by being an independent farmer. *Ha ha, ha ha ha ha*.”(Goldblatt, 2012, p.121)

Analysis:

Readers are able to recognize these translation items as onomatopoeic words with them printed in italic and words like "sound" and "shout." On the one hand, the translations of onomatopoeic words here well preserve the characteristics of Chinese language. On the other hand, English readers may find it interesting and attractive when trying to imitate the pronunciation with the help of the note of pronunciation given by the translator at the beginning of the book. Therefore, the above examples of Relative Zero Translation can be deemed as effective.



## V. CONCLUSION

This paper, after expounding on Zero Translation in the English version of *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*, has made some findings: First, Relative Zero Translation has been adopted for most of the cultural-specific items. Among all the relative zero translation tactics, relative transliteration and relative transliteration plus explanation are used commonly. Borrowing, a variation of zero translation, is also applied. In most cases, zero translation strategies work together with literal translation and liberal translation to provide sufficient context for the target readers to understand better. Second, only part of cultural-specific items are translated with zero translation strategies. Take onomatopoeic words for instance. Most onomatopoeic words are translated with liberal translation or borrowing, which poses little difficulty for the target readers, only a handful of them, which are unique and do not have equivalents in English, are translated with relative zero translation, relative transliteration in particular. In this sense, it is safe to say that Zero Translation and other translation strategies are complementary. When applied appropriately, it will, for one thing, facilitate target readers in understanding the text deeper and appreciate the unique flavor of the source language, and for another, assist the cultural transmission of source language culture.

This is what zero translation view is about: translation, in essence, is two-way communication based on equality, crossing both languages and cultures. No culture could domineer over another. Under the guidance of such a view, a translator helps readers enter the world of the source language, showing his deep respect for the source language culture and equal cultural communication.

It is a pity that the present study is only confined to zero translation at lexical level, not involving syntactic or textual level. Future researches may attempt to probe into zero translation at these two levels to get a deeper understanding on zero translation and the cultural transmission process involved.

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# A Timeline for Acquisition of Farsi Consonants: A First Language Acquisition Corpus-based Analysis

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**Abstract**—This study is one of the first endeavors in the realm of Farsi acquisition as the first language. The one-year utterances of five Iranian children were meticulously observed to determine the onset of steady perfect articulation of each consonant. The corpora were available from CHILDES which is the largest database for children's corpus-based studies. Corpora analysis revealed that [w] and [ʒ] had been perfectly pronounced before the study initiated; [f] was accomplished before the 40<sup>th</sup> month; [m] and [x] were perfectly enunciated in the 42<sup>nd</sup> month while the pronunciation [v] was idealized in the 44<sup>th</sup> month along with [b], [d], [h] and [g]; [t], [n] and two approximants were perfectly produced in the 46<sup>th</sup> month and [s] got its steady idealized pronunciation in the 48<sup>th</sup> month; [r] in addition to affricates and [z] and [ʃ] were in the process of completion when the inquiry terminated. 8 consonants from a total of 23 found their idealized articulations between the 43<sup>rd</sup> and 46<sup>th</sup> months of age.

**Index Terms**—first language acquisition, consonant acquisition, corpora analysis, CHILDES corpora

## I. INTRODUCTION

Chomsky (2004) emphasized that for comprehending what constitutes linguistic knowledge, it is crucial to know phonological representations and their growth stages. As Dresher (2004) mentioned, in the seventies, children were supposed to acquire morpheme structure conditions and the active phonological rules that relate underlying forms to surface forms. In the eighties, the focus was on phonological representations that children had to acquire. In the nineties, child phonology was about defining the constraints that characterize children's productions (as cited in Fikkert, 2007). One of the few attested points regarding the development of children's phonology is that "sounds precede words in acquisition; furthermore, children acquire vowels prior to consonants whilst naming words are more frequently articulated than action words" (Pinker, 1994).

Very few experiments have been successfully conducted on children to test the development of phonology due to their short memory coverage and their eagerness to do the test (Prince & Smolensky, 1993). The shortage of original data and longitudinal studies can be consumed as another factor which has hindered the detailed analyses of children articulation development studies (McWhinney, 2010). Few studies have viewed developing the whole phonological system. This article is one of the first attempts which tapped on the acquisition of Farsi as the first language through scrutinizing considerable corpora and presents a longitudinal descriptive report of five Iranian children's commencement and order of proper consonant appearance during one year of inspection. Thirty audio files were transcribed and analyzed for each of the subjects in order to

- Determine a timeline of her consonants' articulation development, and
- Determine the consonantal category of (un)challenging consonants for her to pronounce.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Parental diaries are deeply-rooted milestones in the literature of first language acquisition (e.g., Preyer 1889; Stern and Stern, 1907; Grégoire, 1937; Velten, 1943; Leopold, 1947). These diary studies which had larger focuses than just language were not that systematic even though they benefitted from large samples such as Templin (1957) in which 430 subjects participated.

This assumption that child and adult phonology are made up of the same ingredients, has provoked the researchers to investigate the evolutionary survey of children's phonology development. For example, Dresher (2004) by proposing *Continuous Dichotomy Hypothesis* confirmed that the sounds children produce at the initial stage of language

acquisition are the improper variants of phonemes adults articulate in their adulthood. So, gaining knowledge about the time and the quality with which children acquire the correct articulations of phonemes may provide the researcher with insightful information regarding the articulation theories of phonology and even speech therapy enquiries.

#### *Consonant acquisition*

Many researchers (e.g. Holzman, 1997; Foster-Cohen, 1999) suggested that initial consonant sounds are often those linked to lips because the children try to imitate their parents facial expressions witnessed during face to face interactions. This may accentuate the roles of care-takers and parents who are usually present in the immediate environment. Evans-Morris (1998) also mentioned that consonants will be acquired much sooner than the vowels through interactional activities such as plays. Again this happens by imitating the peers in the environment when the time is right.

On the other hand, Fikkert and Levelt (2004) focusing on the acquisition of place of articulation, found that at early stages of acquisition, for articulating the words consisted of consonants and vowels that shared the same place of articulation vowel sounds were prior. At subsequent stages, the vowel could be specified independently from the consonants, and later, the consonants in a word could also have different places of articulation. At this stage, a pattern emerged in which specific places of articulation were preferred in specific prosodic positions. Dutch children preferred labials in word-initial position, while they tended to avoid words beginning with dorsals, which is reminiscent of the word templates. Another important finding was that children were initially very faithful to the place of articulation make-up of target words (Vihman et al., 1994), and that ‘incorrect’ renditions only occurred at a later stage. The unfaithfully produced words often resulted in labial-initial child’s productions, where the adult target was labial-final; for instance, ‘soap’ produced as [fep] (as cited in Fikkert, 2007).

### III. METHOD

#### A. *Subjects*

The subjects were five roughly 3-year-old Persian children whose exposures to other children were limited because she was cared for at home. During the 12 months of data collection, the subjects have been in touch with their parents and some temporal guests at home. The subjects’ parents began diaries of their language productions from the January of 2013 until the December of the same year during which 30 one-hour audio files were record in “wav” format for each children which are available from “<http://byu.corpora.edu>”. With the aid of “Phon” each one of the subjects’ actual utterances were transcribed in IPA symbols while its orthography, morphology and its target IPA symbols were discernible on the screen.

#### B. *Instruments*

“Phon”, a transcribing software designed at Memorial University of Canada (MUN), seems to be a way out from the practical problems encountered in phonological corpus-based case studies. It makes it possible to test most current hypotheses against a large body of data. “Phon”, in addition to the morphology and the IPA target transcription of every utterance and a media player, is also equipped with a smart IPA menu and a syllabification processor; it uses different colors for onsets, vowels and codas and tenders the deviations of the actual utterances from the target ones. This software has a distinctive ability for transcribing validation, analyzing the corpora and reporting the results.

#### C. *Procedure*

After the audio files were collected, transcribing began and lasted 4 months of hard work. All utterances were transcribed except for the subject’s whining, yelling and other unidentifiable declarations. Then, the transcribed corpora were given a double check by two post-graduate students of linguistics. Furthermore, they have been validated by “Phon” itself. As the next step, corpora analysis started. “PhonQuery” run for consonant articulation. The number and the percentage of correct and incorrect articulation were determined for each consonant. It is worth mentioning that “voice” was not regarded as a distinctive phonological feature in quantification of acceptable productions of a consonant (e.g., [s] was considered as the acceptable pronunciation of [z] or [d] was regarded as the proper enunciation of [t] due to the common place and manner of articulation). This made it possible to have a quantitative analysis of correct verbalization and consequently, an acquisition curve for each consonant and its consonantal category based on place and manner of articulation.

### IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The very first observation was that articulation of all consonants improved during the year of enquiry. In the following lines the subjects’ advancements are illustrated for each consonantal category.

#### *Plosives*

*Bilabial plosives\_* Subjects’ correct articulation of [b] had been started before the age of three, before the commencement of the study; [b] articulation was acceptable from the beginning of the enquiry but it was accomplished perfectly at the average age of 3.8 when the twentieth audio file was being recorded for the subjects. Considering the fact that the only distinctive phonological feature between [b], [p], [β] and [β̞] is “voicing”, all these variations were also

considered as the acceptable articulation of [b]. As it can be seen in Table 1, as the time passed the accuracy of [b] pronunciations increased while the number of [b] deletions declined.

TABLE 1.  
VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [b]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
b → b	102	297	192	415	492	521	2019
b → ʋ	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
b → β	3	1	14	4	0	0	22
b → p	9	1	0	1	0	0	11
b → d	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
b → g	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
b → k	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
b → m	2	2	1	0	0	0	5
b → n	2	1	1	1	1	1	6
[b] deletion	18	3	3	2	0	1	27
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>97%</b>

The correct pronunciation of the other bilabial plosive, [p], had been appeared before the age of three similar to [b]. The only difference was that its enunciation idealized sooner than [b] around the age of 3.6 in the fifteenth audio file while pronunciation of [b] was better when the study initiated. Likewise, [b] was considered an acceptable pronunciation of [p]. Table 2 depicts what the subjects produced on average for [p]. Corpora analysis revealed that “bilabial plosives” were not challenging at all for the subjects; 97% of all [b] like [p] articulations were accurate. This certifies what Foster-Cohen (1999) and Evans–Morris (1998) suggested about the acquisition of “labials” (section 2.2.). Figure 1 depicts the acquisition curves of these two consonants.

TABLE 2.  
VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [p]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
p → p	15	19	19	34	77	87	251
p → b	16	8	17	0	2	0	43
p → d	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
[p] deletion	6	1	0	0	0	0	7
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>97%</b>

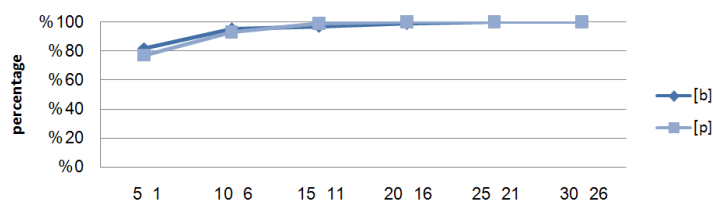


Figure 1. The acquisition curves of bilabial plosives

*Alveolar plosives\_* Similar to “bilabials”, the subjects had had good pronunciations of [t] and [d] in the beginning of the study. Articulations of [t] became perfect around the age of 3.10 in the twenty fifth audio file. Due to minute phonological distinctions, consonants [d], [d] and [t] were assumed as the acceptable variations of [t]. Overall, 89% of all [t] articulations were perfect and omitted [t] were reduced in number as the study advanced. Table 3 shows the variations of [t] in the subject’s utterances.

TABLE 3.  
VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [t]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
t → t	26	59	96	82	127	202	592
t → d	18	8	1	1	0	0	28
t → dʰ	4	0	1	0	0	0	5
t → t̪	36	8	17	11	0	0	64
t → g	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
t → j	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
t → s	4	0	0	0	1	0	5
t → e	6	4	0	0	0	0	10
t → ts	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
t → tʃ	4	0	1	0	0	0	5
t → θ	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
[t] deletion	25	17	10	6	8	1	68
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>89%</b>

Developmental articulation of [d] was similar to that of [t]; both had been appeared before the year of observation but [d] was idealized sooner around the age of 3.8 in recording the twentieth file of the corpora. [t], [d] and [d] were deemed to be proper articulations of [d]. Generally, [d] was spoken better than [t] by the overall correct articulations of 96%. Table 4 depicts variations of [d] in detail. Omission of [d] like [t] decreased throughout the year of observation.

TABLE 4.  
VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [d]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
d → d	107	243	177	469	643	440	1683
d → ḍ	26	6	3	2	0	0	37
d → ḍ̣	12	4	12	2	0	0	30
d → t	12	6	2	2	1	2	23
d → b	0	7	0	1	0	0	8
d → f	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
d → g	1	0	0	2	0	0	3
d → j	4	1	1	0	0	0	6
d → l	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
d → n	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
d → s	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
d → v	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
d → z	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
d → dz	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
d → β	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
[t] deletion	28	17	7	10	3	1	66
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>96%</b>

“Alveolar plosives”, like “bilabial plosives” were being produced before the initiation of the inspection and were acquired easily by the subject during the year of the study; 93% of all articulations of [d] and [t] were acceptable. Figure 2 demonstrates the acquisition curves of these two consonants.

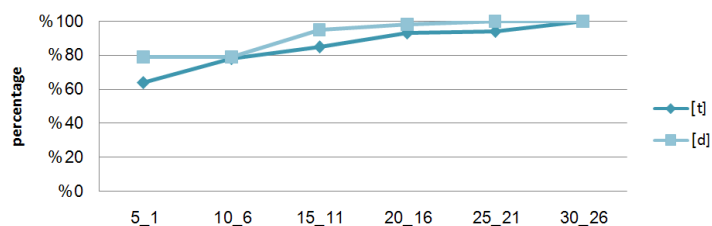


Figure 2. The acquisition curves of alveolar plosives

*Velar and uvular plosives\_* As the corpora analysis revealed articulations of [k] and [g] as velar plosives and [q] as the sole uvular plosive of Farsi were as unchallenging as “bilabials” and “alveolars”; 90% of all attempted [k]s were pronounced correctly. Although the subjects’ productions of [k] were not proper in the first five audio files (average of 50%), their acquisition rates were so amazing that their full accomplishment of [k] occurred around the age of 3.6 in the fourteenth file. Velar plosive [g] was also viewed as the proper articulation of [k] due to their common phonological features. Few instances of “velar fronting” were seen whose frequency reduced as the study advanced. “Velar fronting” happened for about 6% of all [k] where the subjects produced [t] instead of [k]. (1) and (2) show two instances of [t] to [k] substitutions. Table 5 shows the variations of [k] in the subjects’ utterances in detail.

- (1) ['ketab] /'tetaβ/ (book) (File No. 2 # subject no. 3)  
 (2) ['komæχ] /'tomæt/ (help) (File No. 6 # subject no. 4)

TABLE 5.  
VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [k]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
k → k	24	70	74	104	129	205	606
k → g	12	5	0	1	1	1	20
k → d	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
k → h	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
k → t	18	19	5	0	0	2	44
k → e	2	0	1	0	0	0	3
k → q	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
k → γ	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
k → f	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
k → ʃ	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
k → χ	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
[k] deletion	8	5	2	1	0	0	16
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>90%</b>

Few instances of “velar fronting” were observed for [g]; 7% of all tried [g]s were replaced by [d]. The subjects’ productions of [g] were also reasonably good but not as good as [k] (86% of all attempted [g] were acceptably pronounced). [g] accomplishment occurred in the twenty first file around the age of 3.9. Velar omission was drastically decreased during the year of observation. (3) and (4) are two examples of [g] fronting. Table 6 presents the subjects’ [g] productions in detail.

- (3) [ˈgush] /ˈduʃ/ (ear) (File No. 7 # subject no. 1)  
 (4) [ˈgesse] /ˈdesse/ (story) (File No. 11 # subject no. 6)

TABLE 6.  
VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [g]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
g → g	36	41	36	31	49	85	278
g → k	3	7	3	1	4	1	19
g → d	5	5	10	1	3	0	24
g → q	2	1	2	0	0	0	5
g → ŋ	1	8	1	0	0	0	10
g → ɖ	1	0	0	0	0	2	3
g → γ	2	1	3	0	0	0	6
g → ɖʒ	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
g → χ	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
[g] deletion	5	3	2	1	0	1	12
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>86%</b>

Productions of [q] as the only uvular plosive in Farsi were by far more challenging than other plosives for the subjects. Only 36% of attempted [q] were pronounced properly and its productions were idealized around the age of 3.11 in the twenty seventh file. Considerable numbers of the all tried [q] were pronounced [g] and [γ] (35% and 13% respectively). Table 7 shows what the subjects produced for [q] during the course of observation on the average.

TABLE 7.  
VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [q]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
q → q	4	5	12	8	8	34	71
q → k	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
q → g	26	17	14	8	4	1	70
q → b	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
q → d	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
q → h	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
q → p	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
q → x	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
q → e	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
q → γ	8	7	7	4	0	0	26
q → ʃ	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
q → χ	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
[q] deletion	7	0	5	1	3	0	16
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>36%</b>

Pronouncing [g] instead of [q] was the most frequent type of “fronting” in corpora. Figure 3 demonstrates the acquisition curves of [k], [g] and [q] as the dorsal plosives. As it is discernable [q] was acquired remarkably later than [k] and [g].

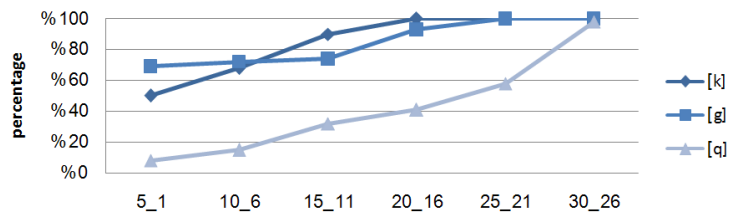


Figure 3. The acquisition curves of velar and uvular plosives

**Nasals**

Nasals were the least problematic consonants for the subjects to pronounce. [m] was pronounced properly 94% of the times the study’s subjects attempted. The number of omitted [m] was remarkable (7% of all attempted [m]) and was more frequent in onset position. Omission of [m] was not disappeared during theyear of study. In the beginning of the enquiry the subjects had an acceptable expression of [m] and it was accomplished around the age 3.4 in the thirteenth audio file. [m] was also considered as an acceptable articulation of [m].]. Similar to [m], [n] had a proper pronunciation in the study’s commencement. The only difference was that the subjects gained its immaculate verbalization around the age of 3.9 in the twenty second file. Omission of [n] was observed frequently but it was diminished in three last files. [ŋ] was regarded acceptable for determining the amount of correct articulation of [n]. The following table depicts the subjects’ performance in [n] productions. Tables 8 and 9 show the subjects’ productions for [m] and [n] on average.

TABLE 8. VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [m]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
m → m	392	361	632	846	616	955	3802
m → m̠	5	1	9	0	0	0	15
m → b	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
m → h	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
m → j	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
m → n	2	2	0	0	0	0	4
m → s	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
[m] deletion	111	54	55	7	3	3	233
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>94%</b>

TABLE 9. VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [n]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
n → n	240	309	243	490	699	918	2899
n → ŋ	61	34	19	8	0	1	123
n → b	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
n → d	4	2	1	0	1	0	2
n → h	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
n → j	2	2	5	0	0	0	4
n → m	2	2	1	0	0	0	1
n → t	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
n → ɛ	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
n → dz	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
n → dʒ	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
[n] deletion	85	72	51	18	7	2	235
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>94%</b>

Figure 4 depicts the acquisition of [m] and [n]. Nasal productions of the subjects were quite acceptable, even better than plosives. Interesting point was the high frequency of nasal omissions particularly in onset position what was also proposed by Gordon (1995). Another interesting point was the difference in rates of [m] and [n] acquisition; [m] was acquired by far faster than [n]. Figure 4 schematized the acquisition curves of nasals.

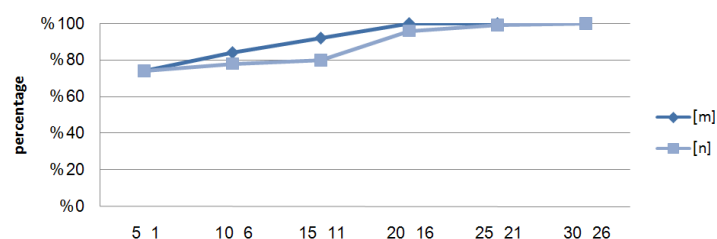


Figure 4. The acquisition curves of [m] and [n]



### Trill

[r] is the sole trill consonant in Farsi for which the subjects' productions were interestingly poor; Only 17% of attempted [r]s were pronounced properly while [ɾ] was also reckoned as the acceptable articulation of [r]. It was replaced with [j] very frequently (approximately 60%) and not accomplished before the age of 4 during the study. [r] had also the second highest frequency of omission (21% of total [r]s were omitted) and this was not ceased until the end of observation. Table 10 displays the subjects' productions for [r] on average.

TABLE 9.  
VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [r]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
r → r	6	3	8	6	35	26	84
r → ɾ	30	80	61	58	17	2	248
r → d	22	1	0	1	0	0	24
r → j	306	252	265	135	153	79	1190
r → l	1	0	0	0	1	2	4
r → m	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
r → n	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
r → d̥	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
r → t	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
r → w	2	0	0	0	1	0	3
r → ʃ	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
r → ʒ	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
r → y	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
r → z̄	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
r → z	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
[r] deletion	175	125	68	27	17	10	422
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>17%</b>

Figure 5 depicts the subjects' acquisition curve of [r] although it was not completed before the age four.

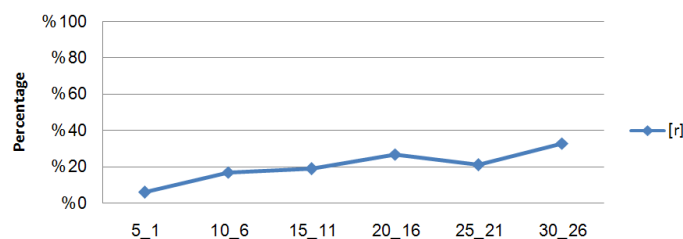


Figure 5. The acquisition curve of [r]

### Fricatives

*Labiodental fricatives*\_ [f] was undoubtedly the easiest consonant for the subjects to pronounce. It was pronounced properly from the beginning of the study and accomplished earlier than other consonants at the age of 3.3 in the sixth audio file. 96% of attempted [f]s were articulated properly during the study and only 2% of total [f]s were omitted. In addition to [f], [v], [ɸ] and [v̥] was also considered as the acceptable pronunciation of [f]. Table 10 is the average performance of the subjects for [f] throughout thirty audio files.

TABLE 10.  
VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [f]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
f → f	18	13	35	21	38	63	188
f → v	9	1	0	0	0	0	10
f → ɸ	1	1	2	0	0	0	12
f → v̥	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
f → ɛ	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
f → ʃ	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
[f] deletion	2	0	1	0	0	0	3
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>96%</b>

Consonant [v] had also an acceptable articulation from the beginning of the enquiry but it was not as unchallenging as [f]; only 90% of total tried [v] had acceptable pronunciations and only 3% of [v]s were omitted. [f] was also assumed as the acceptable articulation of [v] due to the common place of articulation. Replacement of [v] for [f] was more frequent than replacement of [f] for [v] (6% versus 3%). [v] pronunciation became perfect around the age of 3.8 in the nineteenth file. Table 11 shows the productions of the subjects for [v] which has more variations than [f].

TABLE 11.  
VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [v]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
v → f	22	20	14	21	66	64	207
v → v	0	1	2	2	3	0	8
v → b	1	2	0	0	0	0	3
v → d	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
v → m	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
v → w	6	0	0	0	1	0	7
v → ʃ	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
[v] deletion	1	4	2	1	0	0	7
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>90%</b>

Figure 6 illustrates the acquisition curves for labiodentals fricatives during the year of inspection.

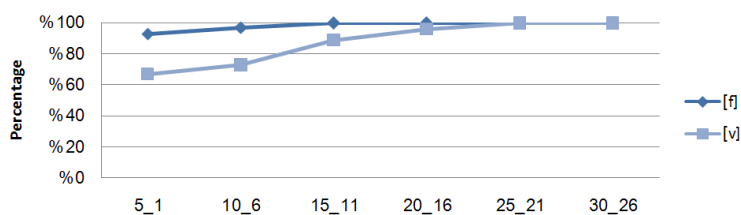


Figure 6. The acquisition curves of [f] and [v]

(Post) alveolar fricatives\_ Among these consonants only [ʒ] had an acceptable pronunciation in the beginning. Production of [s] was very poor in the beginning of the observation (the average of correct articulation of [s] in the first five audio files was less than 11%), but subjects showed good rates of [s] acquisition that its production was accomplished before the age of four in the twenty third audio file. 53% of total [s] productions were acceptable while many variations were observed for [s] enunciations. Due to the same place of articulations [z] was also considered as the approved pronunciation of [s]. Table 12 shows the subjects' variations for [s] on average.

TABLE 12.  
VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [s]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
s → s	18	53	50	38	112	118	389
s → z	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
s → ɛ	95	54	29	20	3	2	223
s → ɕ	8	9	1	13	0	0	31
s → ʂ	4	0	16	0	0	0	20
s → ʒ	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
s → z	1	5	0	0	0	0	6
s → d	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
s → ð	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
s → j	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
s → t	7	1	2	0	1	0	11
s → ʃ	2	3	1	0	0	0	3
s → ʒ	11	3	0	0	0	0	14
s → ts	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
s → θ	26	3	2	0	0	0	31
[s] deletion	29	8	3	0	0	1	41
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>53%</b>

Production of [z] was more problematic than [s]; more than 55% of total [z]s were produced as retroflexed [ʒ] or [ʒ]. Only 23% of all attempted [z]s were pronounced properly and it was not accomplished despite the subjects' good rates of acquisition. [s] was judged to be appropriate production of [z]. Table 13 shows what the subjects produced for [z] during one year of enquiry.

TABLE 13.  
VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [z]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
z → z	5	10	7	17	26	60	125
z → s	13	5	0	1	0	1	20
z → ẓ	5	26	85	34	0	8	158
z → z	7	68	18	24	6	0	123
z → d	17	3	0	2	0	3	25
z → ð	0	12	6	0	0	0	18
z → j	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
z → t	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
z → ɛ	1	2	0	0	1	0	4
z → d̪	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
z → f	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
z → ʒ	31	16	0	0	0	0	47
z → dʒ	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
z → dʒ	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
[z] deletion	2	7	1	0	0	0	10
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>23%</b>

[ʒ] as a post-alveolar fricative articulation was perfect from the very beginning of the study unlike to [ʃ] which was one of the most challenging consonant for the subjects. Only 8% of all tried [ʃ]s were acceptable; 32% and 50% of total [ʃ]s and were pronounced [s] and [ɛ] respectively. [ʃ] accomplishment did not happen before the age of four but its acquisition was perceptible during the year of observation. Due to the common place of articulation [ʒ] was assumed to be the proper articulation of [ʃ]. Table 14 shows what was produced for [ʃ] by the subjects on average.

TABLE 14.  
VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [ʃ]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
ʃ → ʃ	6	4	8	6	10	25	59
ʃ → ʒ	10	8	0	0	1	0	19
ʃ → s	56	71	24	14	64	70	299
ʃ → ɛ	159	103	103	63	30	5	463
ʃ → ʂ	1	0	4	3	1	0	9
ʃ → ɟ	1	3	0	0	0	0	4
ʃ → d	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
ʃ → g	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
ʃ → h	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
ʃ → n	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
ʃ → t	7	2	3	0	0	1	13
ʃ → z	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
ʃ → ẓ	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
ʃ → z	1	3	0	0	0	0	4
ʃ → ts	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
ʃ → tʃ	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
ʃ → θ	11	5	1	0	0	0	12
[ʃ] deletion	10	5	5	1	2	7	29
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>8%</b>

Figure 7 illustrates the acquisition curves of [ʃ], [s] and [z]. As it is discernable the productions of all these consonants were poor at the age of three and [s] was the only alveolar fricative which was accomplished before the age of four.

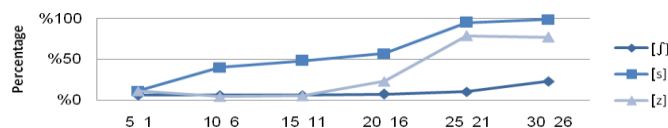


Figure 7. The acquisition curves of (post) alveolar fricatives

*Velar fricative\_* Articulation of [x] as the only velar fricative in Farsi was reasonably good from the beginning of the enquiry. 94% of all attempted [x]s were pronounced properly and it was accomplished around the age of 3.5 in the thirteenth audio file. Production of [ɣ] and [χ] were judged as the good pronunciation of [x]. Table 15 shows the subjects' performance for [x].

TABLE 15.  
VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [x]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
x → x	8	32	31	91	81	150	393
x → y	46	20	14	8	5	1	94
x → z	132	115	35	12	0	3	297
x → g	4	0	0	0	0	0	4
x → h	31	2	1	0	0	0	34
x → k	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
[x] deletion	5	5	2	0	0	1	13
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>94%</b>

As Figure 8 depicts the study’s subjects had good productions [x] between the ages of three and four.

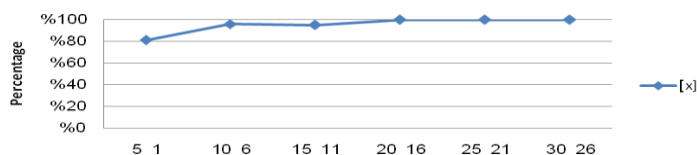


Figure 8. The acquisition curve [x]

*Glottal fricative\_* Articulation of [h] was good from the beginning. The only noticeable problem was h-deletion. It was the most omitted consonant; 37% of all endeavored [h]s were omitted and it was not stopped until the end of the observation. Neglecting h-dropping, [h] was accomplished in the nineteenth audio file around the age of 3.8. The following table presents productions of the subjects for [h] considering h-dropping as a cause of [h] failure and Figure 9 demonstrates acquisition curve of [h].

TABLE 16.  
VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [h]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
h → h	27	24	41	34	77	136	339
h → g	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
h → j	2	0	0	1	0	0	3
[h] deletion	70	33	35	24	22	11	195
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>63%</b>

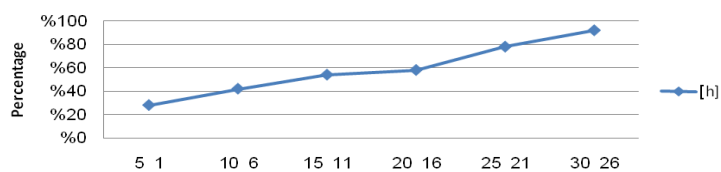


Figure 9. The acquisition curve [h]

**Affricates**

[dʒ] and [tʃ] are two Farsi’s affricates. Performance of the subjects for producing these two consonants was remarkably poor. Affricate-omissions were not frequent implying that despite difficulty in articulation; the study’s subjects did not try to omit the affricates. Only 23% of total endeavored [dʒ]s were pronounced satisfactorily and 47% of [dʒ]s were replaced by alveolar plosive [d]. Articulation of [dʒ] improved during the year of observation but never accomplished. [ʒ] was also perceived as the acceptable pronunciation of [dʒ]. Table 17 shows what the subjects produced for [dʒ] on average.

TABLE 17.  
VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [dʒ]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
dʒ → dʒ	3	4	3	29	27	17	83
dʒ → ʒ	6	2	0	0	2	0	10
dʒ → ð	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
dʒ → d	87	43	20	10	23	18	201
dʒ → j	2	0	0	0	1	0	3
dʒ → n	8	1	0	0	0	0	9
dʒ → s	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
dʒ → t	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
dʒ → z	1	6	0	1	0	0	2
dʒ → ɛ	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
dʒ → z	1	0	0	3	0	0	4
dʒ → dz	14	20	10	7	0	0	41
dʒ → dʒ	6	11	9	0	0	0	26
dʒ → tʃ	1	0	0	3	0	0	4
[dʒ] deletion	6	3	0	0	0	0	9
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>23%</b>

Production of [tʃ] was not as awkward as [dʒ] but it was also underprivileged. The subjects was successful only 45% of times. Like [dʒ], [tʃ] omission stopped around the age of 3.4 but its steady perfect articulation was not observed. 32% of all [tʃ]s were pronounced [t]. [tʃ] was judged as the proper enunciation of [tʃ] in the analysis. Table 18 depicts variations in pronouncing [tʃ] by the subjects on average.

TABLE 18.  
VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [tʃ]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
tʃ → tʃ	7	6	7	4	22	21	83
tʃ → ʃ	2	3	1	0	2	0	10
tʃ → ɕ	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
tʃ → d	1	0	0	0	0	0	201
tʃ → s	9	4	1	0	0	1	3
tʃ → t	55	15	13	5	1	2	9
tʃ → ɛ	5	5	1	0	0	0	2
tʃ → dz	1	0	0	0	0	0	41
tʃ → dʒ	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
tʃ → dz	1	0	0	0	0	0	26
tʃ → ts	32	14	18	15	4	1	4
[tʃ] deletion	2	0	1	0	1	0	9
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>45%</b>

Figure 10 demonstrates the quality of affricate acquisition for the study's subjects.

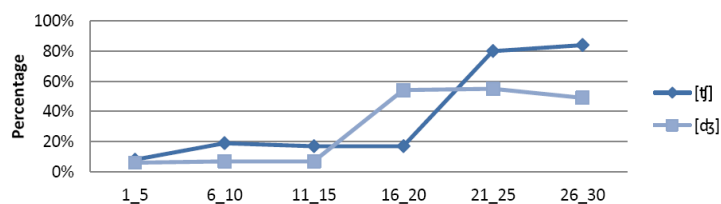


Figure 10. The acquisition curves [dʒ] and [tʃ]

**Approximants**

Among the approximants [w] was pronounced perfectly from the beginning but the story was different for [l]; 82% of endeavored [l]s were produced properly and its perfection happened around the age of 3.9 in the twenty second file. Production of [l] was also assumed as the acceptable articulations of [l]. Generally, articulations of [j] were better than [l] although the subjects' productions of [l] was better in the beginning; [j]'s perfect pronunciation observed sooner than [l] in the eighteenth file while 87% of all tried [j] were judged to be appropriate. Tables 19 and 20 present what was observed for [l] and [j], respectively. Figure 11 shows how approximants are acquired during the year of observation by the subjects.

TABLE 19.  
VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [l]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
l → l	57	84	89	73	118	186	607
l → ɫ	52	12	8	3	2	3	80
l → d	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
l → h	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
l → j	31	18	11	4	4	2	70
l → n	4	1	0	0	0	0	5
l → t	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
l → ʎ	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
l → ɾ	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
[l] deletion	29	17	5	11	6	1	69
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>82%</b>

TABLE 20.  
VARIATIONS IN ARTICULATING [j]

Audio file	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	Total
<b>Variations</b>							
j → j	52	29	98	75	75	167	496
j → d	2	0	1	0	0	0	3
j → h	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
j → l	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
j → s	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
j → ʒ	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
j → dʒ	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
[j] deletion	31	17	13	5	4	0	70
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>87%</b>

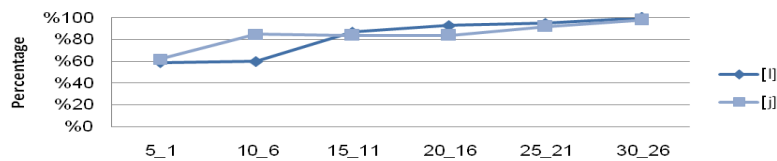


Figure 11. The acquisition curves [l] and [j]

As it is implied through the previous sections articulations of all the consonants (with no exceptions) improved and omissions diminished as the time passed. As the following table illustrates, in the beginning, nasals, approximants and plosives were the best articulated consonants and accomplished at the end of observation. Articulations of fricatives were meaningfully weaker and have not been idealized at the age of four. Productions of affricates were amazingly poor in the initiation however their rates of acquisition were surprising. [r] had the lowest rate of acquisition and remained the most problematic consonant at the age of four. Figure 12 presents a general view of acquisition on the basis of consonantal categories.

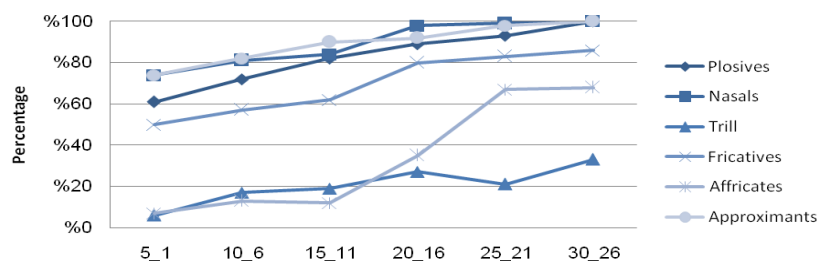


Figure 12. The consonantal categories' acquisition curves

V. CONCLUSION

This study was aimed at determining the developmental changes of Iranian children between the ages of three and four for all Farsi's consonants' articulations. The following table is the report of repeated measure analysis (a statistical mean comparison technique) which summarizes the findings of the study. The meaningful improvements of consonants' articulation of the subject for consequent periods of time are shown by “\*”. As it is discernable, only two consonants of [w] and [ʒ] had been accomplished before the observation initiated. [f] was accomplished before the fortieth month; [m] and [x] found their perfect enunciation in the forty second month while the pronunciation of the other bilabial fricative [v] was idealized later in the forty fourth month along with [b], [d], [h] and [g]. [t], [n] and two approximants were

perfectly produced in the forty sixth month and [s] got its steady idealized pronunciation at the end of study in the forty eighth month. [r] in addition to affricates and two fricatives of [z] and [ʃ] were in the process of completion when the inquiry terminated. Eight consonants from a total of twenty three found their idealized articulations between the forty third and forty sixth month of the subjects' age. This implies that these four months can be assumed as the peak of Farsi consonant acquisition.

TABLE 21.  
THE ACQUISITION TIMELINE FOR ALL CONSONANTS OF FARSI

Consonantal category	Audio files Consonant	Months	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30
			37/38	39/40	41/42	43/44	45/46	47/48
Bilabial plosive	[b]	Before the study (0 to 36 month of age)	0.676	0.341	0.126	0.048*	0.014*	0.001*
Bilabial plosive	[p]		0.314	0.118	0.043*	0.023*	0.011*	0.001*
Alveolar plosive	[t]		1.118	0.986	0.075	0.056	0.049*	0.002*
Alveolar plosive	[d]		3.124	1.897	0.836	0.048*	0.031*	0.001*
Velar plosive	[k]		1.654	1.119	0.042*	0.032*	0.011*	0.000*
Velar plosive	[g]		0.763	0.435	0.052	0.031*	0.015*	0.000*
Uvular plosive	[q]		2.786	2.156	1.345	0.076	0.056	0.049*
Nasal	[m]		0.074	0.053	0.043*	0.012*	0.000*	0.000*
Nasal	[n]		3.897	3.123	2.127	1.342	0.048*	0.012*
Trill	[r]		4.378	3.746	2.243	1.567	0.0654	0.038*
Bilabial fricative	[f]		0.074	0.021*	0.014	0.000*	0.000*	0.000*
Bilabial fricative	[v]		1.768	0.987	0.534	0.033*	0.001*	0.000*
(Post)alveolar fricative	[s]		5.464	5.123	3.908	2.567	0.0876	0.011*
(Post)alveolar fricative	[z]		3.768	3.123	1.897	1.112	0.0768	0.019*
(Post) alveolar fricative	[ʃ]		2.345	2.004	1.980	0.076	0.086	0.009*
(Post) alveolar fricative	[ʒ]		4.345	3.897	2.897	1.768	1.894	0.098
Velar fricative	[x]		0.765	0.560	0.041*	0.018*	0.000*	0.000*
Glottal fricative	[h]		0.876	0.543	0.054	0.038*	0.002*	0.000*
Affricate	[dʒ]		4.324	2.987	1.987	0.876	0.076	0.029*
Affricate	[tʃ]		4.879	3.786	1.678	0.098	0.076	0.041*
Approximant	[w]		4.678	4.231	3.903	1.765	0.098	0.087
Approximant	[l]		1.980	0.098	0.065	0.053	0.037*	0.000*
Approximant	[j]		1.786	0.986	0.876	0.075	0.008*	0.000

Although studies of consonant acquisition date back to more than a hundred years ago, the progress in this field has been very slow (Pater & Werle, 2003). Moreover, more detailed studies are necessary to have empirically defensible answers to the related questions such as: “how consonants are acquired in different languages?”, “Are the consonants' acquisition processes universal or language-dependent?” and “Do consonants and vowels follow a similar order of acquisition?”

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# An Analysis of Symbolic Images in *The Scarlet Letter*

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**Abstract**—*The Scarlet Letter* was written by Nathaniel Hawthorne in 1850, with the background of seventeenth Century of the early American colonies, taking the tragic love between pastor Arthur Dimmesdale and a woman named Hester's as content, which revealed the dim of American law, and hypocrisy of religion. So this novel filled with the religion plot and conveyed the humanity feelings. This paper focuses on the symbolic technique to analyze *The Scarlet Letter*. By rethinking and criticizing the Puritanism, this paper wants to reveal the dark side of man nature and arouse readers' thought on morality. Predecessor researchers analyzed *The Scarlet Letter* from the aspects of feminist, religion and moral. But this paper turn view, it analyze the novel from symbolic images technique. This paper consists of three parts. The first part introduces the author, including his background, study and work experience, and the influence of his novels. The second part introduces the symbolism, including its definition and effect. In the third part, in order to reveal the hypocrisy of the religious at that time, to reveal the rebellious spirit of women, I will interpret the symbolic images from three aspects: the nature, color, time. Through the analysis of the symbolic images, readers can find the deep meaning of the context, which can strengthen people's understanding of the characters, scenes and the plot of the novel. This can promote the comprehensive understanding of this greatest novel.

**Index Terms**—symbolization, imagine, application analysis, freedom, religion

## I. INTRODUCTION

Nathaniel Hawthorne is not only the pioneer of romantic novel in the late 19th century, whose works have a deep influence at that time, but also a founder of American literature. For the style of profound, unique, and fantastic, his works were regarded as the typical romanticism literature, which had a profound influence on the area of American literature even the world. The reason why the works have wide influence is that it has a closely relation to the author's ingenious techniques. There are a lot of techniques in *The Scarlet Letter*. And the symbolization is very famous. The purpose of this technique is to express the protagonists' inner world by using the connection between the objective things and the inner world. Using this technique can skillfully avoid the Puritan persecution at that time. So it is possible to reserve his works by this method. Without carefully study of the symbolic images in the works, it is difficult for us to understand the roles of those scenes. We would appreciate the work with our own view, so the author's intention of the work can't convey or understand by ourselves. Sometimes we think it is useless to use those scenes. We can have a new perspective to appreciate the work by understanding those symbolic images. *The Scarlet Letter* is a romantic novel of the United States in 19th Century. The obscure theme, extraordinary form and ingenious artist made it become the object of literature research all the time. *The Scarlet Letter* not only involved a serious and sensitive topic of extramarital affairs, but also touched on the controversial and radical feminist thought. Most importantly, It revealed the hypocrisy of the human moral and religions. So it is a challenge to the judgment of Christian value. It is wisdom to use the symbolic images to avoid the literal meaning of the religious doctrines. This work exposed the social darkness at that time.

Based on the analysis of *The Scarlet Letter* from the aspect of symbolic images in a comprehensive and multiplex angle, readers can have a better perspective to understand the deep meaning behind the literal, which can attract more scholars to use and pay more attention to symbolization in their works. This paper acts as a guiding role for readers who will have a further understanding of Hawthorne's work. Most importantly, it is also useful to have an overall sight to learn the development of American capitalism social system in late nineteenth Century. This paper makes us have important attention to study of symbolization. Applying the symbolization will make the article has a strong artistic atmosphere, so that people can have the courage to break the traditional constraints, and pursue of freedom and equality.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *The Introduction of the Writer and Novel*

#### 1. Introduction of Hawthorne

Nathaniel Hawthorne was born in the town of Salem Massachusetts. His grandparents were one of the three judges of the famous Salem deceit in 1695. His father was a captain and died when he sailed in the sea. Hawthorne was four years old and was brought up by his mother. In 1821 Hawthorne was supported by the relatives and then sent him to the Bowdoin Institute of Maine. In 1824, graduated from college, Hawthorne returned to his hometown and began to write.

After completing some short stories, he began to write his own novels with the experience in the Hakata Institute, which was the novel *Fanshawe*. But it was so bad that this novel neither published in 1828, nor paid any attention. Hawthorne put this novel into the fire. From 1836 to 1846, Hawthorne was twice worked at the customs office, and in 1848 due to political disagreement with the authorities, so he lost his customs position. After that, he was absorbed in the activities of writing creative works, so he wrote his most important novel *The Scarlet Letter*. From that time he created a lot of works. In order to avoiding the persecution of the Puritans, Hawthorne took the romantic form as his creative style. He believed that only in this way, the author can conceive and create in his own way. Without having to be constricted in authentic of the detail, it can find intermediate zone which can combination the reality and imagination between the real worldland and fairyland. The greatness of Hawthorne' s was that he could reveal the darkness, irony and reveal the truth in a gentle and substantial sharp style of writing. Hawthorne' s works are rich in imagination and rigorous structure. His works style not only used the style of psychological analysis and description, but also used of symbolism. His conceive imaginative image, which added the romantic color of the work and deepened the meaning. In addition to that his work is also with a sense of mysterious obscure.

## 2. Introduction of *The Scarlet Letter*

*The Scarlet Letter* was written by Hawthorn, a romantic writer of the United States in 19th century, and it was published in 1850. The novel took the era of America's colonial years as background, but it revealed the barbarous essence of the law, religious deceit and moral hypocrisy of America when capitalist developed in the 19th century. A young fascinating girl, born in England, had dark eyes and black hair. She married an old man who is doctor and scholar, named Roger Chillingworth. It was a British New World boom at that time. Roger Chillingworth decided to settle in the United States Boston. Without knowing what reason, whether he intended to test Hester's faithful or he had important things to deal with, he let Hester came alone, but the old scholar did not come to the United States until two years later. During this period, Hester had met the person who she really loved, whose name is pastor Arthur Dimmesdale. They fell in love and gave birth to their daughter Pearl. According to the law of Puritan, she was accused of adultery and forced to wear a red word A in front her chest. But the pastor did not confess his sin to the public until the end of life. From that time on, Hester lived alone tenaciously far away from the city and made a living by sewing. When Hester's husband was aware of the scandal he acted as a doctor, but he pretended that he and his wife was strange, attempting to find out who is the man that committed crimes with his wife. In the process of his treatment for Arthur Dimmesdale, he found out that Arthur Dimmesdale was the right person. Therefore, he managed to kill him. Pastor has been tortured by his inner world as well as the guilty of his own hypocrisy. After suffering from the mental torture for seven years, in a new mayor inauguration ceremony, he finally committed to the public frankly about his crime, and then died in the arms of Hester. Hester took her daughter Pearl away from this land. A few years later when Pearl grew into a young lady, Hester returned to Boston again, still with the red letter A. The meaning of red letter A, however, represent moral and glorious. Therefore, this novel is not only a masterpiece of the romantic novels in the United States, but also known as an original novel of psychological analysis.

### B. *The Introduction of Symbolism*

#### 1. Definition of Symbolism

Symbolism is one of the basic artistic techniques. The symbolization refers to external meaning by using a specific thing or some profound thoughts of his artists, or some things that has specific meaning (chen bei. 2016). There is no necessary relationship between the symbolic meaning and symbolic meaning of this tenor, but the artist stresses the characteristic of the tenor things, which makes arts' appreciator generated association from here to there. So the art appreciator can realize the meaning which the artist wants to express. In addition, according to the traditional habits and a certain society, the author choices things that people are familiar with as a tenor. Doing that, it can express a specific meaning. Such as the red symbol of jubilation, white symbol of mourning, the magpie symbol of good fortune, the dove symbol of peace. Using the symbolization as artistic technique, which can make the abstract concept specific, vivid, and make the profound and complex things simple, single and can also extend the description of the connotation, create a kind of artistic conception. The aim is to arouse people's association, strengthen the work of the expression and artistic effect. The symbolization can be divided into metaphorical symbol and suggestive symbol. Symbolization is different from the metaphor, and it is more extensive than the general metaphor of the content. So some works choose symbolization to express the hidden meaning. An artistic way of expressing certain ideas, thoughts, and feelings is to utilize a specific image with a particular association. There are some similarities between the vehicle and the tenor, which can be linked with the reader's imagination and association. Such as candles, burning themselves, whose specific image is to give light to others, so that we can associate the lofty spirit of sacrifice. The candle is a symbol of self sacrifice. At this point, we can further define the symbolization, and the symbolization is a form of expression according to the culture to convey another meaning. Symbolic culture express meaning through metaphor, allegory, personification, symbols, freehand brushwork, contrast and other specific symbolic. Symbolic culture in the existence and its way of expression is universal, where there are people, different races, time and region have symbolic culture. Because of the different cultural background of race and geographical environment, the symbolic meaning of the same cultural symbol is different, sometimes even the opposite. So the content of symbolization is specialization in some context. From the perspective of the symbolization, it can help us to understand meaning from the outside to the inside, and the original process to complete understanding of all the meaning of culture.

## 2. The Function of Symbolization

Appropriate use of symbolization, the article can make the concept of lofty, implicit and profound, so as to leave the space for readers to chew after tasting, giving the article deep meaning. American poet and literary critic Arthur Simmons (1899) said that the form of thought was a symbol of all common tangible and intangible performance. The formation of symbolic image is closely related to the specific cultural literary tradition and social psychology. Therefore, in order to analyze the symbolism in the works, we must study the internal and external relations of these images. The significance of each image lies in its relationship with other images. There is no substantive meaning of the image, only combination with situation, the real meaning can express, which can explain and define each other. The role of symbolization, first of all, it is the abstract sense of the performance of a specific image can be perceived. Secondly, it can make the article more subtle. Using of the immediate objects to express far-reaching meaning. The implication of the symbol is profound, which can enrich people's association, thought-provoking, and make people get infinite mood feeling. It can give a person a feeling of brief and vivid, which can express sincere feelings. It is a symbol of the description of some specific images to express some abstract concepts or thoughts and feelings, which will lead to the reader's imagination and thinking. As in the novel, Hawthorne uses a wonderful description of symbolization giving readers an extraordinary world. The world is a combination of reality and imagination, reality and fantasy. In the word, every person and every object is endowed with profound symbolic meaning.

### III. THE APPLICATION OF SYMBOLIC IMAGES IN *THE SCARLET LETTER*

#### A. *The Symbolic Meaning of Nature*

##### 1. The Brook: Symbol of the Reflection of Protagonists' Heart

The mirror, as well as the object of reflection and representation, such as glass, eyes, puddles, streams, and so on, runs through Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter* and forms a series of image combinations. These seemingly ordinary images often appear in the plot and the psychological development of the critical moment, with a very profound meaning. This section attempts to fill the black in this area, in-depth excavation and analysis of mirror image meaning in *The Scarlet Letter*. The objects of mirror and something is resemblance to mirror, which not only hold the important function of narrative, but also have meaningful roles in characterization of figures and psychological character, self certification (Wang Deyi, 2016). At the same time, they also hold the ethical significance of self reflection, and become the metaphor of the frame of mind. The pastor and Hester spoke beside the brook, which is far from Pearl, this brook become the boundaries of guilty and innocent like a needle stab into his chest. When he met with Hester in the forest, his soul in the past saw their appearance in the mirror.

For the pastor, the brook has three functions or meanings: first, it is the reflection of the physical self to the spiritual self, and the carrier of the subconscious image. The stream can be clearly mapped inner truth, reveal the secret and hidden truth. Second, the brook in the classification category, is belong to the mirror, and the mirror as the ethics it has the function of persuasion and self-examination. So the brook means the self examination of the pastor. Third, the brook like a flashback making objective and psychological time overlap, which confused boundary between imagination and reality, the past and present. So from above all, we can see the role of brook in this work. First of all, the brook shows not the sick face of the pastor, but his tortured soul and void world, which refers to his strong guilt and the pain that he can't become public confession. The image in the mirror sometimes represents himself but one a moment it is the only audience of himself, and he is the witness of self punishment and torture, because he can only reflect on the mirror secretly and privately. The use of the brook image, it showed contrast between the fierce inner conflict of Puritan moralist and wonderful performance as a public figure, which clearly depicts the pastor's dual personality. When tore his double mask, the character shapely produced great aesthetic tension. The mirrors have a very important role on ethics. For oneself it presents self reflection and self improve the moral realm. It was because of the pastor's constant confession to the mirror that he finally made up his mind open. He faced and confessed his own sin and then paid the price of life.

So from this aspect, brook plays an important role on self salvation. Without the brook, there wasn't so much sense of guilty and punishment in his heart.

##### 2. The Weather: Symbol of the Change of the Protagonists' Mind

Weather, a variety of natural phenomena, in the master's pen, sometimes gives it a mysterious sense (Guan qin, 2013). There are many scenes in the novel that are associated with the weather, in which the weather symbolizes the change of the heart. At the beginning of the novel, a gloomy weather, Hester tortured in scaffold, and the pastor did not say his crimes in front of so many people. This kind of weather shows a kind of sad and depressed mood. In this weather, Pearl laugh like a bird, reflecting her innocence, she did not know why the judge took away her mother, and she is waiting for an unknown result. A dark night, the pastor was painful because of misery tortured by the crime, walking around to the place where Hester accepted the torture. His heart was full of contradiction and hesitation, forced him to confess the secret, but coward dragged him back. He imagined himself confessing his crimes to the public. However, everything is shrouded in darkness, and the dark weather is the reflection of the gloomy heart. Rainy days like tears, falling in the rush, seems to reveal the pastor's crime. The pastor fell several times in the rain, a symbol of this intention that he want to wash his sins through the rain. Every time when he fell, with the rough breathing even unconscious, because he was surrounded with the deep regret and each time he struggled to speak his crimes. But the Puritan discipline forced him to

fear his own the crime. Through this way, he wanted to reduce his pain. So he tired to accept the baptism of rain, hoped to be a man without the sin. On the other hand, the weather and the rainy days are both religious hypocrisy. Religion does not dare to express its crimes openly in daylight, rather than to reveal its true feelings through the vague concept of rainy days and cloudy days.

Sunny is a symbol of good start. After raining the sky gets light, some dark clouds took away all the pain and pain, and open a new journey. The Meng Haoran in *the miscellaneous* described the mountain that emptied after raining, the weather late autumn. This reflected the blue sky after raining. Happiness can be shown among the lines of the work. In the novel, one afternoon, Hester wants to escape from this piece of land, under the blue sky and white cloud, Hester and Pearl was so happy. A boat carried them start a new life. Sunny symbolized the freedom.

### 3. The Meteor: Symbol of the Release of the Sin

The significance of the meteor lies in the fleeting of time and the meaningful of meteor is also due to the beautiful things in the twinkling of an eye. We can't hold her beautify, nor can we extend the wonderful of her. If we hold on the meteor at that moment, maybe she and our lives will become eternal life, which is to do meaningful things. To do something meaningful is to live well.

Meteor A is also a memorial to Arthur Dimmesdale's sins. Arthur Dimmesdale is a combination of contradiction. Everything seemed calm on the surface, he is a saint in the eyes of the saints, but he is a real sinner. As a pastor, he is both the spokesman of the Puritanism and the victim. He is in a dilemma between faith and love. He denied the most fundamental needs of human beings and opposed the human nature and the divine, and even regarded his own human nature as a manifestation of the disloyalty of God. So he is always in a spiritual torment. He don't know what he should choose .Whether he should confess his sin through his inner repent and live just for the sake of remaining , or he should confess his sin in the public and take responsibility to his punishment in order to make the guilty mind to be free. For example, an obscure night in early May, Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester and Pearl stood hand in hand on the scaffold. Before he finishing his speech, there is a flashed light in the sky. The pastor looked up at the sky, he regarded the ordinary meteor light as word A which drawn by a dark red line. Confronted with this meteor A, he realized that it is necessary to confess his sin and this letter A represents the relief of his sin. At the end of the novel, pastor Arthur Dimmesdale finished his sermon. In Hester's arm, handed with Pearl, faced with his fellow pastors and the public, he went to the scaffold. He stood there, with all his might, in a solemn and terrible voice, admitting his crimes openly. He tore the sacred hoop and left uncovered chest, at that time the letter A exposed. After Pearl kissed him, he died in his beloved arm. Pearl's kiss washed away his total sins.

In this case, Hawthorne used the shooting stars to convey us a spirit, the error itself is not wrong, but if we blindly cover up mistakes, mistakes will inevitably become a mistake (Li Shiqiang,2008). How many mistakes should one man take in his life until the end his life? The answer is an unknown. But we must realize through *The Scarlet Letter* that the release of sin is not a shame, that sin, like a meteor, falls from the heart, and is the beginning of a new life.

## B. The Symbolic Meaning of Colors

### 1. Color Red: Symbol of Temptation

Yeats(1920), a famous Irish poet, said red is the color of magic. It symbolizes passion, a symbol of desire, and it is a symbol of recklessness, a symbol of shame and a symbol of tragedy. Red also represents God's purification and eternal punishment. In many literary works, to describe the woman who is easy to seduce would always use the red color. In Apocalypse ,the great whore always dressed in scarlet, the pagan idols is usually depicted as red, so red is a color a symbol of hell, which stands for the devil's color, a symbol of anger and hatred.

To some extent, as for Hester, red is a symbol of impulsive and reckless. Special impulse and recklessness is the root of her tragic life. Marry with Chillingworth, Hester was extremely irrational. A young, beautiful, brave and enthusiastic girl married with an old, ugly, cold, extreme man. It is unreasonable for those two persons live together, which means the beginning of the tragedy life. When Hester lost her way with her husband, she was driven by impulse and desire, but she had no reason to be in love with the pastor, because this love can't be accepted by people and people.

Another performance, it is this impulse and reckless act that bring her endless tragedy and pain. In these figures, the negative meaning of the red is also reflected in Hester's husband, who is holding the revenge. For Chillingworth, the red symbolizes cunning, hatred, and blood. When he saw the letter A wore on the clothes of Hester, he felt angry. He hated Hester's betrayal, and when he found out that Arthur Dimmesdale was the sinners who is the person he try to find .After that he embarked on the path of revenge doomed eternally. Pretending to be a trusted friend, but actually he liked a vampire. He approached to the pastor, until he spied on his soul, and lured the minister to all the anguish, pain, repentance, and condemnation. He tortured pastor until he felt exhausted. As a doctor it is his duty to insight the health and look over the early death sign of the pastor, but he did not do his duty. Rather than on the opposition way, he accelerated the speed of torment, and increased his revenge plan .He should be acted as mediate to stop the story of tragedy, but he acted as a maker of the tragedy. The red revenge plan is full of his mind, the red A step by step to lure himself to fall. So with the red A, he achieved his revenge plan at the end of the story.

Red, a color is full of temptation and impulse, giving people mind to revenge. The color itself is not the matter, but when put it in the environment of human being, we give it a different meaning (Li Fangfang,2015).

### 2. Color Grey: Symbol of Darkness

In *The Scarlet Letter*, what Hawthorne shown the readers is almost a gloomy world. Both of the characters' inner

world and the surrounding they lived in are all covered by gray color. This dark hue existed from the beginning in the introduction chapter extended to the end of the novel. The local building is a single color in Hawthorne's vision, which seemed unattractive. This shows only a form of compliance customs office with cobweb, old painting makes the room unusually dark, and everywhere on the floor is gray dust. At the beginning of the story showed the reader a scene that makes people sacred –a wood prison which means civilized dark flower. The old prison is ghastly with heavy and rusty doors which seemed to be a sad sight. But the outside door is a disorder grass ground surrounded with planets such as cattle, toxic work like ugly weed. People in prison can't see sunshine and cloudy forest. Nobody wanted to step towards this land. Only the witch visited here at the middle of night. She regarded this place as magic land.

The description of these scenes buried the tragic seed of main characters in the story As Hawthorne told it, in this piece of land, a generation of their personality keep and continue the behavior and consciousness characteristics of their ancestors, with the time passed. Their human nature will like the poor bean which can't get any nourishment when it sewed in the same land without any changes. So it can involve the healthy growth. Corresponding to the dark environment is the reflection of characters' inner depression and dark. When the heroine of Hester's adultery was discovered, the guilt and outside pressure made her heart full of fantasy and youthful heart covered with the cloud. In the next few years, she felt there is no sunshine around the world. She always covered with coarse gray clothes, with a hat to hide her hair. Through this kind of depressed and full of tragic color description, the writer wanted to the readers deeply appreciate the Puritan discipline which constrict and ruin people's spirits. Mostly significantly the writer wanted to show Puritan treatment of adultery. Confronted with a couple of young people who had been forced into madness by emotion and guilt, the people around them had no sympathy, understanding, and sincere persuasion, instead of the cruel punishment imposed on them by the name of god.

Gray is a color symbol of sincere, calm, elegance. The iron ash, charcoal ash and dark gray, emitting a strong, intelligent, successful etc message under the invisible. Gray and light looks like a calm philosopher. Grey is whiter than black while is blacker than white. Standing between the white and black, which had a gloomy beautiful. The gray sight of the beginning of the world, it is a color with the ash, a bit simple, a little lonely, somewhat ethereal, unpredictable. This color looks like most of the people who are often the fickle. This elusive feeling, as of Hester's heart, people could not guess why she kept secret.

### 3. Color Black: Symbol of Holiness

In the color system, black is a kind of extreme color, no transparency, giving a heavy, depressing feeling. In western culture, it is a symbol of seriousness, mystery, sadness, despair and terror. In the Bible, the black symbol of the devil, evil, pain and despair. Such as Black Friday, is the crucifixion of Jesus. Black sheep often brought an evil member of the herd. In the story, Schwarzwald symbol of a hell, and the black man in Schwarzwald is a symbol of the devil. Hester told Pearl that she is seduced by the black devil and red A was the black mark of the sin. From here, it is easy to find that black is a symbol of the devil. Even the children, from childhood people often instill the knowledge that she is the production of evil. Pearl's born is a mystery in the eyes of the people, and who lured Hester to crime is the devil or man, we do not know, and it remained unknown. So Hester regarded the mistake as mistake, and told pearl that she is God's derivative. Sometimes she said that she was tempted by the devil, so pearl came to earth.

But, on the other hand, the black in *The Scarlet Letter* is a symbol of scared. Master Dimmesdale is always dressed in his black cassock, the dark plain, which shows him as a Puritan divine status contact. But on the other side there is a feeling that he can always cover the confessions, who can't see how a restless heart is black hidden below, how an exciting soul. His eyes were always full of melancholy light, his special tension was agitated, it is customary to hold his hands on the chest, and it was suffering from mental and spiritual consequences. So that all the pious people doubt that his work, his sorrow, his sin, and his pain will end with him. The pastor that is also guilty of his own, but he is so hypocritical, Arthur Dimmesdale can't afford so much guilt. For him, it is of great pain, until finally a passionate speech. He bravely took the hand of Hester and pearl stood there and told his secret openly. Uncover the robe, a significant drain originally self. From then on, the black cover on him and finally opened the black. The false appeared, cowardly abandoned by the weak body. This mystery made public and all evil gone. The mystery of Pearl's life and the reason why the pastor fell frequently has finally been solved.

At the same time, the mystery of the black is also reflected in the baptism of Pear, at that time the pastor dressed in black clothes, and so is Pear. In this sacred and mysterious time, black undoubtedly gives a mysterious color. But on the other hand, it expresses the hypocrisy of the religious doctrine at that time, and the pastor baptized the seeds of his own crime.

## C. The Symbolic Meaning of Time

### 1. The Day: Symbol of Disguise

Daytime is usually considered as justice and integrity, which means to represent ourselves without reservation, privacy or secret in the open day. However, with a careful analysis of this paper, daytime signifies a completely different symbol meaning from a new point of view. That is to say, daytime refers to concealment.

Under the rules of social norms and religious doctrine, people were unconsciously dominated by personality mask. Their behavior was refrained, and they lived a pretended life during the daytime. The argument can be fully justified by the love relationship between Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale. They committed misdeed at night while hiding their secret in the days. In the daytime, Hester Prynne rejected to confess her accompany when she accepted the torment

on scaffold, nor did Arthur Dimmesdale admit his blunder in the public. Although at the end of his life, he finally revealed to the public the matter that has been tortured him for seven years. No one had thought that Arthur Dimmesdale, a venerable and knowledgeable pastor, should have committed such a crime. He used to be a man that Hester Prynne deeply loved and the pastor that exclude difficulties and anxiety for the local people. Nevertheless, he turned out to be a coward who left his lover in a condition of crucial torment physically and mentally. Even though he underwent severe inner pain, it became nothing compared to what Hester Prynne had tolerated. Looking at his beloved woman insulted and bullied by others on a public occasion, he could do nothing but continued his preach like an outsider. Indeed, he was longing for freedom, forgiveness and true love, yet his fainthearted nature stemmed him from taking the responsibility on the key point. In the end, he passed away in the merciless world. Day had an opposite meaning as we usual regard as.

### **2. The Night: Symbol of Honesty**

It seems that night is a word of concealment, for human beings cannot see clearly what and who existed in darkness without tools. As a result, night indicates mystery and disguise. Night enables people to meet their mental and physical needs, which lead to free from any bondage and release their imagination as well as desire. Therefore, from a certain angle, night symbolizes honest in *The Scarlet Letter*. From the first time Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale met each other and fell in love to being honest with each other. All their emotions had been expressed and revealed at night. Night seemed to be a carnival stage when affections were allowed to expose freely. At night, the doctor walked slowly through the wood to threat Hester, not to divulge his secret, and it was until at night that he brought out his discontentment and hatred. In contrast, he pretended to see nothing strange at daytime. Roger Chillingworth presented that he is knowledge and intellect in front of the public, and people admire his outstanding medical skills, not realizing his hostility filling his mind. In the dark time when Roger Chillingworth stayed alone with the pastor, he racked the pastor badly with irritating words which caused greater damage to the pastor. Incisive words hurt his heart and soul, sometimes suppressing the harm to body. What Roger Chillingworth did to the pastor is detested by reader. Why couldn't they be frank and forthright? Just as what the author written at the end of the novel: We can learn a lot from the tragic experience of this poor pastor, and we can put it all down to one sentence. If you can't show your deepest sin to others, then at least show some clues, so that people can deduce your sins.

As is commonly acknowledged, darkness revealed our true feeling. As we often say, the night is the real feeling, the night swallowed up all pride, leaving no need to cover up our own. In our life, it is necessary to behave as straight as possible.

### **3. The Seasons: Symbol of Eternity**

The four seasons represent the cycle of life, which means the beginning and the end of life. The beginning means the end, and the end means a new beginning. Maybe it's a little hard to say, but it is the true reflection of the season. Once there was a saying: if winter comes, can spring be far? It shows that the alternation of the four seasons means the cycle of life. A quarter year is a life cycle. Each quarter is not the same but sometimes it is the same. The difference is that everyone has their own unique four seasons; the same is that we have to go through this process. In this cycle of alternating phenomenon, some things are eternal.

This is reflected in the eternal love that Hester persist in it. Winter to spring, and Hester brought the child by herself, living in the eye sand whispers of others. Hester said, Pearl's father is God, and the child is God's gift to her and she is the crystallization of love. Even abused, and consulted teach recorded punishment, she has not spoke out the name of the father.

Hester stand in scaffold on the street, showing a proud smile, and the glow of beauty, which unexpectedly have magic power. The power can be merged into a halo shrouded in her misery and shame, reminded us the imagine of Madonna's .Despite suffering with misery, Hester still infatuated with Arthur Dimmesdale, she refused to leave away from the pastor. After Arthur Dimmesdale's death, she chose to give up the good life. She buried his bones to his old haunt, and put The Scarlet Letter again, until after the death beside him. In order to stay forever, she chose to lean against him. Hester chose to depart from in the traditional marriage, challenge the traditional sense of rights and abide by the women. She convinced that her power of love, hoping to establish a good future. In order to the pursuit of freedom and happiness of love and purity, she looked for self survival value. Faced with the unacceptable love, she is bravery and dedication, which led to the letter A accompanied her life. But the meaning of letter finally turned into her unyielding, everlasting love fireworks, which made her a saint of love.

The four seasons is also reflected a sense of strong and courageous .Even under the punishment, and put on the red A with shame, she still did not say his accomplice. This kind of strong personality, assertive behavior is the secular concept of the church and was not the decadent. But even if she was in a dangerous situation to accept nail shame post, Hester also did not bow, and she chosen to carry on A with her life. Faced with any situation, she showed no fear at all. She would keep the child with any sacrifices. She would rather use her own hands to feed herself and pearl than accept any benefaction. She is good at sewing, which can support herself and their children, but she earns a difficult birth plan, while the rest are given to the poor people. She is as much as possible to serve the public or benefit with others, regardless of any rewards and costs. She does not require any return. Hester strive for women's personality liberation, and struggled against the hypocrisy of religious. Her spiritual realm is much higher than that of the Puritans and the ignorant governors. Her sprits of nurturing children and bearing bitter hardships touched people around, and people

gradually changed their attitude to her. She despised the religion and the secular with a proud heart, and maintained the independence of the personality, so that this seemingly painful life of slavery to which given a new implication. After a long practice and action, the meaning of the letter A changed from adultery to able, even synonymous worth admirable and angel. Hester eventually received the respect of the world.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

By the analysis this work, it is not difficult to find that the symbolization has deeper meaning than the literal meaning. Compared with all those symbolization in *The Scarlet Letter*, we can know the deeper meaning with the background of that time that is to say the strict doctrine of Puritanism.

*The Scarlet Letter* is one of the famous novels in the history of America literature. By reading again and again, it always gives us a new feeling. We are amazed by the symbol meaning. Every time we read it, we can get a new understanding with the aspect of symbolism (Zhou Shaobin, 2014). We call this as it couldn't be boring after hundreds of reading. The artistic features of the novel are reflected in the delicate, dreamy romantic atmosphere and the using of the abundant symbolic techniques, so that the works are full of a charming artistic charm, emitting infinite luster.

Through the use of symbolic images in the novel, Hawthorne drew the reader's attention from the material world to the real character. In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne used symbolic skillfully and created vivid characters. Hester and the pastor's love were the tragic ending in the novel at that time under restrict of the social system and religious law, while Hester and Chillingworth unreasonable marriage got the protection of the law, which reflected the extremely unreasonable, obliterate humanity social system. The using of nature, time and color as images reveals the theme of this paper, that is to say reveals the social nature of the Puritan hypocrisy, and praises the pure love and the liberation of humanity.

In a word, the novel conveys an idea: the so-called perfect personality that is advocated by old morality will only bring new sink. We should pursue the new moral of this new morality rather than anti morality. Ancestors are not necessary to be afraid of evil, and escape and hypocrisy is fatal to refuse guilty. Refusal of *The Scarlet Letter* is the refusal of salvation. It is necessary to reevaluate the world, and ultimately achieve the integrity and integrity of the whole world. When we see the works of Hawthorne, one thing we can't ignore. He was deeply influenced by the Puritanism which resulted in his way to solve the problems with the perspective of religion. But anyway, Hawthorne's superb artistic techniques --symbol is worthy to discuss and research.

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# A Survey on the Cultivation of College Students' Audience Awareness in English Writing\*

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**Abstract**—The strength of audience awareness has a great influence on the content selection, expression and writing techniques of the article. Therefore, the cultivation of the students' audience awareness in writing becomes one of the key factors that determine the qualities of the students' compositions. This thesis conducts a questionnaire and interviews on college students from the four grades of Nanchang Normal University in order to reveal the college students' cognitive status and attitude of audience awareness. Based on the status quo, this thesis analyzes the possible causes of this situation from two aspects: the teachers' carelessness on audience awareness and overly concern with writing skills, and the students' shortage of language ability and logical thinking ability and their excessive attention to writing skills. For these reasons, this thesis proposes corresponding countermeasures: in the English writing class, the reader's awareness should be emphasized; the theme of the article needs to be much closer to life; students are supposed to create imaginary readers in writing; the method of readers' feedback should be fully utilized. The use of these strategies will effectively help college students cultivate audience awareness in English writing.

**Index Terms**—audience awareness, imaginary reader, questionnaire and interview, strategies

## I. INTRODUCTION

Audience awareness refers to the mental activity that writers set readers in the process of writing and consider the needs of readers while writing (Li & Zheng, 2008, p. 12-13). It is a key factor to determine whether the article is excellent or not. In the domestic English writing teaching, the audience awareness is not valued, which contributes to the situation that students aren't aware of clear readers. In the most cases, students always set the teachers as their readers. In the process of writing, their writing personal demonstrative pronoun changes frequently, and they pay more attention to the number of words, the writing titles and the grammar without considering using reasonable and appropriate forms to deliver their ideas.

### A. Background of the Study

The reader is an important part in the rhetoric context, and it is the communication object in the author's writing process and the co-builder of text meaning (Zhang, 2011, p. 65). In recent years, audience awareness has been regarded as a very important position in the foreign writing teaching. In contrast, there is relative little guidance for students' audience awareness in the domestic writing teaching. As a result, the students only focus on expressing themselves, and ignore their readers. It's embodied in modality, discourse, semantic category, and textual coherence in EFL writing (Wu, 2009, p. 435-437). Tang Ren (2005) found that most students were self-centered and they did not notice the importance of audience awareness from a sociocultural perspective. Although the importance and necessity of audience awareness in writing has been undoubtedly challenged, the current status of cultivation of students' audience awareness in practical English writing is still worth exploring. This thesis employs questionnaires and interviews to investigate the situation of cultivation of students' audience awareness in English writing teaching.

### B. Literature Review

During the past thirty years, the audience awareness was regarded as a prominent element in English writing. The research scholars in different areas explored this subject in different terms, and they made some achievements. The researchers mostly studied the function of the audience awareness, the methods how to cultivate the audience awareness and the relationship between the readers and writers.

The foreign scholars studied audience awareness from two aspects: the function of the audience awareness, and the validity of improving audience awareness. On the respect of the function of the audience awareness, Cohen & Riel (1989) found that the compositions written for peers were better than the compositions written for teachers through the comparison for the students' texts of different types of writing texts on the same subject. Their study reflected that in

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various situations the function of the audience awareness was different. On the respect of the availability of the audience awareness, Chen & Brown (2012) held the view that it was advantaged to combine the computer network learning method with the task-based teaching method on enhancing the writer's audience awareness. Through empirical research, José Brand o Carvalho (2002) proposed using process-promoting teaching strategies to cultivate students' audience awareness effectively.

In the domestic research the audience awareness was mentioned by Zhu Ziqing (1947). He pointed out there could exist one or two actual readers in the writing in author's mind, but the many imaginary readers should be acquired. Without the teachers, the writing could be done; however, without the imaginary readers, it couldn't be completed. Many researches have been done in the field of audience awareness and gradually applied to practical teaching, yet the survey shows students still have shortage of the training of the audience awareness. Tang Ren (2005) found that most students were self-centered and didn't notice the importance of audience awareness from a sociocultural perspective.

### C. *Significance of the Study*

On view of the current situation of English writing, it is necessary to explore the cultivation of audience awareness among college students. On one hand, the cultivation of audience awareness can enrich teachers' knowledge about writing and teaching. On the other hand, it can change the writing situation that the aim of writing is to express the insignificant thought. The cultivation of audience awareness can improve the contents and methods of writing teaching.

This study intends to investigate the status quo of the audience awareness of college students from three aspects: pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing. It aims to learn students' recognition on audience awareness, students' imaginary readers and students' writing contents, and know the teachers' attitudes on cultivating audience awareness and analyze the reasons why they get into the difficult situation. It will help teachers know how to cultivate the students' audience awareness in the process of writing teaching. Meanwhile, some operational strategies will be provided.

## II. OVERVIEW OF AUDIENCE AWARENESS

The audience awareness is defined differently in the field of receiving aesthetics and reader response. The more scientific explanation of it is defined by Zhou Miaolong (2000) that the audience awareness is that the writers consciously take the needs of the readers, the level of acceptance, the acceptance of psychology and aesthetic interests into his mental state in the process of writing. In the process of English writing, the audience is significant to writers. It influences authors' choice of text form, expression means and passion. The audience awareness has three functions: tuning function, choice function, and nurturing function (Luo, 2011, p.34). With these functions, students can conduct articles nicely.

### A. *Definition of Audience Awareness*

Audience awareness has different definitions in different theoretical fields. It is a key element in distinguishing the quality of a work (Mc, 1996, p.28-30). In the field of receiving aesthetics and reader response theory, the readers are practitioners and creators of literary works. In the reading field, audience awareness is the reader's subjective consciousness in the process of reading. They communicate with the text in the process of reading and produce separation and integration, and accordingly they can combine subject consciousness with work consciousness. The more scientific explanation of the audience awareness in the writing theory is defined by Zhou Miaolong (2005) who is the associate professor of the Chinese Department of Hunan Yueyang Normal University, he held the view that the audience awareness is that the writer consciously take the needs of the readers, the level of acceptance, the acceptance of psychology and aesthetic interests into his mental state in the process of writing. Given the definitions mentioned above, it can be defined in this paper that the audience awareness is a kind of the author's conscious psychological activity in the process of writing. The contents of this thinking activity are the reader's needs, accepted levels, and aesthetic interests.

### B. *The Importance of Readers to Writers*

In order to achieve an effective writing, the writer should keep audience awareness in the whole process of writing, in other words, keep closely communicating with the audience.

Before writing, readers will influence the author's choice of text form, expression form, and expression means. The author must first consider the purpose of writing and who his audiences are. The purposes of writing are different, so the choices of writing style are various. Hu Shanlin (1999) said the types and the forms of works the writers and artists adopted were subject to the cultural background, the level of aesthetic interest and the appreciation of readers. The artists must consider readers, let alone the ordinary writers.

In writing, readers will influence the author's words and sentences, tone, and rhetorical expressions. As the writer's communicator, the readers' knowledge level and the degree of intimacy both influence the author's verbs, sentences, tone and rhetoric expression. For example, if the relationship between the reader and the author is intimate, the author may use casual and informal words. If the reader is an elder and has a high status, the author shall be serious.

After writing, the readers also influence the author's passion on writing. The readers are the reasons for the author to write and to embody the value of his labor. The readers' feedback and consumption have a great influence on the

author’s enthusiasm for writing.

### III. THE METHODOLOGY

The study is to identify college students’ perceptions of audience awareness, and the aspects of the article are valued by students from three aspects: pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing. Moreover, the thesis studies the function of audience awareness and reader strategies on English writing quality.

#### A. The Objects of the Study

In order to make the data of the questionnaire more comprehensive and representative, the research group chose the participants from four grades in Nanchang Normal University. A total of 348 valid questionnaires were collected, of which 10 were freshman, 141 were sophomore, 37 were juniors, and 160 were seniors, and the male-female ratio was 25% and 75% respectively. After explaining the purpose of the questionnaire to them, they were willing to complete the questionnaire and the interview.

#### B. The Tools and Methods of the Research

The result and data is analyzed on the Questionnaire Star App. Meanwhile the figures and charts are provided by the app. The interview is carried out in order to find the students’ thought in detail.

##### 1. Open-ended Questionnaire

The open-questionnaire was designed in Questionnaire Star App. The questionnaire containing 20 questions which are divided into three parts: the pre-writing, the in-writing, and the post-writing. The first part is the recognition and attention on audience awareness of students and teachers. The second part is about whether students have imaginary readers when they are writing. The third part is the students’ preferred ways to cultivate their writing skills.

##### 2. Open-ended Interview

An open-ended interview is carried out in order to explore students’ perceptions of audience awareness and its impact on students. The interview consisted of four questions. (1) Have you ever learned the audience awareness? (2) Who is often your imaginary reader before writing? (3) At the time of writing, do you consider whether your language and tone are appropriate depending on the readers’ age, status, level of knowledge, and aesthetics? (4) After the writing is completed, does the readers’ feedback influence you? Thirty college students are interviewed after class, of which 10 were sophomore, 10 were junior, and 10 were senior.

### IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The status is dealt directly by Questionnaire Star online. Some results are listed as followed.





#### A. The Result of the Survey

The result is presented through the figures and charts obviously. The current state of perceptions of students’ audience awareness is analyzed through three aspects: students’ recognition on audience awareness, students’ imaginary readers, students’ writing contents.

##### 1. Students’ Recognition on Audience Awareness

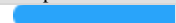
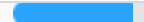
###### QUESTION 1:

IN YOUR LEARNING EXPERIENCE, WHETHER THE TEACHERS OR OTHER PERSONS HAVE MENTIONED OR EMPHASIZED AUDIENCE AWARENESS WITH YOU?

Choice	Number	Proportion
A、Never	51	 14.66%
B、Occasionally	186	 53.45%
C、Often	67	 19.25%
D、Unclear	44	 12.64%
Valid number	348	

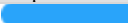
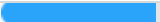
###### QUESTION 2:

WHEN YOU’RE WRITING, WHETHER OR NOT YOUR TEACHERS HAVE EVER ASKED YOU TO CREATE A COMMUNICATION OBJECT?

Choice	Number	Proportion
A. Yes	199	 57.18%
B. No	149	 42.82%
Valid number	348	

###### QUESTION 3:

HAVE YOU EVER RECEIVED THE TRAINING OF CULTIVATING AUDIENCE AWARENESS IN WRITING CLASS

Choice	Number	Proportion
A、Yes	159	 45.69%
B、No	189	 54.31%
Valid number	348	

As showed from above, in the English learning experience, 53.45% of the students had heard audience awareness occasionally, and 14.66% of the students thought that their teachers or others had never mentioned it in their learning experiences, only 19.25% of the students have often heard of audience awareness. As is shown in Figures 2 and 3, although most of the students' teachers have emphasized to have a clear reader, they have not specifically trained the students to how to create one. In the interview, seven students expressed that they had never heard the teacher mention the readers' awareness in the writing class. They only read it in newspapers, magazines or books. The other five students indicated that the teacher had mentioned but had not explained in detail, let alone specifically trained their audience awareness. Therefore it can be drawn that in domestic writing teaching, teachers do not pay much attention to the cultivation of students' audience awareness, and in most of the students' learning experiences, the audience awareness is mostly learned through the media or books. Therefore in students' practical writing, the audience awareness is relatively weak.

## 2. Students' Imaginary Readers

QUESTION 4:  
WHOM DO YOU THINK YOUR ARTICLES ARE WRITTEN FOR?

Choice	Number	Proportion
A、 Teachers	198	56.9%
B、 Classmates	18	5.17%
C、 Friends	50	14.37%
D、 Others	82	23.56%
Valid number	348	

The imaginary reader is an indispensable factor in the writer's writing. The range of imaginary readers restricts the richness of the writer's content. As is shown in the figure, 56.9% of the students' imaginary readers are teachers, 5.17% of the students' imaginary readers are friends, and 14.37% of the students' imaginary readers are classmates. This implies that the range of imaginary readers of the students is too narrow. Most of the essays are written for the requirements of the teacher. In other words, their main purposes of writing are to deal with assignments and examinations. The content of the composition written in this way is not abundant enough, and it cannot meet the needs of their own writing.

## 3. Students' Writing Content

QUESTION5:  
WHEN YOU'RE WRITING, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING RESPECTS WILL YOU GENERALLY CONSIDER?

Choice	Number	Proportion
A、 The title	260	74.71%
B、 The structure	279	80.17%
C、 The number of words	219	62.93%
D、 The readers	158	45.4%
E、 The content	230	66.09%
Valid number	348	

As is shown in the figure, the aspects that considered by the students at the time of writing are structural levels, titles, and contents, without considering using reasonable and appropriate forms to convey their ideas. One of the students said: "I had never been trained audience awareness before. I thought the aim of writing is to express my point of view clearly, and I could improve my writing skills and enrich my writing vocabulary and sentences to show my level of writing rather than thinking about communicating with readers in writing." It shows that the college students did not take the readers' cognitive background and ability into consideration and assumed that readers will understand all the information they have passed. Moreover, for most students, writing is for exams, and this kind of utilitarian writing distorts their motivation for writing. Students only pay attention to the surface language expression and ignore more meaningful communication with readers. So their writing content is always vague.

### B. The Reasons for the Weak Audience Awareness

The results show that the audience awareness of college students in English writing is relatively weak. There are many reasons for the weak audience awareness, and this section selects several representative reasons. The main point is that teachers and students pay too much attention to language skills and ignore the needs of readers. The teachers always were regarded as the target readers in the students' writing. Some students didn't even hear of it. The range of their readers is narrow. Their writing content was vague, only keeping their eyes on the vocabularies, structures, and writing skills. The main reasons for this situation are divided into two parts. First part is about the teachers' reasons: their carelessness on audience awareness and overly concern with writing skills. Second part is the students' reasons: their shortage of language ability and logical thinking ability, and their excessive attention to writing skills.

#### 1. The Teachers' lack of Audience Awareness

The teachers' lack of audience awareness for students in the teaching of writing is the direct cause of the students' weakness on audience consciousness in writing. The data show that in only 19.25% of the students' learning experience

the readers' awareness is often mentioned by their teachers. In other words, 80.75% of the students have never heard it or heard it occasionally in their learning experience. Most of the interviewed students have never heard the teacher explained the reader's awareness in detail. They said that most of the teachers in the writing class were teaching writing skills, structural levels, and contents. And those who had better literary skills are often gained high scores, and they seldom stressed the need to communicate with readers when writing. This neglect of readers' consciousness leads students to develop a bad habit-- just to say what they think, and never consider whether the article can be understood and appreciated by the readers.

### **2. The Teachers' too much Concern with Writing Skills**

According to the survey, only a few students take the teachers as true readers. For most students, the teachers are language evaluators. One of the students said: "In most cases, the readers of my writing are my teachers. They are older than me and have mature ideas, rich knowledge and social experience. The teachers will guide us either in writing or thinking. The other students mentioned that when the teachers revised the composition, they just put a red line in your sentence and reminded you that the grammar and syntax were wrong. One student said in the interview: "Because in the official exam, the readers of the writing are exam markers, there must be some high level sentences in the first paragraph, leaving a good impression on the teacher. In the following writing, there must exist a central sentence at the beginning of each paragraph. The last paragraph also highlights the points, so that the composition can get high scores." The teachers never seriously analyzed the content of your articles and the meaning of what you want to express as a true reader. Therefore, in order to get a high score, students regard writing as an opportunity to train writing skills and practice language skills rather than to exchange ideas and emotions with teachers. Some students even write extreme articles in order to get the teacher's attention. "Our writing teachers often give me some fashionable topics and sometimes I deliberately express his opinions in an opposite way. At this time I would debate with him in the composition. My greatest pleasure is that he often uses my composition as a target. Obviously, for most students, the presence of teachers as readers does not enhance their awareness of serving ordinary readers. The utilitarian purpose of test writing distorts students' writing motivation. Learners only pay attention to the language of the writing superficial factors, neglecting the exchange of "meaning".

### **3. Students' Shortage of Language Ability**

The subjects engaged in this study are mainly sophomore. Their English proficiency is limited by vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. When there are problems in language expressions or when the writing time is tight, the fluency and accuracy of language expressions becomes their top priority. Some students have to "avoid" some contents which they cannot express clearly because of their limited expression ability, resulting in the situation that some information is missed. In the interview, some students also thought that they would consider readers more in Chinese writing than they did in English writing. The main reason is that there are no language barriers in Chinese writing. They have more time and energy to consider how to communicate with readers. One of the students said: "After all, Chinese is my mother tongue. As long as the content of the composition is well prepared, I can convey anything that I want. I have more time to imagine the expressions when the readers see the things I write: Are they crying? Are they laughing? Or do they being helpless and shaking their head? With English, you are not so comfortable. You must consider sentence patterns, choosing vocabulary, and avoiding grammar problems. There is no time to consider the readers' thoughts and expressions."

### **4. Students' Excessive Attention to Writing Skills**

In the process of writing, students pay too much attention to how the language is expressed. Naturally, it is impossible for them to consider whether there is sufficient communication with the reader. According to the survey, in writing, they mostly consider whether the title is attractive, whether the number of words is enough, and whether the structure is complete, but whether the readers like their content is considered last. They use the high-level sentences to attract the teacher's attention. This kind of utilitarian writing will kill their awareness of communicating with their readers. This phenomenon is even more obvious in test writing. One of the students in the interview said that the title and outline of the exam composition had been given. He only needed to fill in it. The aspects that he would pay attention to were the grammar and vocabulary, and they would not consider communicating with readers. Another student said: "Faced with the subject of the exam, I don't know what to write, and I can't find inspiration. Those writings are written under the pressure of the teachers. I don't care about the quality of the written things. I even don't know why I wrote them. In this situation, how can the readers understand what I want to say?"

### **5. Students' Shortage of Logical Thinking Ability**

The transition of students' presentation perspectives in different paragraphs and the frequent jumping of person-directed instruction words hinder the readers from deducing textual coherence. In the student's writing, the personal pronouns constantly change consistently. Consistency of personal pronouns is related to logical thinking. Teachers take no count of special training in the cultivation of students' audience awareness and logical thinking skills in English teaching. On the time of editing articles, written feedback from teachers on the reader's awareness and logic is rare and confined to the consistency of the sentence or discourse level. Moreover the requirement of target readers for college English writing scores is not clear, leading to the situation that students do not really feel the importance of audience awareness in ordinary English writing. The target reader decides the depth of writing content, and at the same time determines the level of vocabulary and sentence structure. Therefore, teachers should also cultivate students'

logical thinking ability in English writing teaching.

## V. THE WAYS TO CULTIVATE AUDIENCE AWARENESS

The aim of this study is not only to uncover the current situation of lacking of audience awareness, but also to put forward the corresponding methods. Therefore in this chapter, more attention will be paid to the operational strategies that can improve audience awareness of college students in English writing. For students' obvious problems during the process of pre-writing, in-writing, and post-writing, the four methods are provided respectively: emphasize audience awareness in English writing instruction, let the subject of the composition close to life, create imaginary readers, and employ effective feedback.

### A. Audience Awareness in English Writing Instruction Shall Be Emphasized

In the process of English writing teaching, it is not enough to only explain the meaning of the audience awareness. Some students cannot usually get the superficial meaning of it. Therefore some materials can be offered by the teacher in the teaching to help them learn the depth and significance of audience awareness.

*Here are some samples:*

*(1) Do you remember the girl called Rose that I told you in the class. She held a party last night and invited all of our classmates. You know how excited I was when I received her invitation. It was a now-or-never chance for me to look at her closely. You must be laughing at me at the moment. But it is better than standing far away from her. You never know how pretty she was when she was in her white long skirt in that evening. I believed all our classmates in that party were attracted by her, and they were hunger to dance with her. Unfortunately, you know what a terrible dancer I was, so the only thing I could do was just sat there and watched the others dancing around. Some rounds of music later, Rose came to invite me to dance. I can't believe that the pretty girl invite me by herself! After knowing how clumsy dancer I was, she said she would train me in dancing. I thought I was the luckiest one in that party! We danced several rounds. You can't imagine how fool I was when I dance with her. But she was patient with me. It was a perfect feeling to hold and dance with a sweet girl. At the end of the party, I invited her to come to my home for the exercise of dancing. She smiled and accepted it!*

*(2) I have taken part in a party last night. My classmate Rose held a birthday party and invited all boys and girls in our class. Though the party I had made many friends and developed the dancing skills which you always ask me to try. Rose and other girls taught me to dance, and we talked a lot. I never feel so nice to dance and communicate with the girls in our class.*

The theme of passages one is the same as the passage two. However, the content, tone and attitude of two articles are different. The first passage is written for the author's friend, which mostly talks about the details of the party without considering hiding something. The tone of it is humorous. The second passage is written for the author's father. The author mainly talks about the things that he learned, without telling all details of the party. The content of the second passage is more formal than the first passage. The samples like these should be offered more to students in the teaching, and require them to read as much as possible. Students will learn what the audience awareness is and realize the significance of it. As a result, the students will select the appropriate content, vocabulary, tone, etc for different readers. However, it is not enough. The students should also take the information of readers into consideration, such as the background, the social status and interest.

### B. The Topic of Composition Should Be Set to Be Closed to Life

Teachers should encourage students to participate in truly communicative writing, and combine the writing of students with reality, encourage students to publish their compositions in different forms, such as opening a writing column in the classroom or writing a blog on the Internet. So that students have more real readers. In addition, pay attention to create the writing topics that are closed to life, so that students will have things and willing to write.

For example, teachers can provide students with the subjects relating to the sharing bicycles. The topics of sharing bicycles are closed to students' lives, and students are familiar with the phenomenon that emerges in daily life. Considering different readers, the students' writing style, attitude, and expression are different. If the readers are the managers who work in the sharing bicycle department, considering their age and nature of the job, the content of the article must be rigorous, orderly, and the attitude must be sincere. If the readers are the users who are mostly the students or office workers, your words must be euphemistic, humorous, and some contemporary popular Internet words can be used in the composition.

### C. An Imaginary Reader Should Be Created

Zhu Ziqing(1947) pointed out there could only exist some actual readers in the writing, but many imaginary readers should be acquired. This shows the importance of imaginary readers.

Teachers should first guide students to imagine a reader, and let them know that writing is not simply to cope with assignments and examinations. Writing should be a process that shows the feelings and ideas of their own lives. This process is actually talking to readers and understanding what the readers need. The process of thinking imaginary readers is actually the process of students' empathetic thinking. In other words, students are not only allowed to think

about issues in their own ontological positions but also in the reader's position that beyond the original knowledge background and scope of thinking and making all-round thinking.

For example, in teaching the letter of apology, the teacher can use the case of "United Airlines letter of apology". By learning the news item of the case, students can be given an assignment to write a letter of apology to the different readers, namely, to the public, or to the staff of the United Airlines. Teachers can raise the questions when students are creating their works:

1. What age groups do your readers belong to? (children, teenage, young adult, middle adult, old adult)
2. What do your readers belong to? (ordinary people\government\firm)
3. What are your readers' concern?
4. What details, illustrations, reasons will be employed to support the writing?
5. What comments will be put forward from your readers after reading?

In the practical writing, it is necessary for students to analyze the readers from the aspects of background, knowledge, interests. Through this way, the students can make the content of the article more practical, and can also make the expression of the article conform to the reader's aesthetic, so as to improve the quality of the article.

#### *D. Effective Feedback Shall Be Employed*

Students always complain that they cannot receive the readers' feedback to revise their articles. Furthermore, the teachers have a heavy load of revising the students' writing, and the efficiency is always low. It takes a lot of time for teachers to check students' article; however, the truth is that students don't value it, let alone improving the writing ability via the teachers' modification. Therefore, how to conduct effective feedback is a key point for the writing teaching teachers. The following are some ways to cultivate the audience awareness.

Teachers' evaluation is a key element of feedback. In the actual revision of the writing, the teachers always evaluate the student's article as the instructors. The content-based standard is regarded as a basic way for teachers to check the students' writing. Meanwhile, a red line is always put under the wrong sentences. This often makes students feel cramped or even lose interest in writing. So the red line should be avoided in the process of correcting. The single or overall score should also be avoided for the reason that it will destroy students' confidence and make them anxious in writing. In the interview some students said they preferred obtaining positive comments and teachers' encouragement, which could make them have more motivation to conduct writing. Therefore the encouragement and the positive opinions should be offered increasingly.

In addition, in the process of writing teaching, peer feedback activities can be carried out to enable students to experience the identity of readers, to think about the rationality of articles from the perspective of readers, and to exchange their own feelings after reading articles as readers. This way of raising audience awareness is easier for students to accept. Through peer evaluations, students can understand the needs of readers and realize the role of audience awareness. Teachers can arrange a revising activity in which teachers make the students check their articles each other. The list can be designed as follows:

1. What is the thesis statement of this article?
2. Is the thesis statement clear in the article?
3. Who do you think the article is written for?
4. Is the person consistent in this article?
5. Is the article logic?
6. Which part of the article is unclear?
7. How do you think the article should be modified?

These questions can not only help students correct the articles, but also provide the standard to conduct their articles. The activity makes them understand that the evaluation is actually cooperative activity. The peer feedback can make the students obtain the sense of audience and stimulate their interest in writing. In a word, whether the feedback come from teachers or peers, students can get many benefits. During the process of creating their works, feedback can help students adjust the articles to the taste of readers. This is the reason why feedback is so crucial in writing.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Audience awareness refers to the writers set reading object in the writing process, try to revise their composition from the angle of the readers, and adjust the writing consciousness to the needs of readers. It has three functions in English writing which are tuning function, choice function, and nurturing function. These three functions help student choose the appropriate tone, forms and style of writing and foster their sense of audience.

When applying the strategies, some problems must be taken into account, such as student's writing ability, or else. Audience awareness can be effectively implemented only after the students are not troubled by grammar, vocabularies, and sentences, etc. Therefore, the methods proposed in this thesis are for the students whose writing ability reached a higher level. In the English writing class, different methods can be used, namely, the reader's awareness should be emphasized; the theme of the article needs to be much closer to life; students are supposed to create imaginary readers in writing; the method of readers' feedback should be fully utilized. The use of these strategies will effectively help college students cultivate audience awareness in English writing.

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# The Impact of Focused Mini Grammar Lessons on Iranian EFL Learners' Most Frequent Grammatical Errors in Writing

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**Abstract**—Corrective feedback (CF) is still a controversial issue among researchers. The present study took a new approach and investigated the effect of CF in the form of focused mini-grammar lessons with self-study materials in a group of 24 Iranian EFL learners at an Iranian language institute. The learners were randomly assigned into experimental and control groups; each class consisting of 12 male intermediate students aged between 14 and 17 years participated in the study for two and a half months. All the participants produced 200-250 word writing samples in three pre-tests on pre-determined topics based on which their three most recurring grammatical errors were identified. Next, the learners in the experimental group received nine sessions of the treatment on their faulty structures. Both groups took part in three post-tests, and wrote on the same topics the results of which were assessed by two raters. Descriptive statistics revealed improvement of the experimental group; also inferential analysis of the data indicated significant progress resulting from CF contrary to some opposing suggestions in the literature.

**Index Terms**—writing, error, most frequent errors, focused mini-grammar lessons, corrective feedback

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the modern world, more and more people are in desperate need of communication via written texts for a variety of purposes. Canale and Swain (1980) stated that learners need to have good knowledge of syntax and semantics of the language to be able to write efficiently. Writing in a foreign language (L2) is a productive skill which serves as a part of learners' communicative competence (Ferris, 2010). Errors are distracting in some settings which add to the importance of writing accurately and how EFL/ESL teachers correct their students' written grammatical errors, which have been an issue of controversy among researchers, practitioners, and teachers (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009; Ferris, 2011). Given the fact that providing feedback on the students' written work is time-consuming and tedious, writing tends to be one of the most neglected language skills.

Despite the number of studies on the effectiveness of CF, there is still no unanimous result on the issue. Majority of the studies have examined the effect of written corrective feedback (WCF); however, little is known about the effect of other strategies (Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Sheen, 2007; Sheen, Wright, & Moldawa, 2009; Chandler, 2003). Moreover, conflicting findings have been presented in different areas such as feedback focus and strategy (Ashwell, 2000; Bitchener, 2008; Bitchener et al., 2005; Chandler, 2003; Ferris & Roberts, 2001) which per se may add to the predicament. Most of the studies concentrated on the effect of unfocused approach (Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima, 2008) and a few studies that adopted focused approach selected the categories based on the findings of previous research (Bitchener et al., 2005; Ellis et al., 2008; Sheen, 2007). Studies in which a group of students' most frequent written grammatical errors are spotted first and appropriate CF is provided accordingly are rather scarce.

The unique EFL context of Iran in which students seem to be rarely exposed to a great deal of English makes language learners prone to problems in their writing ability, and it is often the last skill which is attended to in the Iranian EFL classes due to time restraints. As such, the most common method of providing CF on Iranian EFL learners' writing is rather traditional in which the scripts are corrected by the teacher at home through writing the accurate form of the learners' faulty structures. The question remains as what happens when the students are given back their corrected papers? Do students understand their teacher's comments and how many ask the reason(s) behind the corrections? It is very highly probable that the same errors reoccur in their next writing unless they are provided with the appropriate CF. Regarding the issues mentioned and due to the scarcity of these types of studies, this study intends



to take a new turn and explores the effect of a relatively new strategy of CF other than WCF in the form of focused mini-grammar lessons and additional self-study materials on a group of Iranian intermediate EFL learners' most frequent written grammatical errors.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The sheer number of studies in the literature illustrates the vital role of CF in EFL writing; however, most of the studies have examined the impact of WCF on the learners' writing accuracy and other strategies of CF have almost been ignored. Bitchener and Knoch (2008) have defined direct CF as a common strategy of providing CF by the teacher in the form of writing the correct form of the linguistic structure, and crossing out or inserting unnecessary/wrong words/phrases where needed. Conversely, the teacher draws students' attention to their errors without correcting them in the case of indirect CF by employing various strategies such as underlining, circling, highlighting, and using codes (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). Studies on the effect of focused versus unfocused CF have also been conducted in which teachers provide feedback on all the errors committed by students in the unfocused CF, whereas selected structures are treated in the focused CF. The literature lacks sufficient number of studies on the focused CF (Ellis, 2009); therefore, the present study took a focused approach aiming to fill this gap.

### A. *Effectiveness of Corrective Feedback: A Heated Debate*

After Truscott's (1996) challenging article "The case against grammar correction in L2 writing classes", claiming grammar correction in L2 classes is ineffective, harmful, and should be abandoned, researchers attention has been drawn to the useful feedback forms (Ferris, 1999, 2004; Truscott, 1999). Ferris (1999) pointed out two weaknesses in Truscott's argument stating that Truscott's (1996) definition of "grammar correction" is rather opaque; she further states serious flaws in Truscott's previous reviews including incomparability of the subjects in different studies, variety of research paradigms and teaching strategies, and overemphasizing negative evidence while underemphasizing the positive research evidence.

### B. *Empirical Findings on the Effectiveness of WCF*

Marzban and Arabahmadi (2013) showed improvement in the EFL learners' overall writing ability through WCF. Maleki and Eslami (2013) investigated the impact of WCF on EFL students' writing samples focused on simple past tense and showed outperformance of direct and indirect treatment groups. Likewise, Amiramini, Ghanbari, and Shamsoddini (2015) concluded that students' overall writing ability increased as a result of the feedback. Several researchers applied indirect WCF (coded, uncoded) and reported their positive effects (Ahmadi, Maftoon, & Gholami Mehrdad, 2012; Ashwell, 2000; Chandler, 2003; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Jamalinesari, Rahimi, Gowhary, & Azizifar, 2014; Sadat, Zarifi, Sadat, & Malekzadeh, 2015) while others found no difference between the two types (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008; and Robb, Ross, & Shortreed, 1986). However, findings of other studies were in favor of direct CF (Ellis, Loewen, & Erlam, 2006; Sheen, 2007). Superiority of focused CF was proved by studies such as (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009; Sheen et al., 2009). Ebadi (2014) investigated the effects of focused metalinguistic error feedback on grammatical accuracy of writing and showed a considerable progress in the writing accuracy of the experimental group. On the contrary, Ellis et al. (2008) found no significant difference between the two approaches. Dabaghi Varnosfadrani and Basturkmen (2009) compared the effect of explicit and implicit CF and revealed the advantage of explicit CF with metalinguistic explanation in raising the students' grammatical awareness. Livingston, Toce, Casey, Montoya, Hart, & O'Flaherty (2018) in their study compared the effectiveness of instructional approach called X-grammar with traditionally taught grammar on the use of sentence patterns and verb constructs and reported the effectiveness of the instructional approach.

It seems to be clear is that feedback is an essential part of any instructional program, and its role in teaching writing to EFL learners is unquestionably important as it was proven by the number of studies reviewed in the literature. In recent years, there have been a growing number of studies on different kinds of CF and their effects on students' writing; however, most of the studies have been done on WCF. Some studies indicated the superiority of indirect CF while a few studies showed the effectiveness of direct CF; a number of studies showed the usefulness of focused over unfocused CF. Also, WCF with explicit corrective comments on the students' writing was recognized effective by most studies, but since it is time-consuming and laborious, not many studies have been conducted taking this approach; the results are far from conclusive. As a result, more studies on a variety of CF strategies are required. Ferris (2011) in her book "Treatment of error in second language student writing" stated that focused grammar instruction in the form of brief mini-lessons is a vital part of the treatment of errors in L2 writing classes. She further added additional self-study materials containing extra exercises could really help the students improve their writing accuracy. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, there is a scarcity of this kind of studies in the body of literature; hence the present study intends to enrich the body of the literature filling this gap.

### **Empirical Findings on the Effectiveness of Combinations of CF Strategies**

Bitchener et al. (2005) compared three kinds of CF (1) direct, explicit WCF, and student-researcher five-minute individual conferences; (2) direct, explicit WCF only; and (3) no CF on prepositions, past tense, and definite article and reported adding oral metalinguistic explanation is effective in reducing learners' written errors. Bitchener (2008)

examined the effect of direct error correction using written metalinguistic explanation, direct CF, and no CF and found out outperformance of the group that received first and second types of CF. Similarly, Bitchener and Knoch (2009) treated four groups of ESL learners on the use of two English indefinite articles through direct CF, written and oral metalinguistic explanation, direct CF and written metalinguistic explanation, direct CF only, and the control group with no treatment. The treatment groups surpassed the control group, though no significant difference was noticed between the treatments. Bitchener and Knoch (2010) investigated the possible effect of different kinds of CF on L2 learners. The learner groups received written metalinguistic explanation, CF in the form of circling the errors, metalinguistic feedback, and oral form-focused instruction. The two groups that received direct error treatment outperformed the other. Bitchener and Knoch (2010) also reported positive findings when they compared the effect of direct CF plus extra explanation with that of direct CF plus metalinguistic explanation which supported Bitchener, Young, & Cameron's findings (2005). Rassaei and Moinzadeh (2011) also found that CF with metalinguistic explanations improved the accuracy of the students' writing. Shafiee Sarvestani and Pishkar (2016) did an experiment on the accurate use of English definite and indefinite articles among three groups of EFL learners. The first experimental group received direct WCF, the second experimental group received indirect WCF, and the control group did not get any CF. Direct WCF found to be more effective. On the other hand, Tang and Liu (2018) investigated and compared the possible effectiveness of indirect coded corrective feedback with short affective comments with indirect coded corrective feedback alone in improving L2 learners' writing performance, uptake, and motivation. Statistical analyses showed improvement in both groups regardless of the feedback type; however, affective comments had positive effect on learners' motivation to improve their writing. In similar vein, Kheradmand Saadi, and Saadat (2015) examined the impact of direct and metalinguistic WCF on EFL learners' grammatical knowledge, and the outcome did not show any significant difference between the two groups. Most studies have focused on WCF and its various types on learners' writing so far. Focused grammar instruction in the form of brief mini-lesson is of utmost importance in treating errors in L2 writing classes (Ferris, 2011). Based on the reviewed literature, there are still many controversies on the subject and we see a gap on the impact of other strategies of CF. To this end, this study aims to investigate the effect of focused mini-grammar lessons with self-study materials as a kind of CF strategy towards learners' most frequent written grammatical errors.

### III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the purpose of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

- (1) What are the most frequent written grammatical errors of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?
- (2) Do focused mini-grammar lessons together with additional self-study materials significantly influence the Iranian EFL learners' most frequent written grammatical errors?

### IV. PARTICIPANTS AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted at a language institute in Gorgan, Iran for one term (two and a half months). Twenty four male intermediate EFL learners aged between 14 and 17 who have been studying English for approximately five to six years at the same institute participated in the study. Two English classes each consisting of 12 participants were held twice a week and the learners' other exposure was limited to their high school English classes. The study adopted a quasi-experimental design and the selection of participants was informed by convenience sampling; one class was randomly selected as the experimental group and received treatment in the form of mini-grammar lessons and additional self-study materials whilst the control group did not receive any treatment.

### V. INSTRUMENTS AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The instrument used in the study was the learners' own writing; as mentioned in section four, 24 participants took part in the study and each produced three writing samples during three pre-tests and post-tests which make the total of 144 scripts. The learners in both experimental and control groups were asked to write on predetermined subjects for three consecutive sessions; the allocated time for doing the task was about an hour. The participants in the experimental group were provided with additional self-study materials that were prepared by the author using grammar books such as "*Oxford practice grammar for intermediate*" and "*Grammar in use for intermediate*". Different parts of these books were selected the learners' most frequent written grammatical errors namely simple past tense, preposition, and subject/verb agreement. Overall, each learner received four copies, three on their faulty structures and one sheet of paper including some of the mostly frequent used English verbs and their simple past tense since the researcher found out they did not know or forgot the simple past tense of some common English verbs.

### VI. PROCEDURE

To find the most frequent written grammatical errors, the learners in both groups were asked to write three 200-250-word writing samples in the pre-test phase during three consecutive sessions. The writing samples were then corrected according to the framework of the study by Bitchener et al. (2005) which consisted of 27 grammatical categories. To make the procedure focused, the treatment was provided on students' three most frequent grammatical errors, viz

simple past tense, prepositions, and subject/verb agreement respectively. The mini-grammar lessons lasted for 30-45 minutes and consisted of explaining the grammatical rules of the learners' faulty structure and providing examples, assessing the learners' understanding through asking questions, and completing exercises on the self-study materials including explanation of the grammatical rules, examples, and extra activities related to the structures. Overall, the experimental group received nine sessions of treatments, three on each faulty structure.

First, the function of the simple past tense was explained on the board, regular/irregular verbs, the use of "did", the related adverbs, and also examples for each were presented. In the other two sessions of the treatment, the structure was reviewed by the help of the learners themselves, and, they also practiced simple past tense of some of the most common English verbs through a competition-like activity. Prepositions were the second most frequent error for which the mini-grammar lessons were designed accordingly. The prepositions were categorized as much as possible on the board and exceptions were also highlighted. The final focus of this experiment was on the agreement between subject and verb; the mini-grammar lessons started by writing subject/personal pronouns on the board and conjugating them with "to be" verbs and have/has in the present and past tense. Then, the focus was on the simple present and the use of "s" for the third person singular. Exercises on the self-study materials for each grammatical error were done and checked during the sessions. Both groups took three post-tests resembling the pre-tests in topics a week after the mini-grammar lesson treatments and their samples were corrected by two raters according to the scoring framework of the study.

## VII. ANALYSIS

Number of errors in each category was calculated as descriptive statistics in Microsoft Excel.2010 through which the three most frequent errors were revealed. Inferential statistics included test of normality, paired samples t-tests, and independent-samples t-tests which were accomplished using STATISTICA 8.0. To ensure against the inter-rater reliability, another experienced EFL teacher corrected the writing samples.

## VIII. RESULTS

Figure 1 presents the percentages of errors in all twenty-seven grammatical categories committed by the learners in the pre-tests. As the figure presents, the learners' three most frequent errors which were selected as subjects of the treatment are as follows: 63.34% on simple past tense, 28.07% on prepositions, and 16.15% on subject/verb agreement respectively.

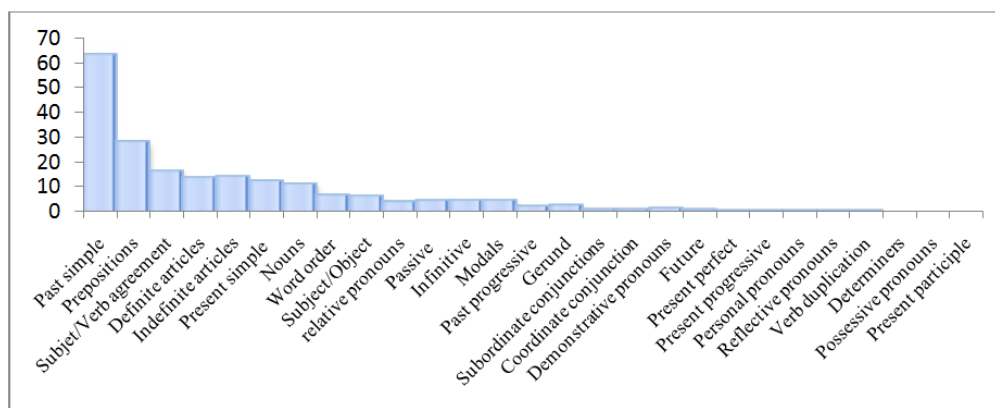


Figure 1. Grammatical errors in pre-tests

Figure 2 (left) depicts the percentages of three most recurring grammatical errors in both groups in pre-tests while Figure 2 (right) displays the percentages of the same categories in post-tests.

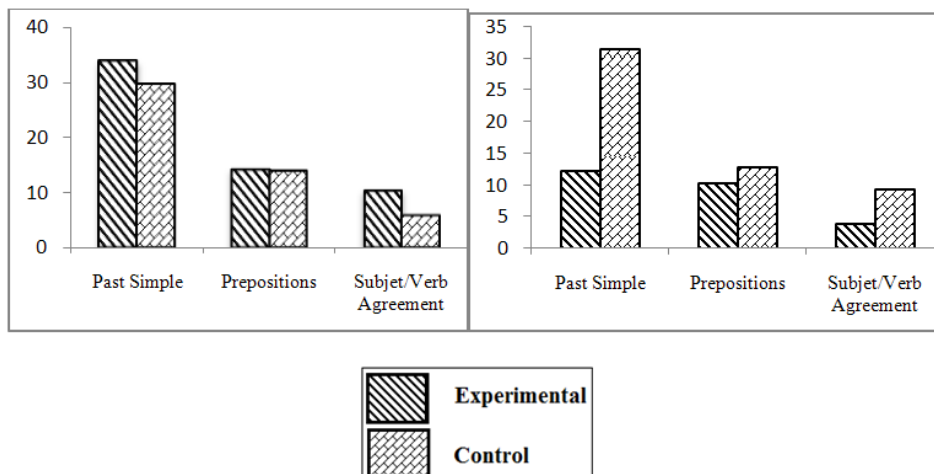


Figure 2. Learners' most frequent grammatical errors in pre-tests (left) and in post-test (right)

As can be inferred from Table 1, the mean of the experimental group in the pre-tests is 23 for the simple past tense, 9.17 for the prepositions, and 6.67 for subject/verb agreement while the standard deviation for the same categories are 13.29, 4.43, and 4.38 respectively.

TABLE 1. SIMPLE PAST, PREPOSITIONS, AND SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT ERRORS, EXPERIMENTAL/PRE-TESTS

	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Simple Past	23	13.29	4	42
Preposition	9.17	4.43	1	16
Subject/Verb Agreement	6.67	4.38	1	17

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality showed that the distribution of the data was normal and homogeneity of the groups was confirmed in the pre-tests. The statistic d for the Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were all below 0.242 at a level 0.05 which proved  $H_0$ , meaning the data was normal.

An independent-samples t-test on the simple past tense errors between control and experimental groups in the pre-tests showed no significant difference in scores. The results for the control and experimental groups are as follows respectively (M = 19.25, SD = 10.41), (M = 23.00, SD = 13.29),  $t(22) = -0.76, p = 0.44 > 0.05$ .

Another independent-samples t-test was conducted on the preposition errors between control and experimental groups in the pre-tests which showed no significant difference between the scores (M = 9.25, SD = 5.41), (M = 9.16, SD = 4.42),  $t(22) = 0.04, p = 0.96 > 0.05$ .

Results of an independent-samples t-test on the errors of subject/verb agreement between control and experimental groups in the pre-test again revealed no significant difference between the two groups (M = 3.83, SD = 2.97), (M = 6.66, SD = 4.37),  $t(22) = -1.85, p = 0.07 > 0.05$ .

However, Table 2 displays the mean of the experimental group in the post-tests that decreased to 5.75 for the simple past tense, 4.33 for the prepositions, and 1.67 for subject/verb agreement while the standard deviation for the same categories are 2.67, 1.72, and 1.37 respectively. This reduction of the mean scores in experimental group in post-tests concerning the three grammatical categories under the study proves improvement in the experimental group after being provided with CF in the form of mini-lessons and self-study materials indicating the effectiveness of the treatment.

TABLE 2. SIMPLE PAST, PREPOSITIONS, AND SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT ERRORS, EXPERIMENTAL/POST-TESTS

	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Simple Past	5.75	2.67	3	12
Preposition	4.33	1.72	3	9
Subject/Verb Agreement	1.67	1.37	0	4

As can be seen from Table 3, the difference between the two groups for the simple past has been significant at a level 0.05 indicating the improvement of the experimental group after receiving the treatment.

TABLE 3. INDEPENDENT-SAMPLES T-TEST, COMPARISON OF SIMPLE PAST TENSE ERRORS IN POST-TESTS, CONTROL/EXPERIMENTAL

Mean Control	Mean Experimental	t-Value	df	P	Std.Dev. Control	Std.Dev. Experimental	F-ratio Variances	P Variances
28.66	5.75	4.56	22	0.00	17.17	2.66	41.46	0.00

Table 4. displays the difference between the two groups regarding the preposition to be significant at a level 0.05 indicating the progress of the experimental group after being exposed to the treatment.

TABLE 4.

INDEPENDENT-SAMPLES T-TEST, COMPARISON OF PREPOSITION ERRORS IN POST-TESTS, CONTROL/EXPERIMENTAL								
Mean Control	Mean Experimental	t-Value	df	P	Std.Dev. Control	Std.Dev. Experimental	F-ratio Variances	P Variances
11.08	4.33	5.25	22	0.00	4.10	1.72	5.66	0.00

As can be inferred from Table 5, the difference between the two groups for this error category has also been significant at  $\alpha$  level 0.05 indicating once again the improvement of the experimental group and the effectiveness of the treatment.

TABLE 5.

INDEPENDENT-SAMPLES T-TEST, COMPARISON OF SUBJECT/VERB AGREEMENT ERRORS IN POST-TESTS, CONTROL/EXPERIMENTAL								
Mean Control	Mean Experimental	t-Value	df	P	Std.Dev. Control	Std.Dev. Experimental	F-ratio Variances	P Variances
8.08	1.66	4.90	22	0.00	4.31	1.37	9.91	0.00

## IX. DISCUSSION

Descriptive analyses of the data indicated an improvement in all three error categories namely, simple past tense, prepositions, and subject/verb agreement after the mini-grammar lesson treatments along with self-study materials in the post-tests. Likewise, inferential analyses proved the difference to be significant between pre-tests and post-tests in the experimental group demonstrating the effectiveness of this relatively new strategy of CF. Errors in simple past tense were reduced from 33.77% to 12.28%, in prepositions went down from 14.16% to 10.30%, and there was a reduction in the errors of subject/verb agreement from 10.39% to 3.96%. We showed that the learners' errors regarding simple past tense and subject/verb agreement (treatable errors) were improved more than in prepositions (untreatable errors). Also, the results of this study indicate that errors of prepositions are not completely untreatable. Overall, the findings of the present study provide clear evidence in support of teacher CF and are in line with the results of studies conducted by EFL/ESL researchers in the field of writing such as Bitchener (2008), Ferris and Roberts (2001), Bitchener et al. (2005), Chandler (2003), Ellis et al. (2008), Ashwell (2000), Bitchener and Knoch (2009), Bitchener and Knoch (2010), and Ferris (2004). However, these results are contrary to those studies that state CF has little or no effect on learners' writing (Robb et al., 1986; Tang & Liu 2018). The findings of this study may counter Truscott' (1996) claim that WCF is ineffective, harmful, and should be abandoned. The finding of the present study could be an answer to Truscott (2007) who stated that learners do not pay attention to teachers' WCF; if learners tend to ignore teachers' WCF; the teachers could adopt other types of CF as this study did. As such, we challenge the claim that if WCF does not work, other forms of CF will not either.

Regarding the Iranian EFL context, several studies have been conducted on the topic of CF, most of which on WCF and its various forms. Not many studies investigated the effect of focused mini-grammar lessons, so the present approach is almost novel in the Iranian EFL context. Many studies in the reviewed literature reported results in favor of CF which are in line with the findings of the current study. Some recent examples are: Ebadi (2014), Jamalinesari, et al. (2014), Amiramini, Ghanbari, and Shamsoddini (2015), Kheradmand Saadi and Saadat (2015), Sadat, Zarifi, Sadat, and Malekzadeh (2015), Shafiee Sarvestani and Pishkar (2016).

## X. CONCLUSION, LIMITATION, PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTION

This study enriched the body of existing literature in the field of CF by introducing a relatively new strategy other than WCF on a group of Iranian EFL learners' most frequent written grammatical errors. Findings of the current study are in support of CF as the learners' errors in the experimental group were improved significantly in all the three grammatical categories. By providing this type of CF, teachers can concentrate on the learners' erroneous structures and avoid overloading students with unnecessary information on a comprehensive range of errors or waste their time on the structures that the learners have already mastered. A large population of EFL learners who do not often pay attention to their teacher's WCF can specially benefit from this kind of error treatment, and learners can assess their own progress instantly. This type of error treatment could be a part of any writing instruction as it can raise learners' consciousness on the grammatical structure they use. To conclude, CF was not proved to be ineffective and harmful in the present study and we believe it should not be abandoned in L2 writing classes until the opposite is proved by more studies on the issue.

Since the study was conducted at an English institute for a term, the long term effects of the treatments remain to be explored. Besides, this experiment only examined the effect of treatment on a small population of male intermediate EFL learners who did not have contact with English except at high school, thus, generalization of the results should be confined to these limitations. A number of pedagogical implications can be offered. The main stakeholders could become more cognizant regarding the variety and frequency of Iranian EFL learners' grammatical errors. These findings can open the door for new research on the subject for EFL/ESL teachers, researchers, and writing instructors. Future research could be conducted taking the same CF strategy in larger population and also in female population.

Mini-grammar lessons could be applied to different language skills and components and the results could be explored towards directing teaching methods and materials.

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# Research on Business English Listening and Speaking Based on Multimodal Discourse Theory\*

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**Abstract**—It is an undeniable fact that the world emerges as a global community with all the countries competing and collaborating with one another. This world calls for graduates from the universities equipped with abilities to communicate with people from different countries to push forward the development of all aspects. Business English Listening and Speaking course should help students, not just English majors but also students of other specialties to better adapt to their future work by providing them with necessary knowledge of business etiquette, cultural differences, speaking manners and the like so that they can be more confidently engaged in their work. Studies on business English and on multimodal discourse are not lacking today, but very few of them have adopted this theory in the Business English Listening and Speaking course. This paper aims to analyze the different modalities in this type of classroom and how these modalities combined can improve the effectiveness of students' learning. Hopefully this paper will give some lights on future related studies.

**Index Terms**—Business English Listening and Speaking, modality, multimodal discourse

## I. INTRODUCTION

People from all parts of the world are connected as a result of globalization which as Cameron sees is “*the ongoing integration of the world economy.*” (Larry A., 2012, p.03-05). Business events are reported on radios, TVs and newspapers. Business people are traveling around the world every minute of the hour. No matter what line of work you are in, you are bound to encounter some problems in business communication, especially when you are communicating in a language other than your mother tongue. Therefore, today sees a growing number of students and working adults sign up for training courses in business English and a lot of universities and colleges have also opened Business English courses which are optional for students. These people wish to seize the opportunity when it comes and get prepared. However, it is found that many students complain that the Business English courses they have in schools only give them some theories and without practice, they can not really get the essence of the message. Actually, Business English Listening and Speaking classes can provide such an environment where students can to some extent practice those theories at school before they carry on any business communication once they step foot into society. However, the real situation is the other way around. This research is necessary in that it tries to find the problems existing in the current course and explore better ways to help students practice what they have learned and not feel like a novice when they need to communicate across cultures. This paper is based on the study of the students in Southwestern Petroleum University.

## II. BUSINESS ENGLISH LISTENING AND SPEAKING COURSE

This course is opened in many universities in China, previously for English majors only, but now available for a wider group of students. It is usually an optional course in university comprehensive English curriculum. One of its main tasks is to enhance language skills in application especially in international business field. The students are expected to learn basics on how to make a proper self introduction, understand the job description and responsibilities, answer and make calls, make introduction of one's company and its products, make greetings, hold meetings and go on business travel and visits. Attention is paid to practice in different business activities and students are supposed to understand and get familiar with certain trade processes and terms during the course.

### A. Requirements for the Teachers and Students

The teachers for this course should first of all study in Business English or have obtained degrees in related fields, for example, international trade, business English, etc. They also should have worked as business people, or have studied many business cases themselves, or else they would just be teaching from the books, which is not beneficial for the students. Secondly, they ought to master the international trade practices and rules, understand the jargon, and know the

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different business cultures and customs. It is preferable if the teacher has acquired certain certificates in business English or interpreting, the skills and methods of which may prove to be useful in teaching.

For the students, it is suggested that this course is better for those students who have at least passed college English test Band Four, for the reason that business English courses in speaking and listening are more demanding in that students should at least have no problem in understanding speeches in English and be able to convey their ideas correctly. It is impossible to expect a student to host or be an interpreter at a business meeting when he or she can not even understand everyday English. Secondly, it is all the better that the students have already learned some basic knowledge in international trade, and understand certain concepts or words such as trade volume, FOB, settlement, and acceptance in financial sense. Otherwise, they can hardly survive the course.

#### B. *Current Business English Listening and Speaking Class and Its Problems*

The current course includes 32 class sessions in one semester, and a text book is required to go with this course, focusing on the basic and necessary business knowledge. Classes are held in the language labs once a week. Yet, the actual sessions can not live up to expectations, neither the teacher nor the students are quite satisfied with the results. There still exist many a questions. It is said that little difference can be found between the Business English Listening and Speaking classes and other listening and speaking classes, except that in the first class, some ideas or concepts of business will be imparted which the students barely get a chance to practice.

As its name suggests, this course intends to fulfill certain important goals as mentioned before, and one of which, also the most basic one, is to help students learn to carry out intercultural communication in a business setting. *“Doing business internationally means that you will come into increasing contact with individuals who speak different languages and live in different cultures. Even the most simple form of communication will become a challenge...Merely knowing the language, though, is still not enough to be able to effectively communicate. You must have some understanding of thought patterns, values, societal norms and of how individuals from different cultures process information to be an effective communicator.”*(Charles Mitchel, 2008, p.67-76) After the semester, according to the feedback from the students, it remains difficult for them to carry on conversations with foreigners in business occasion due to lack of practice. Secondly, some students find the text boring and they spend little time going over what they have learned in class, saying that since it seems quite easy to just answer and make calls, they don't need spend time reviewing. What's more, when it comes to terms and jargon, most of the students can not remember what that word means after a few days. Thirdly, spending nearly two hours in the language lab doing listening and speaking on the headphones, and finishing exercises on the text is not so fascinating for most of the students, and some of them start fidgeting. Fourthly, some teachers want to make the most use of the time so that they just sit in front of their computers playing listening materials or asking some questions that for most occasions meet few answers from the students. Last but not the least, when the students are invited to do some oral practice, they feel embarrassed or indifferent to the participation.

This class is supposed to be informative and fun instead of being dry, so changes need to happen to make this course come alive. By analyzing the influential elements in the class, hopefully, some improvements can be made.

### III. MULTIMODALITY IN THE CLASSROOM

In this part, the definition of certain concepts will be explained to help us further understand the following design of class arrangements.

#### A. *Definition of Modality, Multimodality and Multimodal Discourse Analysis*

##### 1. Modality

Wei qinhong mentions in her book that in linguistics Halliday says that *“modality refers to the area of meaning that lies between yes and no-the intermediate ground between positive and nagative polarity...”* *“...in visual communication, the concept of modality is also very important because visuals can represent people, places and things.”*(Wei Qinhong, 2009, p.48-52 My translation) Also, in social communication, there is more than one modality or mode coexisting around us, for example, language, music, image, the internet and so on. Combined they help us better interpret meanings. Take a commercial as an example, usually on TV, we can see moving pictures, hear background music and maybe do some TV program interaction.

##### 2. Multimodality

*“Multimodality is the study of interrelationships and interdependence between different communicative modes, no matter they are written or oral, visual or auditory. It is also a way to transcribe the meaning of discourse composed of different semiotic modes.”*(Wei Qinhong, 2009, p.2-3) Therefore, an advertisement is multimodal, and a picture alone can also be called so since it has figures, colors and maybe words on it. They combined convey the exact meaning of the message. The relations of different modes are yet to be further explored, and new media has created new modes with the development of modern science and technology. This paper is to discuss some effective combinations of modes in the teaching process to improve learning.

##### 3. Multimodal discourse analysis

Just as been said above, new media has created new ways of combination of different words, it is necessary for us to

understand the hidden meaning of certain messages. “*Multimodal discourse refers to the new forms of text in which words, typography, sound pictures and other semiotic resources are woven together to make meaning. Multimodal discourse analysis is the analysis of several or all of the different semiotic modes in a text or communicative event. The aim of multimodal analysis is to integrate and correlate the representational, interactive and textual meanings realized by these different elements. It analyzes how they work together to create a unified text or communicative event.*” (Wei Qinhong, 2009, p.7-10) You can not get the floor price of the product by simply reading an offer without engagement, or even when you are sitting across the negotiation table, you can not guess the real intention of your business partner without reading his body language, finding subtlety in his words or tones. All the modes have to be analyzed when combined.

### B. Multimodality in the Classroom

In the Business English Listening and Speaking class, the teaching should be an effective cooperation among different modes. “*From the perspective of multimodality, the teaching carried out in the classroom involves a coordination of diverse modes. The first one is oral mode, it is embodied in the conversations and communication between the teacher and the students; the second one is presented in PPT slides, including pictures, words, videos and sounds; the third one is in-class activities between the teacher and the students; the fourth, the gestures and body languages, the fifth, the facial expression of the teacher and the sixth is the setting and space arrangements of the classroom.*” (Jiang Yufeng, 2015, p.64-76 My translation) The previous classes are characterized by simple listening and speaking practices, mostly using the blackboard and a computer to play the listening materials.

### C. Changes of Class Arrangements Based on Multimodal Discourse Theory

To reform the teaching mode of this course, several changes are made to make up for the inadequate modality, making the course more attractive, educational, vivid, impressive and effective for the students.

#### 1. Specification of class sections

Unlike the previous class session characterized by listening and speaking according to the exercises in the textbook, the revised one will be divided into several sections, featured by multimodality, each with its specific purpose of learning business English.

##### a. Student report

The students are divided into groups since the first class and every group is assigned with a report with regard to the relevant unit that is to be covered in the course. A short teaching video will be provided to the whole class before the unit begins, and the assigned group will do a report on the main points they deem as important. In this report section, students are allowed to use words, microphones, pictures to help them present their idea, through which they can make their performance more understandable to the class. It is found that when it comes to the presentation of the students, more than one modality are preferable. Because students differ in their abilities to convey their thoughts and ideas, thus making their speech unavailable for some of the audience. With the help of pictures and words, they can perform a better presentation.

##### b. Business English learning

In this section, the students will be given the useful words and expressions for this class, and it is to lay ground for later speaking and listening practices. The teacher will show all the related and important glossary to the students and which they are asked to remember before the class. Words and expressions will be divided by classification, for example, applying for a job, employee orientation, job description, telephoning, hotel room reservation, etc.. All these categories are of great help when they step into work after graduation.

##### c. Listening and speaking practice

This section will give the student a “real situation”, the teacher will guide the students to practice speaking and listening. The teaching materials will not come from the textbook only, and teachers and the students all will bring to the class relevant information to talk about or discuss. The classroom can be turned into a negotiation room for a business meeting where people conclude a deal, or into a press room for product promotion, a company where interviews are carried out and sometimes, into an airport where greetings are exchanged between guests and colleagues.

##### d. Self and peer review

The review part is actually a new section for the course. *Peer review is the evaluation of work by one or more people of similar competence to the producers of the work (peers). It constitutes a form of self-regulation by qualified members of a profession within the relevant field. Peer review methods are employed to maintain standards of quality, improve performance, and provide credibility.* (accessed 04/03/2018 from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer\\_review](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer_review)) Before the class is over, the teachers will comment on the students’ performance and summarize the key points learned this class and ask the students to comment on themselves and each other about what they have learned, what progress they have made and what kind of mistakes they have done that can be avoided in the future. Liu Xiuli, Zhang Delu and Zhang yibo mention that “*the charisma and principles of the teacher will unconsciously influence the students and will impact on the effective teaching. .... the charisma and principles of the teacher should be expressed through multimodal discourse, which include the passionate teaching, interesting and funny talk and smile, considerate and warm care.....teacher should capture the students’ strengths with love.....teachers’ multimodal discourse can make them feel happy and confident.....so the students can learn new knowledge in a relaxing and harmonious atmosphere which can*

*improve the teaching effectiveness*". (Liu Xiuli, Zhang delu and Zhang yibo, 2013, p.3-7 My translation) Therefore, during the review, the students can find love, care and encouragement from the teacher, getting advice from their classmates, thus willing to take advice and improve their work.

## 2. Other multimodal changes

More than one modality are needed for some classroom activities according to different requirements of the exercises. In this part, two major multimodal changes in the speaking and listening section will be explained.

### a. Culture immersion

*Language immersion, or simply immersion, is a technique used in bilingual language education in which two languages are used for instruction in a variety of topics, including math, science, or social studies.*(accessed 11/12/2017 from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language\\_immersion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language_immersion)) Culture learning can also happen in the same way. As the words suggest, the students will become part of a different culture. As has been said before, successful business people need to know different cultures of the people they are dealing with. In this new course, the teachers will not simply ask the students to speak according to the requirements of the exercises on the textbook, instead, cultural assimilation is a hard nut to crack first. For example, the students need to learn what kind of gift to bring to an American home, and how people in the Arabian country and those in Germany deal with body distance and eye contact. Those are the things that can easily cause cultural conflict. Therefore, the teachers will have a lot of work to do before the class, gathering useful information. For a specific cultural situation, culture immersion is better achieved when the teacher provide a video tape to the whole class to watch instead of handling out some printed materials for the students to read. *"In a real conversational situation, the facial expression, gestures, eye contact, physical distance and so on can provide informative load of background. For the learners, these visible clues are more likely to trigger relevant knowledge in your brain, thus making senses to the students through the interaction of the listening materials and the background information. To add visual factor to the teaching of listening and speaking can help us get rid of the conventional teaching method which emphasizes words and lacks real-time communication and gradually transform into a context where teaching is interactive and listening skills and listening comprehensibility are equally valued."*(Ma Hailong, 2010, p.I-II My translation) In this way, the students get to see the subtle differences of people coming from diverse cultural backgrounds in terms of their facial expressions, body language, etiquette, native ways of expressing the same ideas. Not only do the students get a more direct contact with the people abroad in a two-dimensional way, but also their senses are all aroused to work out the charm of learning actively. In contrast to the one modality of reading only, it is observed that the students can do a better job at retelling what they have learned from the materials. Multimodalities here with the sound, images, moving gestures can give the student a more comprehensive way of peeping into another culture and live in it for the section.

### b. Role-playing

This is based on the functional approach. *In second language acquisition (SLA) functional approaches are of similarities with Chomsky's Universal Grammar (UG). Focus is on the use of language in real situations (performance), as well as underlying knowledge (competence).* (accessed 12/05/2018 from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Functional\\_approach](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Functional_approach)) Once the students have mastered the needed knowledge including the glossary and the culture, they are supposed to begin the listening and speaking part. The teacher should make good preparations and create a communication situation as close to reality as possible. It has been noticed that students can find it easier to understand the speaker and the whole context of the listening material in a "real situation". The combination of words and sound is the second step to help students take in the things they have learned. To further push the knowledge assimilation process, they are asked to play out the conversation. Therefore, the third step, after the model conversation is played to the students, they are assigned with different roles from the conversation and are allowed ten minutes to prepare. It is required that they should use the key expressions from the conversation and show full understanding of the emotions of different characters embodied in the conversation. Both for the students who are acting out the conversation and for those who are the audience, they have again relived the situation. They are part of it, and are impressed.

## IV. CONCLUSION

After the semester, the students' academic performance, their final scores and their opinions about the course are taken into consideration and evaluated. Compared with those of the previous year, it is found that in the Business English Listening and Speaking course, the effective learning can be better achieved by designing multimodal elements in the classroom arrangements, making the students interested in the things they learn. Graphics, sounds, images, body languages, numbers, printed papers and other modes, when combined in a genuine way can actually make our classes brand new.

However, it is not to say that we have to adopt all the different modalities in every one of our class sections, a major modality should be set. This paper does not talk about the situations where single modality is adopted, but focuses on the cases where a combination of modalities is needed. For things like specific terms, for instance, it is advised that students can familiarize themselves with the words when they are written out on the blackboard, shown on the PPT slides or simply printed in the book. Here the major modality is visual. The teachers have to design and find the best combination of those modalities to facilitate the learning. And this detailed work is for further study. Hopefully, this

paper can be of some help to teachers who are teaching similar courses.

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# A Study on the Differences in Middle School English Pronunciation Teaching in Underdeveloped and Developed Areas in China and Their Impact

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**Abstract**—Spoken English is one of the most important parts in English learning. And the footstone of Spoken English is pronunciation, which should have taken pride of educational place in the courses of secondary education anywhere. Differences of pronunciation teaching in middle school exist in the English pronunciation teaching between underdeveloped areas and developed areas, which effects students' further English study. By the methods of interviewing and questionnaire, this paper makes a comparison of current situation of English teaching in middle schools from underdeveloped areas and developed areas in China. This thesis analyzes the causes of differences from teaching idea, teaching contents and teaching faculty, and the impact on the students from students' listening and speaking abilities in the university. Finally, the author presents some constructive suggestions.

**Index Terms**—pronunciation teaching, difference, middle school, underdeveloped areas and developed areas

## I. INTRODUCTION

English is one of the common languages in the world today and it is also one of the most widely used languages today. Our country puts much importance on the English learning all the time. Due to the importance and wide using of English, English courses have been held from primary school to the middle school. Although progress has been made in teaching skills, as far as the actual situation is concerned, these so-called English talents are able to read or write well, but can't speak or understand listening correctly, which is awkward and cannot meet the needs of the future employers.

One of the possible causes of this problem is the English pronunciation teaching in the school. In fact, the problem of "stumped" English has been lasting for a long time in China, and pronunciation has not been paid much attention in English teaching so that students can't speak English correctly and listen to it clearly and then they dare not speak English. To find out more about the English pronunciation teaching, the author intends to do a research on this topic.

## II. ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION TEACHING IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Obviously, pronunciation is of great importance in English teaching and learning. Like Pinyin in Chinese, pronunciation rule is the first step to learn English. Sun (2008) argues that English pronunciation has two different forms and its smallest unit is phoneme. Only when students pronounce the phoneme correctly can they pronounce the words correctly and then pay attention to the pronunciation with stress, liaison and so on. Finally they can have a better listening ability of understanding the listening and have a better spelling ability of remembering every words well.

However, despite its importance, pronunciation isn't paid enough attention to in English teaching in China. Previously, oral test was not included in the college-entering examination, therefore, skills for written tests had been over-emphasized in English classes in many places in China for quite a long time. This so-called "examination-oriented education" has such a great impact on English teaching that English pronunciation teaching is still not satisfying. According to Ji(2013), for example, some teachers spend most of the time teaching vocabulary, grammar, and writing, which are considered to be 'more important than pronunciation'; Jiang(2015) some teachers speak English with an accent or even use Chinese as the classroom language; some teachers simply adopt repetition drills to train the students' pronunciation; and some students, Cheng(2012) says that some students have few chances to open their mouths because of a lack of teaching facilities. All these problems weaken the students' ability to utter correct English pronunciation, which further hinders their understanding because they can't figure out other people's pronunciation well. Finally, when students enter the university or the society, Chen(2008) argues that they will find that they can't apply this foreign language which has been learned for many years.

The negative situation mentioned above appears more in underdeveloped areas, compared to the developed areas.

Therefore, the topic of “English pronunciation teaching” is narrowed down, and this paper really aims to study the differences between the English pronunciation teaching in underdeveloped areas and that in developed areas, with Zhejiang Province, China, as an example.

### III. RESEARCH

#### A. *Research Subjects*

The author chooses middle schools in Zhoushan and Ningbo as research subjects. For one thing, these two cities represent respectively the underdeveloped and developed areas in Zhejiang Province. For the other, according to Piaget’s cognitive development theory, the critical period of learning language is adolescence. Unlike pupils, middle school students already have the initial awareness and ability to learn phonetic symbols, and English learning during this period would lay a foundation for their further study. Therefore, middle school students are suitable as research subjects.

Except for that, the author randomly conducts a survey among the students in university from underdeveloped areas and developed areas. The survey in the university covers not only the students from Zhoushan and Ningbo, but also those from other underdeveloped areas and developed areas, which aims to collect more information about this study and make the results more convincing.

#### B. *Research Instruments*

Interviews and questionnaires were adopted in this research. Questionnaires for middle schools students and teachers are about teacher’s teaching idea, the teaching content, teaching facilities and faculty. To make the result more convincing, interviews were also held for more detailed information about those questions. English teachers and the students cooperated well during the interview. As to the questionnaires for the university students, their performance in English class is added. All the questionnaires are anonymous and 200 valid questionnaires were collected in the total 300.

#### C. *Data Analysis and Results of the Research on Pronunciation Teaching in Middle School*

There were 15 English teachers and 40 students in Zhoushan and 15 English teachers and 40 students in Ningbo who cooperated in this research. By these people, the author collected some information in their schools.

As to teaching idea, All the English teachers in Zhoushan believed that they all wanted to train the students to get better and higher scores in the examination. They also taught students to practice listening and writing to develop the English talent. This result was similar to that in Ningbo.

As to the teaching contents, about 87.50% students in Zhoushan told that a number of exercises in grammar and cloze and reading comprehension were involved in their English classes. About 90.00% students from Zhoushan told that they seldom had competitions like speech contests, while 95.00% students from Ningbo told that their teaching contents were about doing exercises of pronunciation and situational communication. Moreover, all the students from Zhoushan said that they had never been to the language lab while nearly all the students from Ningbo said that they had a good language learning environment, because they had an access to the language labs two times a week to practice listening and speaking. Lots of competitions like English speech were also included in their school.

Except for that, difference also exists in the factor of faculties. 86.67% teachers in Zhoushan believed that lots of teachers didn’t want to work in Zhoushan and the threshold had been lower and lower, which led to the fact that lots of English teachers who were not professional enough to teach English courses were recruited. Finally, the unprofessional English pronunciation would affect the teaching quality. While 80.00% teachers in Ningbo thought that they were under great pressure because many people competed with each other for positions of English teachers. Lots of professional and talented English teachers would stand out in this position. Finally, their excellent English pronunciation and professional teaching skills would have good influence on students.

#### D. *English Performance of University Students from Underdeveloped Areas and Developed Areas*

To see whether the pronunciation teaching in the middle school will have an impact on the English learning in the university, questionnaires were also handed out to university students from underdeveloped areas and developed areas. From the data, difference can be seen in their performance in English.

To the question of ‘your English listening level’, 87.50% students from the underdeveloped areas thought that their English listening levels were B or B-. While 58.75% students from developed areas thought that their English listening levels were B or B-. 41.25% students from developed areas believed that their English listening level were A or A-. The statistics show that students from developed areas have a higher evaluation of their English listening ability.

As to their speaking level in university, 77.67% students from underdeveloped areas thought that their levels were B or B-. However, 61.08% students from developed areas thought that their levels were A or A-. The statistics show that students from developed areas have a higher evaluation of their English speaking ability.

To the question ‘how often do you attend English speech contest’, only 5.18% of the students from underdeveloped area thought that they often attend English speech contest in the university, with 70.52% admitting that they had never attended English contest because they thought that their English pronunciation is almost wrong and their speaking was

not very good. While among the students from developed areas, 21.13% students thought that they often attended the English speech contest, and 25.42% students admitted that they had never attended English speech contest.

Besides their self-evaluation and experience of attending speech contests, students' different performance in the English class is another proof of their listening and speaking abilities. In the university, English teachers almost give their lessons in English. Students from underdeveloped areas told that they could seldom follow the teachers' instructions, and that it's very hard for them to communicate with teachers in English. On the contrary, students from developed areas told that they could understand most of what the teachers said, except for some new words and expressions. These students can communicate with teachers in English and make themselves understood. And in the listening class, it is more difficult for students from underdeveloped areas to understand some news reports and articles well than for the students from developed areas, especially when the listening materials are in standard English.

#### IV. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

From the data, it's obvious that the differences of English pronunciation teaching exist between underdeveloped areas and developed areas, and university students from these two kinds of areas do have different performance in English study. This section will have a discussion on these data from two aspects: the reasons for those differences, which can help to make some targeted improvements, and the impact of pronunciation teaching in English learning, which explains the necessity of making a solution.

##### A. *Reasons for the Differences*

###### 1. **The lack of teaching facilities**

Education has a close connection with economy developments. The schools in underdeveloped areas don't have as many advanced facilities as those in the developed areas. They have few language labs, libraries and multimedia teaching equipment. Teachers can only give their lessons with the textbook and a recorder. This kind of teaching facilities cannot keep pace with the times, which has negative impact on teaching skills and attitudes of English pronunciation teaching.

###### 2. **The lack of teachers**

Because of the poor conditions of the underdeveloped areas, most of people don't want to teach there. Cheng(2012) argues that this kind of area can not attract talents, which gives rise to the lack of the teachers in the underdeveloped area. Lots of schools ask teachers in other fields to teach English. Teachers in other fields don't have professional knowledge. Their wrong English pronunciations lead to the poor teaching effect. Students cannot get the professional education of English.

###### 3. **The lack of the language environment**

As we all know, language learning needs an environment which helps learners form a language-learning habit and continuously get the input of language. However, English speaking isn't included in the classes of middle schools in underdeveloped area. Students would speak fluent Chinese and teachers would teach them almost in Chinese as if it were a Chinese lesson. After class, oral homework should have been an important part in language learning which could consolidate students' learning outcomes. But Tang(2017) shows that in middle school most students have little oral homework when they are in middle school as speaking is paid less attention to than other aspects of English learning. In addition, students don't have activities about English speaking which can train their pronunciation and give them a language environment. Therefore, the language environment is sorely lacking.

###### 4. **Unsatisfying quality of teachers**

Lots of teachers in underdeveloped areas lack up-to-date teaching philosophy. They are not good at reforming their teaching methods but use the traditional philosophy to teach students. They emphasize more on memorizing the grammar, sentences and words but overlook the pronunciation and oral communication. Besides, some teachers in underdeveloped area don't have much professional knowledge. They have no standard English pronunciation. Some of them even have a strong Chinese accent, which leave the bad impression on students and dampens students' interests in English speaking. As a result, students can't learn English skills well.

##### B. *Impact on the English Learning of Students*

Students' further English speaking and listening are influenced by their learning of English pronunciation in middle schools. Most of students defined their English pronunciation level as B and B-. They thought that their pronunciations were not perfect, which can be seen in their performances in English classes and activities.

In the university, all the English majors have English pronunciation class. Students from underdeveloped areas find that their pronunciation is different from that of others and is almost wrong. It's usually late and difficult for them to make a fresh start to learn English pronunciation because have less chance to meet with students and teach them some right pronunciations. In addition, students have got used to speaking English in wrong ways for many years, so it is impossible for them to change their pronunciation in a short time.

There is also a close relationship between pronunciation and listening. When students are used to the wrong pronunciation, they won't be sensitive enough to figure out the correct pronunciation. As a result, they may not be able to well apprehend what they hear. Since listening makes up a crucial proportion of important English tests in China,

such as TEM4, CET4, and CET6, these students are even unlikely to pass the tests, which will have a negative effect on their study.

## V. WAYS TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM

The pronunciation in underdeveloped area has a large and distinct difference from that in developed area. Students in developed area has not only more chances to learn and practise English pronunciation but also gets more attention from the schools, teachers and government. But compared to the education in other elements of English like writing, reading and listening, English pronunciation still needs to be improved. Data from questionnaires show a clear and important thing is that a number of students in the university think that English pronunciation is so important, so there is no hesitation for students and teachers pay more attention to the English pronunciation learning. In the developed area, English pronunciation education can not be improved and enhanced at a short time. It needs a process of accumulation. With the reasons for the differences and the impact on further English study being discussed, some measures are put forward in this section to narrow the gap.

### A. Support for the Government

Education improvement is a huge project, which needs lots of helps from government on schools' expenses and advanced facilities for teaching. Only by this way can the education quality in underdeveloped be hopeful.

#### 1. Improving the teaching facilities

Government and education department should increase the investment in the education of underdeveloped area to improve the teaching facilities. English pronunciation teaching also needs advance facilities like language labs. For example, government can build some language labs and equip schools with lots of advanced multimedia teaching facilities. Therefore, students will be able to have the place and facilities to learn English and practice pronunciation.

#### 2. Optimizing faculty

Basically, education is a progress accomplished by the man. No matter how complete the equipment it is, teaching should only be managed by the man. The government should improve the threshold of being an English teacher and optimize allocation of teachers' resources to solve the problem of weak faculty in underdeveloped cities.

Besides raising the threshold of admission for teachers, it is also necessary to optimize teachers. Firstly, government and education department should strengthen publicity to encourage the ambitious youth to fling themselves into the education in underdeveloped cities. With the powerful teaching level, it can be possible to change the situation of English pronunciation teaching. Secondly, government and education department should organize some English pronunciation training courses for English teachers. With the development of the society, the knowledge and teaching methods should be updated like the procedures of the machines to catch up with the pace of our society. Teachers through the training courses can learn lots of new teaching methods and theories, which can improve the teaching efficiency and result. English belongs to the foreign language and it is also international, which needs teachers to anew the knowledge and learn more about it. Li (2017) argues that English teachers can learn some authentic English pronunciation by watching English original movies and listening to English radio in their spare time. Lastly, government and education department can organize some communication between the teacher in underdeveloped area and the teacher in developed area so that teachers can find their shortcomings and learn from each other. Of course, engaging foreign teacher for teaching English is a useful way to improve the English teaching level. Schools don't have enough money to do this, so the government should be obliged to help. And they should know that it will bring a best and satisfying teaching result. Because foreign teachers know much about their own language, they will give the schools more open teaching methods and theories.

### B. Support from the Teachers

#### 1. Changing teaching belief

Except for urging students to remember lots of words and use the correct grammar, teachers should improve the pronunciation and communicate with students in English. They should update their teaching concept and follow the step of time. They must believe that English pronunciation is as important as the English scores. In class, teachers should often do some pronunciation exercises with students and improve their own teaching abilities.

#### 2. Adjust teaching content

In the class, teachers should be the best English speakers and also advisers to encourage students to speak most of time. They can create a language learning atmosphere for students to develop the students' listening and speaking skills imperceptibly, which not only makes students enjoy English speaking but also test students' pronunciation about some useful but easy words. For example, at the beginning of the class, teachers can use 'Let's begin our class', 'Hello, everyone/boys and girls' to communicate with students and check their English pronunciation. And during the class, teachers can use 'Right?' 'Clear?/Understand?' or 'Follow me please' to encourage students to join in this class and open their mouths to pronounce and speak. When class is over, teachers can use 'Goodbye, class' and 'See you the next time' to finish this class. In addition, adding pronunciation practice to the class is a useful way to make students be familiar with the forty-eight international phonetic alphabet and voiced consonant, voiceless consonant, monophthong and diphthong, which makes up a good English pronunciation. After learning the English pronunciation skills, it is



necessary for teachers to hold some contest like speech, presentation and role play to stimulate students to practice their pronunciation and certainly improve the level of the English pronunciation teaching in the underdeveloped area.

### C. Support from the Students

The biggest problem of students to pronounce English words is afraid of making mistakes and being laughed at. Even if they know the rules of English pronunciation, they are too shy to speak out it. And it seems that speaking less don't affect their scores so much. So teachers and families should often encourage them to speak and praise their pronunciation. Sometimes, they can show the advantages of good pronunciation for a person's development. Little by little, Students should be clear about that language should be spoken often and English pronunciation is so important in English study. And they need to remember that if they enter the society, there will be full of communication but not only the written English. Their action should be included the class learning and also the after-class learning. Good English pronunciation needs to be practised more often. If they only do well in their paper homework, the English can only be dumb English. Students may feel pity about what they have done in their secondary school. So it is significant for students to change their study attitude of English learning and promote the English education in the underdeveloped area.

## VI. CONCLUSION

English speaking lies in an important position today. And the most importantly part of it is English pronunciation, which also becomes more and more important. Nowadays, more and more universities attach importance to it. Although today is the time of being accepted equal education, people didn't accept same extent of education. If you are in the developed cities, you needn't worry much about your English pronunciation, but if you are in the underdeveloped cities, you should be shameful of that. China becomes more and more powerful in the world. As for the education, it also should not be left behind. English has become an important part in international communication. Students representing the big country's cultural strength should show a big country's cultural power. When you communicate with the foreigner, it will be a pleasing and proud thing that you can express yourself in good English pronunciation. There is an old and usual saying that is 'students are the flowers of the country'. Any schools in underdeveloped area or in developed area should know that their education will has a big influence on the students and our country. And their industrious cultivation on students can make this country a big different.

We absolutely need some measures to improve the education in underdeveloped areas. Schools and government in underdeveloped area should take some measures actively and think more about student's further development. This paper mainly studies the current situation of English pronunciation teaching of middle schools in developed areas and underdeveloped areas from the aspects of teaching facilities, contents and faculties. After analyzing the reasons for the differences and the impact on students' English learning of listening and speaking in the university, this paper proposes some suggestions from the aspects of government support and teachers' self-changing, in the hope of narrowing down the gap of English pronunciation teaching between developed areas and underdeveloped areas.

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# Measuring the Effectiveness of Using "Memrise" on High School Students' Perceptions of Learning EFL

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**Abstract**—Mobile applications of language learning have the capacity to revolutionize the way languages are learned. This study examined the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) based instruction as a complement to direct instruction for 36 high school students in Iran. Specifically, student perception using direct instruction combined with "Memrise" Mobile-based language learning versus direct language instruction only. The findings of this research suggest that Memrise is an effective method of English language instruction. It is important to note that Memrise is not meant to replace direct language instruction, but its purpose is to serve as an effective supplement to state language instruction.

**Index Terms**—mobile language learning application, MALL, Memrise

## I. INTRODUCTION

A notable number of people are using the mobile phones to learn a foreign language. The digital English language learning products global market, for instance, reached \$1.8 billion in 2013, revenues were predicted to boost up to over \$3.1 billion by 2019 (Adkins, 2008). Applications of language learning like "Memrise" are excessively popular, with over 20 million registered users (Hickey, 2015). The approaches of mobile language learning are obviously required and will carry on growing in use as more people use the smartphones or tablets as a rudimentary computing device.

Many researchers supported studying the effectiveness of second-language acquisition through technology. As mentioned above, a Language learning application that EFL instructors have considered for teaching English-language acquisition is "Memrise", an interactive software application that is advertised to help users naturally learn English in an immersive and personalized environment.

"Memrise" is a language learning application developed by an American company of language technologies which enables users to master a foreign language with their Mobiles without the help of a teacher. The application guarantees for the users they can learn a language much quicker and easier than ever before without having to learn rules of grammar deductively.

The basic characteristics of a mobile or tablet supply the demands for this method, which leads to a failure in standardized instruction because of the limitations experienced in the classroom environment where teachers are neither able to provide a large amount of background, nor can they focus on each individual student with special attention.

The complete course includes more than 5000 photographs as observable background knowledge. Because the meaning of the heard sound can always be understood by the objects in the scenes or pictures, learners don't seem to need any clarifications in their mother tongue. Unlike the standardized language learning system, structures of grammar are not learned methodically and then practiced, but rather it is expected that the learner develops an intuitive understanding of rules during the this method course work. It lets you them information for free in a fun and effective way using spaced repetition technology.

In the language instruction section of the application alone there are courses each of which is divided into levels so it is easier to manage. It is also possible to sort through courses by language or popularity or search for keywords. Each lesson consists of a preview, a tutorial, exercises, and tests. Learners are first confronted with the preview, when using the application.

To grow the vocabulary level Memrise uses a garden as a metaphor for memory. When learning a course is started, the vocabulary items will be planted as 'seeds'. As the learner is tested on them through typing and multiple choice tests, they will be transferred from the 'greenhouse' (short term memory) into the 'garden' (long term memory).

Once an item of vocabulary is in the learner's long term memory, it will need to be watered (tested on) periodically. If he/she gets the answer right in the test, he/she won't need to water it again very soon, and vice versa. Growing and watering items will make a certain number of points each time.

In the most consistently used kind of preparation practice, learners are asked to answer a task including matching visual contexts cues with either spoken or written language or vice versa. In this regard Memrise is different from other standardized language learning softwares, which is typically utilized to complement course instruction and then uses various games and tasks in order to exercise and use those learned material. Moreover, the "correct" or "incorrect" feedback is given immediately in the form of a visual and musical code.

### Features of Gamification

The rise of gamification as a new type of software/application design may be seen as a product of the new user-centered technologies, combining the enhanced 'social' features of Web 2.0 with a game-like experience to further motivate and boost language learning.

As it was defined by Deterding, Dixon, Khaled, and Nacke (2011) characterizing the use of elements of game design in non-game backgrounds and contexts, gamification has been employed variously in fields such as marketing, finance, and health, pioneering only very recently as a new type of strategy for language learning and instruction with the advent of "Memrise" in 2010. The main objective of gamification, as highlighted by Deterding et al. (2011) is to motivate and increase user activity and retention" via a "rewards and reputation system. Learning is thus meant to be fun.

Kerr (2013) predicts a switch from conventional and traditional textbooks and moving toward adaptive and more interactive learning contexts with both of the use of big data and analytics to store details about users and an integration of more gamified aspects.

## II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

MALL Researches have mostly been influenced by development of technology. Elementary applications put some portable audio devices into use like the Sony Walkman or Apple iPod (Godwin-Jones, 2007). Chinnery (2006) pointed out that the early internet-capable devices such as cell-phones and Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) fundamentally used email and web browsers for language learning targets. Pedagogical MALL Research approaches were largely limited to these devices, restricting most applications to one-way content delivery with little peer-to-peer interaction or communication (Kukulska-Hulme& Shield, 2007; Kukulska-Hulme& Shield, 2008).

Coinciding with the emergence of smartphone technology the amount of published MALL studies greatly increased in 2008 (Duman, Orhon, &Gedik, 2015). Users of mobile applications started to make fundamental use of web-based exercises (e.g. Nah, White, Rol, &Sussux, 2008; Stockwell, 2008). Since the level of sophistication of mobile technology applications has grown up, the release of a vast range of language-learning software came into possibility. Among more than a million applications which are available for the users in both the Apple iTunes app store and Google Play, the educational ones comprising 9.95% of this total show a beneficial growth (Statista Inc., 2015). The number of applications of language learning has been roughly calculated to be as high as 1,000 to 2,000 in total (Sweeney & Moore, 2012).

While the advantages of MALL have been acknowledged by educators, some still criticize MALL platforms. Pedagogical qualities, software stabilities, technical difficulties, expertise deficiencies, and multimedia overloads are problems that may be encountered (Wang, 2011). Notwithstanding these challenges, CALL still has potential as an effective means of language instruction.

In spite of the fast growth in numbers of applications, there was also some criticism regarding the MALL researches for a lack of quantifiable learning outcomes and concrete targets. Burston (2015) carried out a meta-analysis of 291 MALL studies done in about 20 years, and discovered only 35 ones had sufficient duration and included a minimum number of subjects. Burston also stated that a lot of them were affected by unacceptable research design due to failure to concentrate on the struggling variables that exist outside of the device itself – the instructor, content, novelty effects , etc.– maybe because of an extremely "technocentric" approach that overemphasizes the role played by technology in the process of learning.

Aside from some deficiencies, there are a lot of positive reports regarding the MALL studies which support the notion that mobile devices are useful learning tools – especially for vocabulary instruction. In the literature review part of Duman, Orhon and Gedik's (2015) of the current research trends in MALL from 69 studies from 2000-2015, "teaching vocabulary" was the most popular topic, taken into account by 28 of those studies. Contrarily, just one of those studies addressed grammar instruction and writing. In the same way, Burston (2015) mentioned that 58% of the 291 MALL studies examined focused on vocabulary acquisition, among them the positive learning outcomes were the most reported. Moreover, Burston also pointed out positive reports for vocabulary learning, reading competency, listening, and speaking skills among those studies.

### A. MALL's Evolution and Impact on Language Learning Instruction

The advance of technology has significantly improved the ability to provide quality language learning experiences to learners (Ayres, 2002; Green, 2005; Wang & Heffernan, 2010). Since the 1960s, when computers were first introduced to education, CALL has been studied extensively. CALL was a kind of language learning in which a learner uses a computer and, consequently, develops his or her language proficiency (Beatty, 2003). In the 1970s, CALL programs were relatively basic, consisting primarily of question-and-answer sequences (Jafarian, Soori, &Kafipour, 2012).

Internet use in classrooms widened in the 1990s, and CALL has evolved from isolated programs to interconnected, distance-learning applications (Wang & Heffernan, 2010).

As CALL applications developed, the presentation of language instruction advanced. Teaching language, using visually stimulating text, audio, and video features makes multimedia an effective medium for language instruction (Ayres, 2002) and has prompted a marketable business in developing MALL applications. Green (2005) indicated that the greater interactivity of technology could make a positive impact on English language skills. Green has also noted that children who have access to high-quality smartphones with features like authentic audio, sound effects, text that highlights itself as it is read, and vocabulary instruction score much higher on standardized tests. MALL applications are nowadays designed to appeal to visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners through interactive protocols, thus promoting internalization of the language.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that exposure to MALL applications positively affects all four language skills—speaking, reading, writing, and listening— (Arslan & Sahin-Kizil, 2010; Jafarian et al., 2012; Spenader, 2011; Wang, 2011; Yakimchuk, 2010) and increases students' motivation and attitudes toward language learning (Esit, 2011; Morton & Jack, 2010).

Blake (2009) has noted that English language instruction using MALL applications has evolved considerably from what Garrett (1991) described. New research and theories in second-language acquisition have arisen, and authenticity no longer centers on ensuring that language learners model their pronunciation entirely after native speakers of the target language. Interactivity, now, can involve students producing digital products (e.g., blogs, web sites, PowerPoints, etc.) and having meaningful conversations with native speakers.

#### *B. Scarcity of Empirical Research on Memrise*

Limited empirical research exists on the effectiveness of systematically available MALL software. Heil et al. (2016) mentioned "Memrise" in his review of trends, challenges and opportunities of mobile language learning applications in self-directed instruction, observing that Memrise used a systematic and guided curriculum with audio, graphics, video, and speech recognition software; however, no studies deal specifically with Memrise's impact on English Language Learners' perception.

Another reference to "Memrise" is in Walker's (2015) work on the impact of using Memrise on students' perceptions of learning vocabulary and on long-term memory of words. He has asserted that as it was formulated by researchers in languages and psychology, the program is created to develop long-term memory of vocabulary by frequent and systematic testing of vocabulary items having the benefits of portability and accessibility via computers and Apps on smartphones or tablets.

Rather than evaluating specific programs, some recent CALL scholarly work (Nowrozi, 2011; Sykes, Oskoz, & Thorne, 2008; Thorne & Payne, 2005) has focused on how learners use technological tools for interaction. Because of the shift in second-language acquisition to a communicative and interactional approach (Gass & Mackey, 2007), researchers have been more concerned with how MALL programs can stimulate communication rather than assessments of applications or software packages.

#### *C. Purpose of the Study*

This study examined the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) based instruction as compared to direct instruction for 36 students in a high school. Specifically, student perception using direct instruction combined with "Memrise" Mobile-based language learning versus direct language instruction only.

#### *D. Research Question (Hypothesis)*

The amount of increase in employing mobile applications for language learning targets causes a significant question about whether present mobile language learning applications are efficient tools for language learners based upon what we realize about Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research and research in L2 pedagogy. Besides, although the new chances for mobile technology for language learning and the pedagogical usages have been studied in academic contexts, current mobile language learning applications have not been systematically characterized and evaluated.

So the question which should be addressed in this study is regarding the efficacy of "Memrise" Mobile-based language learning application. Accordingly, the research question addressed in this study is:

What is the personal attitude of students who use direct instruction combined with "Memrise" Mobile assisted language learning application as compared to those who use direct instruction regarding English language?

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### *A. Setting and Participants*

This study took place at 3 high school located in Yazd in Yazd province in Iran and serving students in Grade 10. The study sample consisted of 36 students enrolled in High school grade 10 classes at the research site. Demographic information about subgroups indicates that the total sample included 36 students which was split into halves to create a control group and a treatment group with 18 randomly-selected students in each one, the first comprising the direct

instruction group and the second one containing the direct instruction combined with Memrise MALL. The study sample also involved 22(61%) male and 14 (39%) female students.

The researcher sought to determine whether supplementing regular instruction with work on Memrise MALL modules would affect students' perception. Direct English language instruction was supplemented with Memrise MALL application for the treatment Group, while the Control Group received the direct instruction supplemented with additional direct instruction activities (e.g., completing reading comprehension exercises, grammar warm-ups, and formative grammar assessments).

All students in the two groups agreed to participate in the experiment, and all of them were assigned to one or more of the researcher's EFL classes. The 36students were in various classes throughout the day, and students in the Control and treatment Groups were often in the same class period together. Students in both groups received direct English language instruction from the state-chosen EFL course book, a level-appropriate English series containing numerous topics, exercises, and classroom activities.

Researcher-created lesson plans focused on enhancing students' English grammar knowledge. Speaking practice through interactive pair and group work, listening practice through structure-focused listening exercises, vocabulary building-practice through illustrated workbook reading selections and exercises were utilized in daily lessons and activities. Workbook lessons were presented to all students in whole-class direct instruction.

Students in the Control Group used the state schools book series exclusively as their means of learning English. Students in the treatment Group went to the EFL computer lab for the last 20–30 minutes of each class session during the 6-week intervention. They used a log sheet to record minutes spent on "Memrise" and to help the researcher ensure that students were making effective use of their time, using the web-based version of the application.

Students in the Control Group remained in the classroom and completed supplementary exercises that accompanied the state- chosen book series. The students knew each other and were aware that some students were going to the lab for computer work.

## *B. Instrument*

### **1. Memrise English Learning Application**

Memrise is an English language learning application that specializes in foreign language acquisition. Memrise is an online self-study program with the main benefits of availability (via Applications on smartphones and computers and tablets), portability and ease of use. Built by researchers in languages and psychology, the program is created to develop long-term memory of taught items by frequent and systematic testing. Memrise utilizes an algorithmic system of item reviewing in which students should visit and revisit items over and over but at a particular predetermined time schedule, with some reminders to remember reviewing taking place at the time. The Memrise English for Intermediate Students version is available on Bazaar, App Store and Google Play. It can also be reached at [www.memrise.com/courses/english/english](http://www.memrise.com/courses/english/english).

This dynamic system was awarded as the best app for iPhone and iPad and got the google play award for the best app in 2017. It includes more than 150 language courses based on 25 different languages. The app has more than 20 million registered users.

### **2. Questionnaire**

The researcher used a questionnaire to determine the effect of Memrise on attitudes toward the effectiveness of instructional practice to determine if a significant difference existed between the Control and treatment Groups. Student Perception Surveys (see Appendix A) was a 20-item questionnaire administered to students in the Control and treatment Groups after the intervention. Five questions related to students' cultural and educational backgrounds, five questions addressed student attitudes toward their own ELP, and the remaining ten questions focused on the students' attitudes toward either the effectiveness of "Memrise" or the direct instruction exercises. Fifteen attitude statements about their own language skills and the usefulness of either "Memrise" or the direct instruction exercises were listed, and the students chose responses from 1 (strongly agree) through 5 (strongly disagree).

The survey was developed by Griffin et. Al. (2014) and validated by the researcher through peer review with five teacher-researchers. To assist students with different reading levels to complete the survey, the questionnaire was translated into the students' mother tongue. Selected responses on the post-intervention survey were analyzed by comparing students' attitudes toward the effectiveness of their instruction.

## **IV. RESULTS**

Students in both the control and treatment groups completed post-intervention surveys, which measured students' perceptions of their own learning skills and academic aptitudes. The version of the survey administered to students in both the Control and treatment Groups (see Appendix A) specifically measured students' attitudes toward the effectiveness of the direct instruction approach in helping them learn English. A separate version of the survey (see Appendix A, alternate Section III) was given exclusively to students in the Memrise Group to measure their perceptions of the effectiveness of Memrise in helping them build proficiency in English.

TABLE 1  
POST-INTERVENTION PERCEPTIONS OF DIRECT INSTRUCTION EXERCISES FOR BOTH GROUPS (N = 36)

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree/Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
The book series graphics and illustrations helped me stay focused and concentrate better.	32%	19%	49%
I would prefer Mobile-based instruction to teacher-directed instruction.	69%	12%	19%
I would recommend the book series exercises to other English Language Learners.	29%	28%	43%
The book series exercises are a waste of time.	19%	38%	43%
Overall, the book series exercises were an excellent tool for learning English.	37%	21%	42%

Student responses concerning the effectiveness of the direct instruction exercises are shown in Table 1, while responses concerning Memrise are shown in Table 2. When comparing student responses, noticeable differences stand out. A large percentage of Memrise students (79%) preferred computer-based instruction to teacher-directed instruction. While only 32% of students believed the direct instruction graphics and illustrations helped them stay focused and concentrate better, a vast majority of respondents in the Memrise Group (94%) agreed or strongly agreed that the Memrise graphics and illustrations helped them stay actively engaged in the learning process.

TABLE 2  
POST-INTERVENTION PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING MEMRISE FOR THE TREATMENT GROUP (N = 18)

Survey Statement	Strongly Agree/Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree/Disagree
The graphics and illustrations helped me stay focused and concentrate better.	94%	0%	6%
I would prefer teacher-directed instruction to Mobile-based instruction.	10%	11%	79%
I would recommend Memrise to other English Language Learners.	83%	9%	8%
Memrise is a waste of time	2%	4%	94%
Overall, Memrise is an excellent tool for learning English	92%	2%	6%

Only 2% of students in the treatment Group felt that Memrise was a waste of time, but 43% of students in both groups believed the direct instruction exercises were ineffectual. A large percentage of students in the treatment Group (83%) agreed that they would recommend Memrise to other students, and a larger percentage (92%) believed that Memrise was an excellent tool for learning English. The data suggest that Memrise was perceived well among students that were exposed to its media-rich and interactive language learning application.

## V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

For the 36 students in this study, the attitudes toward mobile-based applications were positive. Moreover, students' exposure to Memrise Mobile Assisted Language Learning interactive software over the 6-week intervention period aided in developing positive attitudes toward MALL software applications. The quantitative data collected over the course of this study indicate that when combined with direct instruction and direct exercises, Memrise is a highly effective instructional resource.

Data collected from the student post-intervention perception surveys revealed that students that were exposed to Memrise held a more positive attitude toward its effectiveness than students that participated in direct instruction held toward the direct instruction's effectiveness. In rating the two treatments as excellent tools for learning English, significantly 55% more student participants favored Memrise over direct instruction learning, and 17% more students believed the direct instruction exercises were a waste of time compared to those that believed the same about Memrise.

Quantitative data gathered during the post-intervention survey provided support for data from the above-mentioned data. Both sources provided evidence that students believed Memrise was effective because of its strong interactive features and interactive learning.

These findings agree with Ayres (2002), who also found that visually appealing multimedia applications positively impact student attitudes toward learning. Paralleling the studies of Morton and Jack (2010) and Esit (2011), this study found that students' attitudes became more positive as they progressed through multimedia MALL applications. This study supports the findings of Wang (2011), who concluded that MALL-based instruction could inspire students to work harder to become proficient English speakers and readers.

With the population of students in public schools increasing every year (Anderson & Dufford-Melendez, 2011), effective strategies for teaching the English language are necessary. Findings from this research study support the proposition that when combined with direct mainstream instruction Memrise is an effective resource that may significantly impact attitudes toward language learning for students.

### A. Factors Influencing Implementation

Some factors may have affected the accuracy of this study's findings. Inadequate implementation of daily computer time for students to work on the program. Six weeks may not be a sufficient period of time to observe positive gains in language proficiency achievement. Furthermore, due to some shortcomings including lack of smart phones and mobile internet network students had to work on the offline web-based version of before mentioned program which may affect the results of the study.

### B. Implications and Limitations

The findings of this research suggest that Memrise is an effective method of English language instruction. It is important to note that Memrise is not meant to replace direct language instruction, but its purpose is to serve as an effective supplement to state language instruction. This study, also, has implications beyond the students researched. It is recommended that this study be replicated with a larger experimental group of students. Research using a longitudinal approach and multiple groups with larger numbers of students across grade levels and school districts from state to state would yield the most reliable results. Further research using a number of teachers to implement the intervention could reduce possible bias in data collection for the survey.

#### APPENDIX. STUDENT SURVEY WITH ALTERNATE FORMS OF SECTION III (QUESTIONS 11-20)

Thank you for your participation in this voluntary questionnaire. You may withdraw from participation in this study at any time. Your responses are anonymous. Your completion of this survey indicates your consent to participate.

##### STUDENT CONFIDENCE

Use the following 1 – 5 scale for items 1 through 20. Please indicate (by circling the most correct response) the degree to which you agree with the statements listed below. Take into consideration that 1 stands for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for undecided, 4 for agree, and five for strongly agree.

##### EFFECTIVENESS OF DIRECT INSTRUCTION EXERCISES (all students)

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 1. The book series exercises helped me to understand English better.                         | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. The book series exercises helped me to speak English better.                              | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. The book series exercises helped me to write English better.                              | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. The book series exercises helped me to read English better.                               | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. The book series graphics and illustrations helped me stay focused and concentrate better. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. I would prefer computer-based instruction to teacher-directed instruction.                | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. I would recommend the book series exercises to other English Language Learners.           | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. The book series exercises are a waste of time.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. The book series chapter reviews helped me remember what I learned previously.             | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. Overall, the book series exercises were an excellent tool for learning English.          | 1 2 3 4 5 |

##### EFFECTIVENESS OF MEMRISE (alternate form for treatment Group only)

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 1. The listening exercises helped me to understand English better.               | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. The speaking exercises helped me to speak English better.                     | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. The writing exercises helped me to write English better.                      | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. The reading exercises helped me to read English better.                       | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. The graphics and illustrations helped me stay focused and concentrate better. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. I would prefer teacher-directed instruction to computer-based instruction.    | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. I would recommend Memrise to other English Language Learners.                 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. Memrise is a waste of time.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. The review sessions helped me remember what I learned previously.             | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. Overall, Memrise is an excellent tool for learning English.                  | 1 2 3 4 5 |

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# Call for Papers and Special Issue Proposals

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*TPLS* carries original, full-length articles and short research notes that reflect the latest developments and advances in both theoretical and practical aspects of language teaching and learning. We particularly encourage articles that share an interdisciplinary orientation, articles that bridge the gap between theory and practice, and articles in new and emerging areas of research that reflect the challenges faced today.

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