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Heralding an ICT Environment in Initial EFL Teacher Training Programmes through a Curricular Innovation

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Abstract—Information and communication technology (ICT) has become a prominent part of education and offers numerous means of improving teaching and learning in the classroom (Bransford et al., 2000, Yelland, 2001). However, the tendency to take the teacher education curriculum for granted and the assumption that it adequately prepares the teachers for the integration of ICT into their teaching practice need to be questioned. Correspondingly, providing pedagogical training for teachers rather than simply training them to use ICT tools is an important dimension. This paper, thus, investigates whether the new EFL teacher training curriculum provides an efficient ICT training or not through both a quantitative and a partially qualitative research methodology. One hundred twenty eight prospective EFL teachers attended this study and the results highlight that the prospective teachers having five ICT-related courses displayed reasonably better attitudes in comparison to those not completing this training period. The results also imply that the success of the integration of new technology into education varies from curriculum to curriculum, depending on the ways in which it is applied.

Index Terms—ICT, curriculum, English language teaching, attitudes

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, technological change has brought innerconnectivity to all aspects of life and everyday living, and accordingly, ICT has constituted an integral part of learning and teaching process and has a considerable impact on the characteristic and function of education in most countries as the use of technology promotes thinking skills and strategies, from basic recall to higher level skills such as classification and inference (Henderson et al. 2000). In addition, technology is a significant factor in enhancing the quality of education and learning, by making it more accessible to people (Scott and Robinson 1996).

Thus, the nurture of teacher candidates' ICT awareness has become critical in that ICT is transforming how teachers teach and how students learn by making it possible for both to meet the demands of schooling of today. Therefore, teachers and administrators define ICT as a content to be learned and as a skill to be mastered. However, as Jurema et al. (1997) assert, little or no importance has been attributed to pedagogy of ICT, which requires considering learning and teaching processes, organisation of curriculum and reflection on people, machine relationships in learning community as well as developing students' ability to employ computers competently. Initial teacher training institutions at this point have a key role in equipping and preparing teachers for the classrooms of this digital era. The teachers need opportunities to develop suitable instructional strategies and encounter circumstances where they can practise and reflect on the pedagogy of using ICT in the classroom (Romeo 1998).

In this respect, no curriculum model is flawless and no curriculum theory is sufficient for all users. Hence, researchers continue to investigate a myriad of curriculum models and benefit from them. However, most of them only describe their positive and negative aspects instead of their impacts on student learning and teacher teaching (Wang, Haertel and Walberg 1998). Thus, this study does not propose a new curriculum model. Instead, this research not only investigates the effect of a curricular innovation involving more ICT-related courses on prospective EFL teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward ICT integration into language instruction but also explores how they view the training they have received during a four-year teacher training program.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. ICT in Language Instruction

The use of modern technology in teaching languages has been dramatically increasing world-wide over the past decade (for example, Belkada and Okamoto 2004, O'Dowd 2003, Pennington 1999, Toyoda and Harrison 2002, Warner 2004). A great amount of research done to better comprehend the effect of ICT on students' language learning has revealed that ICT integration in language instruction increases the students' enthusiasm and achievement and also makes them stay longer on the task. (for instance, Davis et al. 1997, Moseley et al. 1999, Pacher 1999, Tunstall and

Gipps 1996). Furthermore, ICT integrated language instruction helps students with intellectual disabilities to promote their communication skills and self-confidence (Lankshear et al. 2000), and increases their cultural awareness, and develops their social identity in the target culture (Chapelle 2001). Since the advancement and pervasiveness of ICT have affected language instruction to a large extent, most teachers are increasingly aware of the direction to incorporate and infuse ICT into their instruction. Accordingly, educators are concerned about effective infusion to engage students in meaningful learning (Koehler et al. 2004). As teachers are the key figures who will promote any innovation in education, it is prominent to help them amalgamate technology effectively into their instruction (Peetenai 2001).

B. Attitudes and Beliefs

Concurrent studies have demonstrated that the effective utilization of ICT depends largely on the attitudes of teachers who ultimately decide the way in which it is implemented in the classroom (Becker and Riel 2000, Beggs 2000, Ertmer et al. 1999, Mumtaz 2000). According to Myers and Halpin (2002), a fundamental reason for studying teachers' attitudes is that it is a significant predictor of prospective ICT deployment in the educational context. In this respect, much of recent research has supported the viewpoint that acceptance and implementation of computer technologies have been strongly affected by the teachers' attitudes (Huang and Liaw 2005, Isleem 2003, Van Braak, Tondeur and Valcke 2004).

As Baylor and Ritchie (2002) state, 'regardless of the amount of technology and its sophistication, technology will not be used unless faculty members have the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to infuse it into the curriculum' (p.398). That is, teachers should become effective agents to be able to utilize ICT tools in the classroom, which is possible via positive teacher attitude thereby adopters feel more comfortable with using them and usually integrate them into their teaching (Bullock, 2004, Kersaint et al. 2003). Positive attitudes often stimulate teachers with less technology knowledge to learn the required skills for employing ICT-based tasks in the classroom setting. Otherwise, a lack of technology knowledge and skills may give rise to anxiety and lack of confidence; consequently, teachers may feel uncomfortable with technology (Finley and Hartman 2004, Groves and Zemel 2000). In brief, for teachers to take initiative in curricular change and to effectively apply technology for meaningful instruction, teachers' attitudes are one of the most significant internal factors described by researchers (Ertmer 1999, Fabry and Higgs 1997).

C. Curriculum Innovation and ICT Integration

Curriculum can be defined as the knowledge, skills and values that students learn in educational settings (Oliva 2001, Ross 2001) and it is a continuous process. Henson (2001) states that 'through the years, curricula have been tailored, modified, and shaped to fit the needs of a changing society'. Furthermore, there seems to be a significant degree of mismatch between the content of teacher education programs and the pedagogical skills required in schools (Aarons 2003).

Regarding the role of ICT in curriculum design, a more fundamental consideration is that students' learning processes involve more ICT tools such as the web, laptops, online encyclopedias, electronic dictionaries and so on. Although many researchers indicate that curriculum innovation is very complex and difficult in view of the requirements of teacher involvement, funds, plans, adequate time and other supports (Kirk and Macdonald 2001, Slaughter 1997), it is necessary to review the existing curriculum and its design models by adopting an ICT perspective (Koh 2002).

To upgrade the educational supervision, Turkey made some alterations in the education system. Curricular reform initiatives launched in 2005, in particular, have captured the attention of various stakeholders by incorporating ICT into instruction as one of its major objectives, while changing the whole national curriculum considerably (Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu, 2005 and 2004).

Faculties of education realized that this was a massive educational renewal process, requiring academic staff at the faculties of education and approximately 400,000 teachers to make fundamental to adopt and accommodate to new changes. They wished to incorporate the changes into their pre-service teacher education programme. To implement the new curriculum as intended and facilitate teacher adoption, they considered it essential to provide the pre-service teacher training institutions, as well as practising teachers with time to discuss, evaluate, interpret and comprehend the new content including ICT (HEC and MONE, 2006). In short, the curriculum of each ITE programme was reformed from theory-laden courses to more practice-based courses (Alev, 2003). The contents of these courses are as follows:

1. Computer I and II: The emphasis of these courses is on the application of computers. Topics to be covered include decision support systems, data management, desktop publishing electronic data interchange, artificial intelligence and expert systems, communications and negative effects, prevention of the negative effects of the computer and internet on the children/teenagers.
2. Instructional Technologies and Material Development: Special technical features on various education, teaching technology by means of using and developing assorted quality material (eg. work/study plates, transparent slides, video, computer based materials) with constructions and evaluation methods. (YOK, 1998)

Those courses would seem to be a national guide for education faculties in terms of integrating ICT into teacher education programmes. Although these courses provided a framework to teacher educators about what should be taught regarding ICT, they did not specify how it should be taught to prospective teachers to make them deploy ICT for pedagogical purposes in the classrooms. Despite all these changes, Turkish Teacher Education Institutions still suffer

from lack of appropriate integration of ICT into their programmes. Although courses related to computers were included in ITE programs by CHE, teachers' lack of experience and competence in pedagogical use of ICT is the biggest constraint at the moment. Altun (1996, 2002) states that computers are often locked in rooms and waiting for professional users and trainees.

As a common strategy, all countries are trying to develop compulsory courses for teachers and moving to a standardized curriculum, which specifies acquired skills and competences in ICT training in TE courses. Although integration strategies in different countries vary depending on the level of development, the main idea underneath those strategies is to keep educational systems up with the technological and global improvements for the future information society.

III. THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

This study was conducted in a higher education context in North Cyprus which is coordinated with both the Council of Higher Education (CHE) and the Council of Higher Education Planning, Evaluation, Accreditation, and Coordination in a centralised structure. Six universities offer higher education opportunities for the students who are, in particular, from Turkey. Thus, the aforementioned councils operate collaboratively to meet the needs and expectations of the students. As one of the six universities in North Cyprus, The European University of Lefke (EUL) was founded in 1990 by Cyprus Science Foundation and the university today offers 6 Associate, 28 Undergraduate and 10 Postgraduate programs.

The Department of English Language Teaching was the context in which the research was conducted. In the department, all courses are instructed in English in technologically-furnished classrooms. Upon investigating the curriculum of ELT department developed by the Council of Higher Education and adopted with additional changes, one can view that three courses are relevant to ICT, namely Computer I, Computer II, and Teaching Technology and Material Design. As stated previously, the programme is centrally designed and monitored by the Council of Higher Education which is the accreditation body for all teacher education programs offered at sub-degree level. In addition to these compulsory courses, the department offered elective ICT courses which are Video Technologies in Language Teaching and Learning, Computer Assisted Language Teaching, and Internet Skills in Language Teaching so as to develop better attitudes toward ICT- integration and encourage students to employ ICT in their subject teaching.

IV. METHODOLOGY

These questions were handled using both qualitative and quantitative strategies. To explore these issues, a questionnaire was administered to the first and fourth year prospective EFL teachers in EUL in March 2010. Then, the sample was interviewed through the triangulation of structured and unstructured interviewing for the identification of significant issues of ICT training that they had during four years.

A. Sample

The study was conducted with the participation of 124 prospective English teachers at different grades of the ELT department at EUL. The participants were randomly selected among the first (n=38) and the fourth-year (n=86) students. Each participant was assigned a number during the data analysis procedure because of ethical considerations. Demographic properties of the participants are presented in table 1.

TABLE 1.
DEMOGRAPHIC PROPERTIES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Year	Freshmen	38	31
	Senior	86	69
Gender	Male	29	23
	Female	95	77
Age	18-20	30	24
	21-23	34	27
	23+	60	49

B. Instruments

A questionnaire was developed by the researchers to gather data needed for the study rather than using an existing instrument after an extensive literature review of literature utilized in different educational backgrounds (Dudeny and Hockly 2007, Isleem 2003, Jones and Clarke 1994, Robertson et al. 1995, Sooknanan 2002). The review of the instrument was broached by a number of experts working at two higher education settings. This board of experts including two professors of educational technology, two native experts and two non-native EFL teachers evaluated the instrument for content and face validity and contended that the questionnaire is appropriate and comprehensive for the

context of the study. To check the reliability, the instrument was analyzed through the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient $\alpha = 0.90$, which shows high level reliability.

The questionnaire contained nine items based on 5-point likert scale (from 1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree) and one open-ended question asking their views on the ICT training they had received. Preceding the instrument, prospective EFL teachers' personal characteristics (gender, age, type of higher education) were also included into the design of the study to ensure maximum control of variables (Gay and Airasian 2000). The instrument was designed in English as all participants were known to have a high level of language proficiency, which is a requisite for attending to the ELT departments in Turkish Higher Education System.

The questionnaires were administered to the prospective teachers at EUL (n=124) in the classrooms since they attended various courses in the main campus of the university during March, 2010. The return rate from prospective teachers at the first year was 92.6% (n=38), whilst the response percentage from prospective teachers at the last year was 95.5% (n=90).

C. Data Collection and Analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS. 16). The demographic variables for this study were discrete data (nominal and ordinal), therefore, descriptive statistics was utilized to run for frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation (Beins 2004, Heiman 2001, Sekaran 2003). Parametric analysis was used such as Independent samples t-Test to determine whether there was a significant difference between two sets of scores or to compare means and correlation (Coakes 2005).

V. RESULTS

Participants were requested to respond to nine Likert-type statements dealing with prospective English teachers' attitudes toward ICT integration into education (Appendix A) and the ICT attitudes of prospective EFL teachers were presented by a mean score on a five point scale where five (Strongly Agree) shows the maximum score and one (Strongly Disagree) represents the minimum score. Additionally, one open-ended question was asked to the 4th year prospective EFL teachers to unearth their perceptions of the ICT training that they received. The findings were structured along with the following list of research questions comprising the central basis of the concurrent study.

A. To what extent has the teacher training curriculum promoted prospective students' positive attitudes toward teaching via ICT tools?

B. Is there any significance between their attitudes before and after ICT-interwoven training?

C. What do the prospective EFL teachers themselves think of the ICT training they have received?

A. To What Extent has the Teacher Training Curriculum Promoted Prospective Students' Positive Attitudes toward Teaching via ICT Tools?

As shown in table 2, a great number of prospective EFL teachers at freshman year of their higher education represented partially positive attitudes toward ICT integration in education with a mean score of 2.50 (SD= 0.22). The majority of the participants exhibited negative attitudes toward using ICT in subject teaching, while none of the respondents expressed positive or highly positive intentions in terms of employing ICT in their prospective teaching career. The most striking result in this section is that the respondents showed very little positive attitudes toward items two, seven, eight and nine. This implied that ICT use does not save time and improve their teaching, and they considered changing the curriculum to integrate more technology as a difficult attempt. Also, almost all of them were of the opinion that utilizing ICT too often to be of very much use would break down.

TABLE 2.
DISTRIBUTION OF MEAN SCORES OF PROSPECTIVE EFL TEACHERS AT FRESHMAN YEAR

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
Item 1	2,86	1,18	0,19
Item 2	2,94	1,03	0,16
Item 3	2,52	0,95	0,15
Item 4	2,36	0,88	0,14
Item 5	2,55	0,50	0,08
Item 6	2,02	0,82	0,13
Item 7	2,81	0,83	0,13
Item 8	2,13	0,74	0,12
Item 9	2,34	0,48	0,07
Overall attitude	2,50	0,22	0,03

As table 3 illustrates, the general ICT attitudes of prospective EFL teachers at the senior year of the higher education context were positive with an overall mean score of 3.89 (SD= 0.33). Almost eighty-nine (89%) of the respondents had positive or highly positive beliefs of ICT integration into education. These respondents reported that they enjoyed using ICT, had no apprehension of it, felt very comfortable while working with ICT, learned more about in-class ICT implementation. In addition, most of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that ICT saved time and effort,

enhanced learning many new things, did not intimidate or threaten the learners and should be integrated into the curriculum more.

TABLE 3.
DISTRIBUTION OF MEAN SCORES OF PROSPECTIVE EFL TEACHERS AT SENIOR YEAR

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
Item 1	4,13	0,85	0,09
Item 2	3,53	1,12	0,12
Item 3	3,80	1,33	0,14
Item 4	4,02	0,93	0,10
Item 5	4,08	0,89	0,09
Item 6	3,94	0,88	0,09
Item 7	4,29	0,66	0,07
Item 8	3,38	1,05	0,11
Item 9	3,81	1,24	0,13
Overall attitude	3,89	0,33	0,33

B. Is there Any Significance between their Attitudes before and after ICT-interwoven Training?

From the output of table 4, it is found that there is a difference between the ICT attitudes of two groups of prospective EFL teachers. Prospective EFL teachers at the freshman year had positive attitudes toward ICT integration in education with a mean score of 3,89 (SD=0,33), while their counterparts at the senior year exhibited considerable less positive attitudes (mean=2,50; SD=0,22). For more detailed analysis of the data, the table showing the complete results were added at the end of the paper (Appendix. B).

TABLE 4.
GROUP STATISTICS

		N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
General	Group 1	86	3,89	0,33	0,03
	Group 2	38	2,50	0,22	0,03

To determine the proportion of the difference in the attitudes of prospective EFL teachers toward ICT, a t-test was conducted to compare the means of the attitude variables of two groups as shown in Table 5. The results indicated that there were significant differences between the two means, that is, the significant value (p-value) is lower than 0 ($p < 0$). In other words, H_0 - null hypothesis claiming that there is no significance between the attitudes of two different groups was rejected because sig. (singificance 2-tailed) value is not greater than 0.05.

TABLE 5.
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T- TEST

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t _{heap}	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
General	Equal variances assumed	6,77	0,01	23,37	122	0,00	1,38	0,05
	Equal variances not assumed			26,81	99,56	0,00	1,38	0,05

C. What do the Prospective EFL Teachers themselves Think of the ICT Training they have Received?

In response to the open-ended question asking the fourth year prospective EFL teachers about their perceptions of the ICT training they received, they stated that ICT integration into the curriculum at their university was more sufficient than planned and expected and that they had more ICT-related courses thereby they could improve their competency and pedagogical skills in ICT realm. They also stressed that it was possible to herald better ICT environment by increasing the number of ICT courses and the degree of ICT training. On the other hand, they delineated that the ELT curriculum somewhat failed to sensitize them to the challenges of teaching through ICT and flawed in a certain number of ways. To illustrate, comments illustrating these views were as follows:

'There should be more time allocated to the practical aspects of teaching through ICT and the dissemination of related teaching skills.'

'The infrastructure should be in sufficient numbers so that each student can use one computer on his/her own. Also, all computers are to be connected to the Internet.'

'Teachers should focus more on how we can use ICT tools to teach EFL to our students by making us prepare internet- based lesson plans.'

'We need to witness some technologically- conducted lessons in actual computer laboratories to improve our classroom management skills in virtual settings.'

'I know how to use a computer and the Internet. Actually, what I need is how to use ICT in teaching English to my students, so the pedagogical training should be emphasized.'

These comments are the summary of all comments made by prospective EFL teachers and imply that ICT training provided at EUL has optimised substantial effect on prospective EFL teachers' attitudes toward ICT as an overarching concept in language teaching; however, it could not exert sustainable improvement in terms of teaching via ICT tools. These comments make diagnosis of prospective EFL teachers' future expectations about ICT training which would augment credentials for ICT-assisted language teaching.

VI. DISCUSSION

In recent years, the focus on information technology has shifted towards curriculum integration (Albion 1999) since students instructed with a technology enhanced curriculum exhibited a better performance than their peers who were exposed to the same curriculum without a technology strand and, the same results were reiterated in many similar studies (Jang 2006, Smeets 2005). Efforts are made towards betterment of current design on an integrative level for existing curriculum, rather than on a creative level for new teaching materials. Laudable as these efforts are, they are yet to address the issue of teacher preparation, especially pre-service training programmes, which initially prepare teachers for teaching EFL/ESL. In spite of the prominence of initial teacher preparation in shaping the teachers' attitudes towards teaching and providing the requisite 'tools for the job' in the form of knowledge of subject matter and pedagogical skills, it is amazing that the curriculum of teacher education has not attracted policy makers' and development partners' attention (Umar 2006). At this juncture, Gülbahar (2007) stresses that an ICT policy is not only about hardware and internet connections, but also about how ICT is infused into the instructional program.

However, the curriculum of pre-service teacher education is now viewed as a significant area of intervention by the government in the research context for quality improvement of teaching and learning of English as a foreign language. Nevertheless, whether curricular or structural, or whether initiated internally or externally, there is no certainty that practice succeeds policy (Hopkins and Lewin 2000). The rate of adaptation of any change will not only rely on what the changes are and how they are displayed, but also how they are perceived by the main stakeholders. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate perceptions of the end-users; otherwise, personal goals, values, concerns and beliefs would go unaddressed, a mistake which would have essential bearings on the achievement of the whole endeavour (Aksit 2007). Accordingly, in a recent study, Hew and Brush (2000) modelled the barriers and strategies that affect the amalgamation of ICT for instructional purposes into curriculum and the attitudes and beliefs were found as a direct impediment influencing ICT integration, which is the reason why we investigated this issue in this research study. If the aim is to encourage language teachers to employ ICT in their subject teaching, it is very crucial to stimulate positive attitudes towards ICT integration during initial teacher training programme as teachers play a pivotal role in implementing educational innovations. Therefore, they are prominent figures in the concrete implementation of ICT in classroom settings. (Albirini 2006).

In this respect, the study suggests that the new curriculum offering ICT-related courses be achieved to create positive attitudes to a certain extent but the prospective teachers were not strongly satisfied with their teacher education curriculum in terms of ICT integration due to some problems, which is, in fact, very consistent with several findings in the related literature (Brush et al. 2003, Tinmaz 2004, Toker 2004).

We see that ICT curriculum in the research context tend to be competency based in that teachers' ICT competence is a significant condition for effective deployment by teachers (Hew and Brush 2007, Pelgrum 2001) but lack of teaching experience with ICT has been described as a prominent factor that prevents teachers from making use of ICT in an educational setting (Mumtaz 2000). Thus, prospective EFL teachers are now aware of the necessity that they are required to develop a range of general knowledge and skills in ICT as well as competency in using ICT in the classroom. This is partly because of the increasing focus for the consideration of effective uses of ICT, which is upon pedagogy rather than technology itself (Passey 1998).

In doing so, ICT support is highlighted as a prominent school condition for the successful implementation of ICT, and teachers need adequate technical support so as to facilitate their use of ICT (Becta 2004, Hew and Brush 2007, Tondeur et al. 2009). Beyond technical support, ICT support further needs to be comprehended as a form of pedagogical support that teachers require when amalgamating ICT into their classroom (Mumtaz 2000, Tondeur et al. 2008). Based on literature review, Strudler and Herrington (2008) stress that ICT support is important since it has been empirically exhibited that the availability of quality ICT support affects the frequency, variety and increased use of ICT in the classroom. Anderson and Ronnkvist (2002), who have operationalized 'the quality of ICT support', emphasised the multifaceted composition of this concept. In their viewpoint, 'the quality of ICT support' is about establishing a

suitable classroom context with access to resources, providing teachers with one-to-one support, teaching them how to integrate ICT into practice, and stimulating professional collaboration.

Another problem indicated by prospective EFL teachers was the delivery methods of training, which is expected to be more practical. Prospective teachers emphasized that conceptual or theoretical elements of the courses were unnecessary and the course as a whole together with the exams should be conducted hands on in computer laboratories, and computer facilities should be provided for each student in the laboratory. These findings support the guidelines of Thomson, Bull and Willis (2002) as follows:

- ICT should be infused into the entire teacher education programs.
- ICT should be introduced in context.
- Students should experience innovative ICT supported learning environments in their teacher education programs.

It was also argued by Hayes and Jin (1999) from a similar perspective that there are many challenges in teacher education programmes to prepare an effective teacher for tomorrow's classroom. For instance, although the impact of computers on education grows rapidly, teacher educators in HE continue to depend on more traditional methods for delivering instruction, so lecturers should have the ability to integrate modern technology into instruction. Hence, it is necessary to professionally combine the use of ICT with other innovative instructional and learning strategies to generate and impart knowledge, attitudes and skills. At this point, Valcke, Rots and van Braak (2007) further suggest that ICT teacher training be organised during school hours and that the school be used as the training location. This implies that ICT training has to be linked with context-specific questions, needs and problems. Becta (2004) argues that training facilities need to concentrate on both pedagogical aspects and teacher ICT skills.

VII. CONCLUSION

It is clear from the above discussion of responses that the prospective EFL teachers sampled for this study believe that the updated curriculum is successful in generating positive attitudes but still the curriculum has certain flaws and needs urgent reform if it is to address the needs and the realities of teachers in mainstream schools in general. In this regard, Mhyre (1998, p.102) concludes: "we must address the use of computers together with the teachers' understanding of pedagogy and subject matter in order for technology to play a significant role in improving schools". If not, attempts to reform or renew the curricula to deploy the ICT tools in the classrooms will end up as another example of failure.

We are to emphasise the increasing satisfaction with the level of ICT achievement and competence among newly trained teachers and to stress the need to reconceptualise initial teacher education curricula to integrate more opportunities for ICT training when considering few number of continuous professional development opportunities in many developing countries where teachers have to rely on the knowledge base that they developed during pre-service training (Umar 2005), the issues related to ICT integration into the initial teacher education curriculum becomes a major determinant of teacher quality and even the subsequent performance of teachers.

Consequently, in this study, we explored the relationship between the intended curriculum and how it is enacted in comprehending the factors which may bring about disparity and discovered that the advantages of periodically evaluating and revising existing curricula are widely acknowledged (Jackson 2005) to ensure that the needs and expectations of learners are adequately met. Hence, ELT curriculum should be subject to on-going renewal if it were to remain dynamic and be more responsive to the current and future needs of the students. Or else, teachers are inclined to restricting their thinking about ICT to 'boxes and wires' or isolated computer skills (Fishman and Pinkard 2001).

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Written Error Feedback from Perception to Practice: A Feedback on Feedback

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Abstract—Several aspects of written error feedback contexts have been simply overlooked or have remained on the sidelines, partly due to controversies over its long-lasting efficacy. The few studies conducted on the subject, though, failed in imparting key factors at work. This study sought to take learners' and teachers' written feedback perceptions as well as teachers' actual feedback practices into account to judiciously inspect two major areas of written feedback contexts; firstly, examining potential areas of mismatch between teachers' and learners' perceptions of teachers' error feedback practices and secondly, discovering the possible misfits between teachers' perception of their feedback practices and their actual feedback performance. To this end, 60 participants including 45 students from English classes with a focus on writing and 15 of their teachers were selected and asked to separately fill in teacher and student comprehensive questionnaires. Then, at the end of the course, an actual error correction task was corrected by the teachers and finally, they were orally interviewed. The results indicated four certain mismatch areas between teachers' and learners' views on (1) teachers' manners of marking, (2) use of error codes, (3) awareness of error selection principle and (4) effectiveness of teachers' error feedback practices. Moreover, four conspicuous areas of misfits between teachers' perception of (1) their manners of error marking (comprehensive vs. selective), (2) manners of feedback provision (direct vs. indirect), (3) use of error codes (4) amount of errors selected and their actual feedback performance were found. The implications are discussed.

Index Terms—perception, written error feedback, comprehensive marking, selective marking, direct feedback, indirect feedback

I. INTRODUCTION

Unceasing debate over the short- and long-term effect of error correction on writing accuracy in ESL/EFL contexts has long molded and pervaded much of what we conceive of as feedback studies. Nonetheless, most seemingly engrossing studies in this sense have been founded upon comparing erratically myriad methods and conditions of error feedback provision which have barely yielded any viable outcomes. In contrast, the formation and dynamics of such contexts, i.e. the potential mismatches in perceptions and reflections of key sides of such synergy-developing exercises have not come under much close scrutiny. In truth, few studies have ventured to establish what, in practice, teachers do as to L2 written error correction, and what the teachers' and learners' perceptions and expectations of those error feedback practices in an EFL context are. This is the case while calls for application of teachers' perceptions have infinitely refueled a flurry of studies that pursue data-first approaches to error correction as opposed to theory-first methodologies based upon the Grounded Theory (for a fuller discussion on procedures see Glasser, 1967, 1978, 2001 and Glasser & Holton, 2004). As such, perception studies appear to function a key role by sustaining such newly resurfaced ideologies and spurring feedback researchers on to insightfully embark on their data-first methods. Furthermore, studies of this nature enable language instructors to be aware of what and how students think and how they may react to EFL teachers' feedback maneuvers. Moreover, this awareness in turn helps EFL teachers better reformulate the logics behind their practices and provides the ground for more dynamic learning environments conducive to learners' improved motivation.

Throughout the feedback provision processes, as pointed out by some feedback specialists, some featured and in-context practices have not received due attention. Among them, some camps of scholars have alluded to the crucial role of teachers' having a feedback framework for specifying errors, use of error codes and manners of marking and feedback provision in pinpointing many qualitative and quantitative aspects of teachers' feedback methods. Against this backdrop, the present study has endeavored to delve deeper into the issue, as befits a matter of such pedagogical significance, engaging both teachers' and learners' perspectives while it further utilizes an actual error correction task taken from the participating students to discern if there is a sense of division between learners' and teachers'

perceptions on teachers' written feedback and, to a certain degree, between teachers' perceptions of their error correction and their actual classroom performance.

A synthesis of theory and practice has implied that creating a coherent, accurate and extended piece of writing, to most EFL and ESL learners, is far from easy. As a matter of fact, learners need to be guided toward active use of the target language. One of the steps that teachers should take to do so is through providing an independent learning environment in which constructive feedback to learners can be reinforced as they progress. Although many technical and contextual variations in the provision of error feedback exist, all of which cannot be done justice to in the format of the present study, the most common error feedback types include:

- peer feedback, conferencing, teachers' comments (Muncie, 2000),
- taped commentaries (Hyland, 1990),
- computer-based response (Brandl, 1995; Warschauer et al., 1996),
- portfolios (Belanoff & Dickenson, 1991; Purves et al., 1995; Hamp-Lyon & Condon, 2000).

In what follows, a historical synopsis of written error feedback and studies on perception of error feedback will be presented.

The history of error correction in L2 writing proves that it has undergone several shifts over the past three decades. From the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s, there was a great deal of research on L2 writing classrooms. Such attention to treatment of learners' errors gained strength by the prevailing learning theories of the time, namely behaviorism which called for the immediate treatment of learners' errors in order to prevent fossilization phenomenon (Brown, 2007). In contrast, from the mid 1980s to the mid 1990s few studies were conducted on the subject. This was, as Ferris (2003) maintained, rooted in "the prominence of the process-oriented writing paradigm in ESL writing classes at the time with its consequent de-emphasizing of sentence-level accuracy issues" (p.42). In addition, some contrasting views on the ineffectiveness of error correction—which are still widely in the air (see Truscott & Hsu, 2008)—seem to be accountable for such a period of silence in the use of error correction (Semke, 1984; Robb, Ross, and Shortreed, 1986). It was probably viewed as ineffective as it has been the case elsewhere in the area of second language teaching akin to some of once-ruling L2 teaching methods. Conversely, when the process writing gained support as a feasible framework, some writing scholars made attempts to deal with students' problems in writing accuracy (Eskey, 1983; Horowitz, 1986; Reid, 1994). Advocates of such a process approach believed that by putting much emphasis on students' content (e.g. Caulk, 1994; Ferris 1995; Conrad & Goldstein, 1999), the appropriate form would proceed gradually as it is the case with L1 acquisition (see Krashan, 1981; Zamel, 1982, 1985). But in the meantime, a mound of evidence bore out the idea that errors committed by L2 learners in the course of L2 writing could be improved by musing solely on L2 writing learners' ideas and writing processes and that learners' low level of accuracy must be culprit in many diverse writing milieus. Therefore, a fair number of studies were carried out to tackle such concerns in learners' writing (see Raimes, 1985; Ferris, 1995). Still in its third decade, further research showed that, although "unnecessary and out of vogue error correction is to some writing researchers, in the classroom, error correction is a real and urgent issue that commands teachers' attention" (Lee 2004, p.286). Moreover, L2 writing research has showed that in L2 writing classrooms learners conceive of error correction as an essential part to the quality of their writing (Cohen, 1987; Leki, 1991; Lee, 1997; Ferris & Roberts, 2001).

Among all debates, teachers while treating students' errors, as Lee (2003) put it, should clarify whether:

- to correct or not correct errors
- to identify or not identify error types
- to locate errors directly or indirectly

There are a number of research studies indicating that providing students with indirect error feedback (i.e., highlighting errors without presenting the correct form) is more beneficial to learners' improvement than direct forms of it (Lalende, 1982; Frantzen, 1995; Ferris, 2003). However, there is also unfailing support for the use of direct error feedback in certain cases such as for:

- beginning-level students
- or when errors are "untreatable"
- and when teachers try to draw students' attention to some other error forms that need learners' correction (Ferris, 2003).

Nevertheless, more recently, among lots of issues regarding error correction, teachers' and students' perspectives toward it have taken the center stage. In a similar vein, new developments in educational psychology has notably contributed to the rise of perception studies by stressing the central importance of learners and their attitudes toward learning from a humanistic perspective. In the area of error correction studies, neglecting learners' or teachers' perceptions of the error feedback has always been a thought-provoking issue. There is research evidence to prove that L2 learners want error feedback and believe that they benefit from it (e.g. Leki, 1991; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Lee, 2004; Montgomery & Baker, 2007). Nonetheless, these studies as with studies on feedback efficacy were not flawless.

Cohen and Cavalcanti's (1990) investigation was an attempt to incorporate the three factors in the study. They made use of teachers' own perceptions of their work in providing students' with the necessary written feedback, students' perspective, and the real practices that take place within an L1 and EFL contexts of university and institute. Their study revealed strong relationship between teachers' perceptions of their own feedback practices and their real performance in

different categories that they investigated namely mechanics, vocabulary, organization, content, and grammar, especially at the college level. In fact majority of students saw their teacher as a judge. But their findings were not generalizable by any means in that they included few number of subjects in the study, to be exact, three teachers and nine students. Furthermore, the study did not make clear if teachers knew that their perceptions of their error correction practices would be compared with their actual practices in the classroom context.

In Satio (1994) he struggled to examine learners' perceptions and teachers' views on error feedback in order to later find the areas of mismatch between the two. He chose 24 L2 learners from intermediate to advanced level to complete a questionnaire on their teacher current feedback practices. In addition, to ensure teachers' feedback practices some observations were conducted. Final conclusion was that learners needed and welcomed teacher personally providing feedback. But teachers of these courses, instead, had practiced other forms of error feedback that did not require teacher presence, like self- or peer correction. The weak point of Satio's work seems to be the observation part. In fact, teachers had only been evaluated based upon observations so there was not reported any precise and objective estimate of their feedback practices.

To sum, a much of the past studies on error feedback perception (also see Leki, 1991; Komura, 1999; Rennie, 2000 and Ferris and Roberts, 2001, to name but a few) in 1990s and early 2000s accentuated:

- The importance of linguistic accuracy in writing to the overall efficacy of being a second language writer.
- Vitality of teacher feedback on errors as an ingredient for students to improve the accuracy of their writing.
- Superiority of comprehensive error marking over selective error making.
- Higher value of indirect correction (errors marked and labeled by error types) to that of direct correction (teachers making the corrections for students).

Later in her study, Lee (2003) merely focused on L2 writing teachers' perspectives, practices and challenges regarding error feedback ignoring the other side of the aisle meaning learners. Secondly, it did not provide information as to what and how teachers in reality adopt such error correction. Lee (2004) gave learners a voice, taking their perceptions into consideration. But she did not use the same writing sample of the under-study participants in the study of teachers' actual practices; that is, she made use of an artificial piece of writing, which is a major problem with her study as it couldn't viably be indicative of teachers' measure of actual practices. In fact, albeit some studies called for new research on teachers' perceptions (e.g. Montgomery & Baker 2007), others stuck to teachers' perspectives ignoring students' perceptions (e.g. Lee, 2003, 2008).

It is in this sense that attempts should be made to chart a broader understanding of how teachers' perceptions relate to both student perceptions and teachers' actual written feedback practices. Also, in many ways, further insights should be offered into and critical questions should be drawn out about how teachers' perspectives relate to the writing process.

Accordingly, the present study is designed to answer the following major research questions:

1. What are the mismatches between EFL learners' and EFL teachers' perceptions regarding teachers' error feedback practices?
2. What are the misfits between EFL teachers' perceptions of written feedback and their real practices in the classroom?

II. METHODOLOGY

A. *Participants and Sampling*

A total of 60 subjects including 15 male and female L2 teachers and 45 of their students at 3 usual levels of instruction (15 classes) from beginning to advanced courses with a focus on writing at the University of Tehran, the Faculty of foreign Languages and Literatures, building, no 3 and 3 other private language institutes (from district 6 of the city of Tehran) participated in this study willingly. Students' age ranged from 14 to 36. The average number of students that enrolled in each class also fell within the range of 6 to 18 people. As to teachers, however, those who put more emphasis on the writing section of their books and paid more attention to keeping up with teachers' guide book were more preferable due to the correction guidelines suggested in the teachers' guide book. Teachers' age ranged from 22 to 39 mostly having a related degree in an English-related field such as TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language), English translation and English literature. Still, other teachers had an unrelated degree in medical sciences and chemistry.

B. *Materials*

The study made use of the following materials:

- a teacher questionnaire
- an error correction task taken from the participating students
- a Persian translated student questionnaire (which went through back-translation to ensure precision)
- and an oral interview (treated as open-ended questions).

To ensure updated and validated questionnaires, Lee's (2004) questionnaires were used. Later thoughtfully designed changes were implemented to them and their reliability indices were computed. Also, through the pilot study, construct validity of the questionnaires were assured. Lee (2009) also used the shortened form of the same teacher questionnaire.

Finally to standardize and therefore better ensure the validity of the error correction task, the correction task was double-checked and scrutinized for any possible misfit in determining standard number and category of potential errors.

C. Procedures

In order to investigate teachers' and learners' perspectives on the written error feedback, EFL instructors were requested to complete their own separate questionnaires in almost beginning of the semester. Then, after at least 4 to 6 writing papers were exchanged back and forth between teachers and students, student questionnaire was distributed and its data was garnered. On the teachers' questionnaire, they were asked about their teaching experience, educational backgrounds (recognition type questions), the quantity and type of error feedback practices on their students' writings on the average, correcting errors comprehensively (i.e.; correcting all of the learners' errors on a written assignment) or selectively (i.e.; teachers' random selection of students error types), do they make it directly or indirectly (as asked about in the questionnaires), their major principle for the selection of errors, their use of marking codes, the role of students and teacher relating error correction, and the amount of time they spend on marking students' writings. Care was taken not to plunge too soon in implementing correction task (time trap). Therefore, one session before the final exam, they marked a 2- line, 5-paragraph sample composition from one of the participating students at advanced levels (due to their higher ability to write more) and answered 4 enclosed questions of the error correction task, not to mention, students at beginning levels were only able to write a short one-paragraph writing due to their low level of language proficiency, thus a lesser number of errors could possibly occur and teachers could not have been seriously challenged and therefore reveal their error correction behaviors. This later on was compared to their questionnaire data for further convergence in the data analysis process. Also, teachers were asked ten questions regarding their feedback practices in an oral interview about their perceptions and preferences in an oral interview session. In addition, students received the translated version of their questionnaire and were asked to complete it (Figure 1).

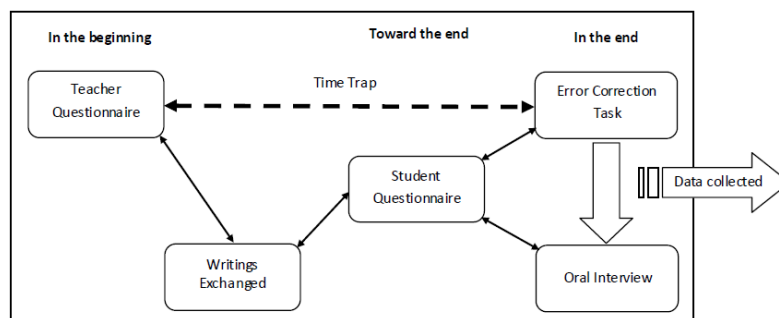


Figure1. Study design and data collection scheme

D. Data Analysis

To perform the statistical analyses, certain systematic measures were taken. (1) The first step was coding the questionnaire data. The coding framework for close-ended questions was straightforward as choices on both questionnaires ranged from "strongly agree to strongly disagree", based on the construct each question measures, Care was taken to assign these numerical codes according to the positivity or negativity of the construct under measurement as suggested by research methodologists (Dörnyei, 2003). (2) The second step was feeding the questionnaires data into SPSS. (3) Third step was checking the collected data for possible human errors while feeding data into SPSS. To do this last part more systematically, all data went through "data cleaning" process as suggested by Dörnyei's (2003) in analyzing questionnaires data. In his words, "Data cleaning involves correcting as many of errors and inaccuracies as possible before the actual analyses are undertaken" (p. 79).

Like any other psychometric (measurement) instrument a questionnaire must possess adequate reliability. To establish the reliability of the two questionnaires, Cronbach's Alpha was used, which is the measure of internal consistency. Result of the internal consistency test fell into "good" range of "0.82" for the teacher questionnaire and "0.87" for the student questionnaire.

Moreover, to standardize and therefore better ensure the validity of the error correction task, the task was double-checked and scrutinized for any possible misfit in determining standard number and category of potential errors. This included identification, counting, categorization and marking of the errors on the task by four other English teachers' besides the researcher. The standard number of errors and their related categories in the error correction task, on different grounds was examined.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

As to the first and the second research questions frequency count analysis as with previous studies (Lee, 2004, 2009) was run and the inferential analysis based upon the areas of mismatch were presented. All descriptive statistics of both questionnaires data due to their size and comprehensiveness do not appear in this section.

A. Answer to the First Research Question

To determine areas of mismatches between EFL learners' and EFL teachers' perceptions regarding teachers' error feedback practices; first, data from all areas of feedback perception and preferences common to both questionnaires coverage were collected underwent frequency count analysis, second, data were categorized, and compared and Finally areas of mismatch were identified and presented as with previous studies.

The results of the frequency count analysis of the areas of mismatch between perceptions of EFL teachers and EFL learners regarding teachers' error feedback determined five areas of mismatch including: (1) manners of marking (comprehensive vs. selective), (2) use of error codes, (3) students' awareness of teachers' error selection principle, (4) feedback responsibility and (5) effectiveness of teachers' error feedback practices. The results are categorized and presented below:

Comprehensive vs. selective marking

On the teacher questionnaire, the second question targeted teachers' perception of their error feedback practices regarding marking all potential errors in students written assignments (comprehensive error marking). There, a majority of 46.7% agreed (seven out of fifteen) and 20% (three out of fifteen) strongly agreed that they mark all students' error while marking their written assignments. In contrast, as to selective marking category which consisted of three questions subsumed under it (questions 4, 21, and 22), teachers expressed their views as follows: on question four which asked teachers' perception on whether they selectively mark students' errors 53.3% (eight out of fifteen) stated they disagreed and 6.7% (one out of fifteen) strongly disagreed on it. Further, when they were asked on question 21 that there is no need to mark students' written works selectively 67.7% disagreed. Here in fact teachers contradicted themselves. As to question 22 also teachers were asked if it is a "should" for them to selectively mark errors on students written works selectively. 53.3% disagreed on it and 13.3% were undecided on the issue.

On the other hand, on the student questionnaire, they were asked 66.7% disagreed their teachers' marking their errors comprehensively and a minority of 15.6% agreed all of their errors have been marked by their teachers (question 1). However 62.2% of students agreed teachers do not mark all of their errors (question 2). Tables 3 and 4 present teachers' and students' perceptions of teachers' practices on comprehensive and selective marking.

TABLE 3
TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR MANNERS OF ERROR MARKING

Teachers	Percentage (%)
Comprehensive	66.7%
Selective	26.7%

TABLE 4
STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS' MANNERS OF ERROR MARKING

Students	Percentage (%)
Comprehensive	15.6%
Selective	62.2%

Use of marking codes

On the general practice of marking codes, nine out of fifteen teachers, 73.3% which is a large majority of EFL instructors, on all three levels of instructions, rejected using error codes, that is, they strongly disagreed or disagreed on it and only 20% of them agreed on it (question 11). Further, 33.3% disagreed on its helpfulness for students to guide them to correct their errors themselves. Moreover, 46.7 % were undecided on this issue (question 25) and also on the clarity of it (questions 26), a majority of 64.7% were undecided on the fact that error codes should be clear and easy for students to understand and follow. Table 5 presents the percentage of teachers' perception of error codes.

TABLE 5
PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ERROR CODES

Use of error codes (%)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Using error codes	13.3%	60%	6.7%	20%	-
Codes helpfulness	-	33.3%	46.7%	20%	-
Codes clarity	-	6.7%	73.3%	20%	-

This is whereas, on the other side, almost 57.7% of the students expressed that their teachers use error codes to mark their written assignments (question 14) and 40% were undecided on the use of error codes by their teachers. Further, 40% rejected disability in understanding their teachers for later revisions (question 15) and 55.6% agreed and 26.7% strongly agreed that they to some extent can understand and follow their teachers' error codes (question 16), also 51.1% of students rejected that they cannot completely understand their teachers' error codes (question 17). The result of the students' perception on the use of error codes is shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6
STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE USE OF ERROR CODES

Use of error codes (%)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Using error codes	-	2.3%	40%	51%	6.7%
Inability in codes understanding	-	40%	20%	28.9%	11.1%
Partial Ability to Follow codes	-	-	17.8%	55.6%	26.7%
Complete understanding of codes	11.1%	40%	28.9%	20%	-

Here is where mismatch arises, generally there was a call from the learners' side for teachers to use error codes as they, with their current level of understanding of their teachers' coding framework, express a need for it—in spite of their incomplete or partial understanding of the codes, it proves, as mentioned earlier, learners generally take advantage of it while they are given opportunity to revise their written works and correct their errors for themselves—whereas majority of teachers at once rejected using any kind of error coding in marking students' written assignments. But it seemed other factors as putting more time and receiving more educational training and having a clear coding framework to yield better results would help lessen the mismatch. So most definitely, these other relating factors need further research to prove effective (questions 11 and 14 respectively).

Awareness of type(s) of errors selected for marking

As EFL teachers, it has occurred to many of us on countless number of occasions where learners ask for whether, for instance, spelling errors are going to be marked by the teacher or not. The second area of mismatch was between EFL teachers' informing their students of the type(s) of selected errors for marking (question 30). 53.3% of teacher agreed on the fact that they make their students aware of the type(s) of error they had selected to do the marking. Also 26.7% were undecided not knowing whether they do it or not and only a minority of 20% disagreed that they provide students with their error selection principle prior to marking students written assignments.

On student questionnaire a striking fact was revealed (question 4), as it could rationally be predicted experientially, data indicated, an absolute majority of 91.1% of the learners unanimously disagreed (80% disagreeing and 11.1% strongly disagreeing over having any prior knowledge), that their teachers would have informed them of the any selection criteria. Table 7 presents the teachers' and students' perception of students' awareness of their error selection principle.

TABLE 7
TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS' AWARENESS OF THEIR ERROE SELECTION PRINCIPLE

Awareness of Error selection Principle	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Teachers	-	20%	26.7%	53.3%	-
Students	11.1%	80%	8.9%	-	-

The mismatch here was more than clear; there was a total disregard on the part of teachers for not letting students know what aspects of writing were more important to them. This is also in contradiction with the already well-established fact in the language teaching that any moves inside the four walls of an EFL class must be purposeful. Further, as writing research moved from product to process writing, this shift should most certainly affect teachers' marking practices, therefore, this shift should have an imprint on students' writing and patterns and implications of responding to it. As a result, such a context of unawareness and mismatch between EFL learners and instructors can well diminish the positive and pedagogical influences of second and foreign language writing research.

Overall effectiveness of the existing feedback practices on students' grammatical accuracy

Finally where all these mismatches come down to is the effectiveness of such feedback provision methods on students' progress in their writing quality. Regardless of modern theories of language teaching, methods and rules, while teaching, most teachers resort to their experiences and already held assumptions.

On the teacher questionnaire, also it was asked, how these teachers evaluate their current feedback practices on student progress in grammatical accuracy in writing at the end of one semester (question 37). Here, 53.3.8% of teachers stated that their students were making "some progress" on grammatical accuracy, also 33.3% of them considered their students as making "good progress" in the field of grammatical accuracy of their writings. And minority of 6.7% believed that their students' making "little progress". In addition, 6.7% said on the questionnaire that their students were making "no progress" with their current feedback provision methods. Table 8 exhibits teachers' and students' views on students' grammatical progress regarding teachers' existing feedback practices.

TABLE 8
TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHERS' FEEDBACK PRACTICES

Grammatical Progress	Good Progress	Some Progress	Little Progress	No Progress
Teachers	33.3%	53.3%	6.7%	6.7%
Students	4.4%	11.1%	46.7%	37.8%

Learners in addition, reported of 46.7% of "little progress" in the grammatical accuracy of their written works. Further 37.8% said that they made "no progress" and also 11.1% expressed they made "some progress".

The last mismatch was indicative of a split between EFL instructors and EFL learners on teacher written corrective feedback, as mentioned earlier regardless of all intervening factors as individual differences, philosophies, amount of motivation, etc, it seems with the current trend each side is heading its own way. But in any event, as Leki (1991) stressed, this can work well against the motivation of learners. Table 4.14 showed the students' and teachers perceptions on the effectiveness of teachers' feedback practices yet to better illustrate the overall mismatch between students' and teachers' perception on the effectiveness of teachers' feedback practices, Figure 2 is better presents the division below.

In the fourth research question however, this overall effectiveness of students' grammatical progress and teachers' own views toward their current in-class written feedback practices will be further analyzed through teachers' real performances on the error correction task which will be supplemented to the survey question posed and compared in the above discussion.

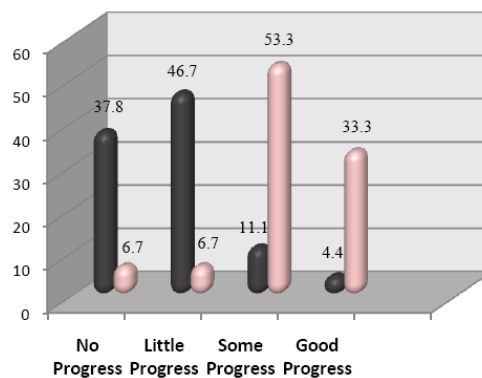


Figure 2. Mismatch between perceptions of students and teachers of feedback responsibility of teachers (■ Students ■ Teachers)

Content analysis of the open-ended questions on the teacher questionnaire

On the teacher questionnaire two open-ended questions were posed, first one at the beginning of the questionnaire targeting the main purpose of providing feedback on students' errors in students' written work and the second one addressing teachers' concerns and problems regarding providing feedback on students' writings. Here the common answer categories are presented pertaining to each open-ended question. On the first question majority of teachers (twelve out fifteen) that is 80% of them almost stated the main purpose of feedback provision on students' written errors is to make them "conscious" or "aware" of their errors. At the same time two other teachers (13.3%) believed make students never "repeat the same error" in the future. Furthermore, one teacher (6.7%) stated "this gives them courage to write and self-correct errors for themselves". On the second question also almost half of the teachers (53.3%) reported of over-dependence of learners on teachers for receiving corrective feedback and called for a reduction in their role as feedback provider. Still 26.7% that is four teachers complained about inaction of learners after receiving their feedbacks that is in terms of the revision processes. Finally three teachers (20%) doubted effectiveness of their feedback practices as their learners repeat errors on other writing tasks and topics.

B. Answer to the Second Research Question

Preliminary requirements

To provide an answer to this research question, which investigated the misfits between EFL teachers' perceptions of their written corrective feedback and their real practices in the classroom, five measures were taken: (1) teacher questionnaire data were went through frequency count analysis, (2) the 4 enclosed questions on the real error correction task (error correction task questionnaire) were collected and their frequency was calculated, (3) students' perception of teachers' practices on the related areas was collected and compared, (4) teachers marked the actual error correction task then all of its possible errors were identified and categorized and finally (5) all data were analytically compared to provide an answer to the research question. Further as explained in the previous section, teachers' answers to the enclosed questions (however they happen at the same time) were compared to their actual performance on the error correction task and their previously expressed perceptions on the teacher questionnaire to better discover areas of misfit. This was due to the limited scope of the questions tagged on the error correction task as with other studies, five major areas of feedback perception and practices underwent frequency count as to determine the misfits between teachers' perceptions and real practices on written error feedback.

Here also results reported of four areas of misfit including: (1) manner of marking (comprehensive vs. selective) (2) manner of feedback provision (direct vs. indirect) (3) use of error codes (4) amount of selected errors.

As with third research question results, accordingly, results of the fourth research questions are presented below:

Comprehensive vs. Selective

On the first question after completion of marking of the error correction task teachers were asked about their performance on their manner of feedback provision whether they did the marking comprehensively (marking all error,

whatever the type) or they selectively did it. The results showed that on marking comprehensively 6 out of fifteen teachers meaning 40% marked all errors on the correction task. Back to teacher questionnaire data 66.7% of teachers had already expressed they mark all errors in students' assignments (comprehensively), here also 26.7% on the teacher questionnaire they had held that their marking was selective. However, error correction task questionnaire showed that 9 out of the fifteen teachers, 60% this time believed that their marking was selective. This is also in contrast with students' perception of their teachers' using comprehensive feedback on the student questionnaire and also in line with students' perception of their teachers' practices where 66.7% of them disagreed that their teachers circle or underline all of their errors. Therefore the mismatch area is clear enough. But it seems this coordination between students' perception and the results of the error correction task is expressive of the significantly important stance of EFL learners in the context of the classroom so, it is better for teachers to receive feedback on their feedback practices to modify their methods and better adjust them to learners' perceptions and preferences for it. As shown although Tables 9, 10 and 11 show the result of the teachers' real feedback behavior on the error correction task, their perception and students' preference for their teachers' practices on teachers' comprehensive vs. selective marking manner.

TABLE 9
RESULTS OF SELECTIVE VS. COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ON ERROR CORRECTION TASK

Teachers	Percentage (%)
Comprehensive	(6) 40%
Selective	(9) 60%

TABLE 10
TEACHERS' SELECTIVE VS. COMPREHENSIVE PERCEPTION ON TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Teachers	Percentage (%)
Comprehensive	66.7%
Selective	26.7%

TABLE 11
STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS' SELECTIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE MARKING

Students	Percentage (%)
Comprehensive	15.6%
Selective	40%

What makes it more interesting is that, although there is a mismatch between teachers' and students' perception about teachers' manners of marking, there also exists a perfect harmony between students' preference and teachers' perception of their marking practices as 66.6% of students stated that they best liked all of their errors marked (Comprehensive) just like 66.7% of teachers who perceived of their practice as being more comprehensive. But what disturbed this all-out balance were teachers' practices.

Direct versus Indirect error feedback

As different strategies were used in utilizing both direct and especially indirect error feedback, on the teacher questionnaire, 6 questions altogether covered it. Therefore, results of detailed feedback strategies under each manner of feedback provision (Direct vs. Indirect) are presented and these two manners of feedback provision will be compared on the teacher questionnaire and the error correction task with each other to determine precise areas of mismatch properly.

On the first direct feedback strategy which involved circling or underlining the errors and presenting the correct form of them, 66.7% had agreed that they make use of it on the teacher questionnaire. Their performance on the error correction task also indicated that 60% (nine out of fifteen) used such direct feedback provision strategy which reports of no considerable mismatch. But on the second direct feedback strategy which was coded direct feedback, where errors had to be circled or underlined and categorized with the help of a marking code there was a clear mismatch as on the questionnaire only 40% of teachers had stated they use it but it was found out 73.3% of them used it in the error correction task. As to indirect feedback strategies, first strategy was circling or underlining without correcting (uncoded indirect feedback), 20% had held on the teacher questionnaire they apply it to students' writings, when analyzed, in the error correction task, it was also revealed 26.7% of them had used it in their real feedback practices which is expressive of no considerable mismatch. In addition, as to the second indirect feedback strategy which was to find out whether teachers use coded indirect feedback or not, 66.7% had disagreed, on the teacher questionnaire, using it and only 26.7% agreed on it. But in the error correction task 53.3% of the teachers utilized it at least once for "verb form" or "spelling" errors which reports of a mismatch area in this regard. Third and fourth strategies were about giving uncoded and coded indirect feedback in the margin of a specific line that contained an error. Here, there was no split between teachers' perception and their real practices on the error correction task since 73.4% and 66.7% respectively, on the questionnaire disagreed using them further when analyzed, in the error correction task, 80% and 60% of the teachers respectively did not apply them to the error correction task.

Subsuming all these 6 strategies under two broad categories of direct and indirect manners of feedback provision, it was found out that 60% (9 out of fifteen) of the teachers on the whole, on the teacher questionnaires had stated that they give different kinds of direct feedback on students' written assignment and 40% (6 out of fifteen) believed they provide indirect error feedback to their students' written works. This was almost supported by the teachers' actual practice one the error correction task where 53.3% of teachers (eight of fifteen) used and direct feedback strategies and 46.7% used

indirect feedback strategies. Table 12 shows mismatch areas between the teachers' two direct and indirect strategies and teachers' practices on those two direct and indirect error feedback. Generally when these six strategies were subsumed under the two major categories of direct and indirect error feedback, on average, there appeared to exist no considerable mismatch between teachers' perception and their real practices on direct and indirect error feedback which indicated what teachers did in the error correction task ran in parallel with what they had previously stated on the teacher questionnaire. Table 13 also presents the overall result of the between teachers' perception and practices in using direct and indirect feedback.

TABLE 12
MISMATCH AREAS BETWEEN TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF TWO OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT STRATEGIES

Teachers' perception of Their feedback types	Percentage of teachers agreed (%)	Percentage of errors in error correction task marked (%)
Coded direct feedback	40%	73.3%
Coded indirect feedback	26.7%	53.3%

TABLE 13
COMPARISON BETWEEN TEACHERS' PERCEPTION AND REAL PRACTICES IN USING DIRECT AND INDIRECT FEEDBACK

Teachers	Perception (%)	Real practices (%)
Direct feedback	53.3%	66.6%
Indirect feedback	46.7%	55%

Use of error codes

Fourth question in the error correction task examined whether the participating teachers used error codes while marking the error correction task or not. Prior to error correction task, 60% of teachers had strongly disagreed and 13.3% disagreed, on the teacher questionnaire, that they use a marking code in marking their students' written assignments, when again asked at the end of the semester 73.3% (eleven out of fifteen) of them right after completion of the error correction task expressed that on the composition they used a marking code. Also when further their error correction task was checked and compared with their responses on the error correction task, it was revealed that they had used at least one marking code, 5 out of these eleven teachers specially used "Sp" (in line 6 of the error correction task for the wrongly written word "efficiency") while marking students, still others used "Adj" for adjective errors (occurred in line 15 of the error correction task for the wrongfully used word "good") and "Adv" for the errors in using adverb correctly (appeared in line 15 of the error correction task for the wrongfully used word "well").

Given students' perception of their teachers' practices on the student questionnaire where 51% had agreed that their teachers use error codes while marking their written works, and even 6.7% strongly agreed on the fact that their teacher do practice error codes in their writing away from being suggestive of a sharp mismatch between EFL teachers' perception and their real practices in the classroom context is indicative and illuminating in two ways: (1) Taking students' perception helps the context of the classroom improve by bridging the gap between learners preferences and expectations and teachers' strategic plans and methods of providing feedback on students' written assignments and (2) is further expressive of the fact that the learning environment is not only designed for students to learn but teachers as well should be aware of the learning context and educate themselves through teacher training courses. Such a mismatch further shows that not only teachers were not aware of their own practices or but also they even practiced something that they did not believe in. Figure 3 indicate the comparison between teachers' perception, their real practices on the error correction task and students' perception of teachers' practice in this respect.

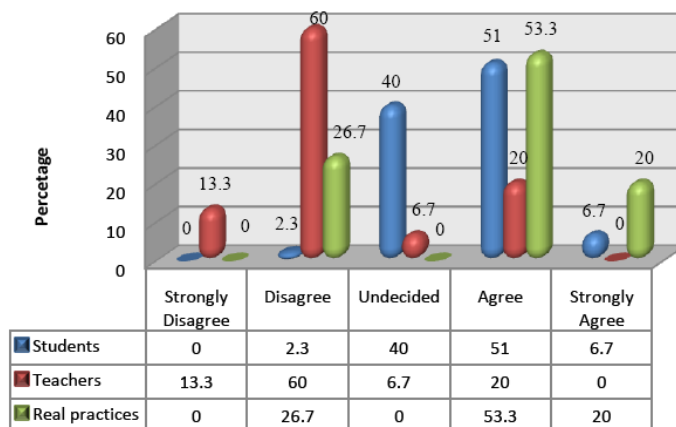


Figure 3. Comparison between teachers' perception, their real practices on error correction task and students' perception of teachers' error codes

Amount of selected errors

As with teacher questionnaire, on the error correction task teachers were asked about the amount of errors they marked in the error correction task. Those who had previously stated on the first question that they marked the sample

composition selectively had to respond to this question however. When on the teacher questionnaire 13.3% had stated that they select about 1/3 of all errors, on the error correction task it was revealed none of them (0%) had marked such amount of errors. Further, 6.7% of teachers had expressed on the teacher questionnaire that they mark around 2/3 of all errors; here on error correction task 80% of teachers seemed to mark approximately 2/3 of all errors. Also on the teacher questionnaire it was asked whether teacher mark more than 2/3 of all errors which had 1 follower, that is, 6.7% which accorded harmonically with the one teacher (6.7%) that marked the error correction task. In any event, this mismatch between teachers' perception and their delayed error correction behavior as with previous item under-study, is well expressive of teachers' having no clear idea for the provision of feedback on errors on students' written works and they are not also aware of their amount of error correction. And further this amount is in agreement with their students' expectation and perception of error feedback they demand or not. Rationally speaking, it can be said, such a mismatch on the amount of students' error on their writings can further promote a context of suspicion and mistrust among learners as this may affect their accurate estimation of their progress in grammatical accuracy of their writing skills. The interesting fact is that even most of these teachers, asserted as shown in the first dichotomy of selective and comprehensive, they had marked errors comprehensively whereas it was here rejected altogether. Table 14 presents the mismatch between teachers' perception and their real practice on the amount of the errors they select for marking.

TABLE 14
TEACHERS' PERCEPTION AND THEIR REAL PRACTICE ON THE AMOUNT OF SELECTED ERRORS

Teachers	1/3 of errors (%)	2/3 of errors (%)	More than 2/3 of errors (%)
Teachers' perception	13.3%	6.7%	6.7%
Error correction task	0%	80%	6.7%

Content analysis of the oral interview

In the interview session as explained in methodology section, all fifteen teachers were asked 10 questions meanwhile an outline of their expressed ideas was written down and just as with open-ended questions on the questionnaire common views got clustered under unified categories. On question number one as with questionnaire data they mostly believed they had comprehensively marked the error correction task, also as to the second question they rightly mentioned underlining and circling and using a cross (×) close to those faulty forms which should be omitted altogether. Yet as to the third questions majority of teachers expressed they mark errors on ad hoc basis. They also unanimously believed however indirect error feedback encourages students to self-correct their errors but they mostly go for direct feedback as they have always traditionally done it in the past. As to error codes teachers believed as they use it only for significant errors they were not aware of it due to their irregular and unsystematic use. On questions six and seven most teachers said at beginning levels it is more on teachers' shoulder to locate and correct but at higher levels up to the advanced ones it passes to students however teacher should still lead them. The same kind of concerns as with open-ended questions on the questionnaire were expressed which mainly focused on students' inaction in "revision" processes. On training for error correction however, they seemed to resist it but implicitly there was a call for more educational training and correction framework. Lastly they called for more students' participation and cooperation as that is the best way to share the burden and more actively engage students in the correction process which they suggested could be the best way of error correction.

IV. CONCLUSION

The current research within the context of error feedback was probably the initial or among the initial studies to take three key sides of the written error feedback as it takes place within Iranian EFL classroom contexts. These three edges, namely learners' perception, teachers' perception and teachers' real practices were added, however, many other teacher and student variables due to introduction of many more confounding variables have not been accounted for (as highlighted in many studies), since it could hugely affect complexity of the results thus this study concordantly in and by itself tried to follow one of the pivotal features of modern approaches to language research (see Dürnyei, 2007).

Compared with Lee's 2004 and 2009 studies, It was shown about half of teachers had accurate correction of their marked errors which is in line with Lee's 2004 study. On the manner of error marking, a majority of teachers had already had held they mark all students' errors (comprehensive) which was— however, in accord with students' preferences— in contradiction with their real practices. This could create an atmosphere of dissatisfaction for learners as well as confusion for teacher if gone unheeded. But in any event, students can get frustrated and give up their writing motivation at the end. On the manner of feedback provision of course, there was no sharp misfit except for one part that is coded direct and indirect feedback, it generally pertains to the next item that is teachers' unawareness of their practice and their unconscious use of error codes on ad hoc basis at least once for, to their views, significant errors. Still as to the next misfit, not only comprehensive teachers did not go for all errors but as with Lee' (2004) study, selective teachers did not go for the amount of errors they had stated on the teacher questionnaire. But all previous mismatches aside, when teachers' feedback effectiveness was explored from three sides that is, learners, teachers themselves and their real performance on error task; it was revealed all previous mismatch manifested them in this last one as teachers did not practice most of the things they asserted to. Further as mentioned earlier this is possibly of teachers' ignorance to four things: (1) students' perceptions and preferences, (2) learning context, (3) their own beliefs and (4) new developments in

language teaching (that is to say, they showed disregard for their students' perception) which supports active role of learners and the learning context in general and what make it worse is that teachers turn their backs to achievements in the area of second or foreign writing research in particular.

Interestingly, this study also showed many differences between teachers' asserted error correction practice and learners' preferences. A vast majority of teachers mark errors selectively, but on the contrary, a large majority of students prefer comprehensive one, for instance. In fact, students' expectations and preferences may be easily affected by teachers' practices. Also several areas of misfit were found between teachers' perception of their feedback activities and their actual feedback behavior. If all the time in students' language learning process their EFL instructors mark their errors comprehensively and presented the correct forms to them, learners as Lee (2004) maintained "may feel that these are the right things to do and that it is the teacher's job to correct errors". Without altering teachers' philosophies and their actual practices, it is not feasible that learners reformulate their expectations, as students' preferences and perceptions are often molded or highly influenced by their instructors' actual practices. Therefore, it is, as alluded to by some feedback researchers, raising awareness about harmful impact of comprehensive error marking should be incorporated into language programs. It is also of paramount importance that EFL instructors take required measures to morph learners into autonomous editors through less direct interventions.

APPENDIX A THE ERROR CORRECTION TASK (Please correct the following composition)

Been anxious is not useful for everybody in his or her life.

There are some tips for everybody to reduce anxiousness in his or her life.

(5) 1. First, Relax. If you are anxious, you can't doing everything well and your efficiency would be reduced.

2. Second, Self-confidence. If you are confidence to do everything, you can overcome your anxiousness about your problems in life.

(10) 3. Have hope for the future. This is so important to reduce your anxiousness. Having hope makes a great energy so you can do everything that you want.

4. Have confidence in other people. You have to think; that other people are not your enemy.

(15) 5. Eating good. If your nourishment is not well you be nervous to do everything. There are some interesting foods that makes everybody happy. Like ice-cream and spaghetti.

These tips make you happy and won't make you (20) anxious about everything in your life.

1- In this error correction task I have marked (please tick).

- a) All errors
- b) Selectively

2- Approximate percentage of errors I marked were about (please tick).

- a) 1/3
- b) 2/3
- c) more than 2/3

3- My criteria for error selection was:-----

4- Did you use a marking code in this error correction task?

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The Influence of Formal Language Learning Environment on Vocabulary Learning Strategies

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Abstract—This study investigates ESL students studying in the program Teaching English as a Second Language in Universiti Putra Malaysia. This investigation attempts to understand the influence of a formal language learning environment (classroom, teachers, and peers) on vocabulary learning strategies. This study describes how school environments as well as mediating agents interfere in vocabulary learning strategies of ESL students or support them. This research adopts the qualitative method. The researcher gathered data through in depth interviews and used open coding as well as constant comparative methods to analyze the data. The findings suggest that teaching methods, the level of encouragement students received, peers' negative and positive behaviors, classroom's activity and textbooks were significant factors that generally effected the learners' choice of vocabulary learning strategies in school.

Index Terms—formal language learning environment, vocabulary learning strategies, ESL

I. INTRODUCTION

In general, one of the most popular languages need in the world is the English language. In this computer era, English language is the only language that everyone assumes to understand. This leads English to be a dominant international language in communication, science, business, aviation, entertainment, radio and diplomacy. Hence, one of the greatest challenges faced by schools and universities in non-native English speaking countries especially Asian countries is the attempt to educate and communicate properly with a large and growing population of children and adults who cannot speak the English language. In this regard, learning English as an important subject is needed for students all over of the world.

Lack of vocabulary knowledge will have an effect on all four language skills: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking. In addition, language learners learn the English language in an environment of a second language, one of the most common learning environments in today's world. Nevertheless, one of major concerns in Malaysian second language learning research is second language learning environment. As mentioned by Maesin et al. (2009), "in second language learning, students find difficulties to utilize the language skills outside of language classrooms as there are fewer opportunities to do so due to poor language environments" (p.71).

Regarding the importance of formal and informal language learning environment and learners' autonomy, this study investigates the reported vocabulary learning strategies of ESL university students at UPM (Universiti Putra Malaysia) in Malaysia. There have been studies which have investigated the use of vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) by native speakers of Arabic, Japanese, and Sudanese students. However, to the best of my knowledge, there have been very few studies investigating the vocabulary learning strategies of Malaysian students learning the English language in Malaysia (Tuluhong, 2006). This study is conducted to add to the list by answering to the following question: How do ESL students' formal language learning environment (teachers, peers, and school) influence their vocabulary learning strategies?

II. DEFINITION OF LEARNING

There has been continuing development by the educators and researchers to emphasize the importance of learning theories in second language learning following the increasing role of learning theories and learning environment in educational psychology. However as the learning theories are applicable to many different branches of education in areas such as educational psychology, training and development, and social psychology, both academics and expertness

have carried out various studies in different language learning. A considerable numbers of these theories are essential to find out their implications in the field of second language acquisition. Learning can be associated to the ways learners answer questions that is related to learning theories or second language learning.

III. DEFINITIONS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES (LLS)

The knowledge has been gradually increasing on the frequency of the strategies used by learners in the language learning process Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975). This is to say that, even with the best teachers and best teaching methods, the students are the only ones who can fundamentally do the learning, as Nyikos and Oxford (1993) stated "learning begins with the learner" (p.11).

One of the most creative researchers in this field, Rubin (1975), provided an exclusive definition of learning strategies as "the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge" (p.46). In 1975 she recognized two types of learning strategies: those which contribute directly to learning, and those which contribute indirectly to learning. She separated direct learning strategies into six types, 1) Clarification/verification, 2) Monitoring, 3) Memorization, 4) Guessing/inductive Inferencing, 5) Deductive reasoning and 6) Practice. As for the indirect learning strategies, she divided then into two types: a) Creating opportunities for practice and b) Production tricks.

During this decade two researchers Ellis (1995) and Cohen (1998) have distinguished between language use strategies and language learning strategies. Both sets of strategies are delineated as actions that learners "consciously select either to improve the learning of L2, the use of it, or both" (p.23) (Cohen, 1998).

However, as O'Malley and Chamot (1990) expressed, learning strategies are behavior or thoughts that learners use to comprehend, learn or preserve new information. Cook (2001) described a learning strategy to be "a choice that the learner makes while learning or using the second language which affects learning" (p.45). Oxford (1990) defined that learning strategy is very broad as it's composed of approximately every decision made in the process of L2 learning.

IV. THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Teaching methods, quality of materials, reward system, peer group, teacher-student relationship, classroom atmosphere, and homework assignment, are considered as a Learning environment and it can affect the learners' choice of vocabulary learning strategies (Kaylani, 1996).

Nakamura (2000) conducted a mixed method study by using questionnaires, observation and oral interviews to understand the effects of learner variables and an external variable – learning environment for Japanese learners of English use strategies when learning second language vocabulary. The subjects of this study were Japanese high school English learners in Japan (EFL situation) and the England (ESL situation). The finding of the study revealed that, the external variable of learning environment was the most significant factor affecting all aspects of vocabulary learning strategy use. That is, the subjects were most affected by the locations, which are EFL or ESL learning environment, when they learned the target language.

A. *The Role of Classroom*

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on the role of classroom and the recognition of the learning procedures focuses on the similarities and differences involving contribution and interaction inside as well as outside the classroom. Ellis (1997) described the second language acquisition as "the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside of a classroom" (p.3).

Then again, Hellermann (2008) defined a classroom as opportunities that learners mediated by the teacher in personal conversation, student's peer, or available texts in classroom. However formal instruction and teaching methods are one of the important aspects of classroom. In addition, Ellis (1990) defined formal instruction as the "attempt to teach some specific feature of the second language code-usually a grammatical feature-in one way or another" (p.13).

Formal instruction related to teaching, and in second language acquisition according to Ellis (1997) involves language pedagogy or language teaching. Many researchers approved the positive influence of formal instruction on second language learning (Briere, 1978; Carroll, 1967; Chihara and Oiler, 1978; Krashen et al., 1978 and Krashen and Seligar, 1976).

Haggan (1990) examined EFL students in Kuwait University where she perused the benefits of using newspapers in the teaching of English as a foreign language. She found out that the use of newspaper in EFL class is a successful approach in language learning. The students are encouraged indirectly to read the newspapers articles and that they have to find a funny section of doing so. Additionally the students learnt about positive, perhaps rather than specialized, in the process, usage of English, and enhance their understanding to the language in general.

Ohta (2001) Found that mature learners of Japanese in their first two years of language classes assisted each other with a variety of peer interactive. She added that, peer and teacher-learners communication facilitates learners to raise their knowledge in classroom. In line with that, classroom can be seen as interaction between teachers and students this view is supported by Hall and Verplaetse (2000) who described "in additional language learning is especially important. It is in their interactions with each other that teachers and students work together to create the intellectual and practical activities that shape both the form and the content of the target language as well as the processes and outcomes of

individual development (p.10).” On the other hand, the textbook is one of the main classroom materials that can affect the vocabulary learning strategies.

B. The Role Peers

Lantolf and Thorne (2004) explained the importance of peer group as a developmental process of learning occur through participation in cultural, linguistic, and previously formed settings such as family life and peer group interaction.

Shah (1999) interviewed nine undergraduate ESL students in National university of Malaysia using semi-structured questionnaires. One of the socio-cultural factors that she identified of ESL students was negative peers’ reaction and behavior toward practicing English language among peers. Shah (1999) also quoted that “aspects such as an inappropriateness in the use of second language, show of dislike, boastfulness, showing off, and formality second language use are several other factors” (p.107). She added these factors are considered for the lack of oral communication and practice of second language among students.

Seng (2006) in his case study of cooperative learning among the secondary school students in Malaysia found that the key informants liked to share their inspirations and information with others and they learned better when a classmate explains something to them.

V. METHOD & MATERIAL

The students’ use of vocabulary learning strategies in second language is examined from this viewpoint: how they obtained information about the strategies from their formal learning environments.

It was decided that the best method for this investigation to better understand the use of VLSs by these particular students is to adopt the qualitative research design. Cresswell (1994) identified qualitative research as an investigative method for understanding a phenomenon based on separate methodological traditions of inquiry that elicit human conditions or social problem.

One benefit of qualitative researches is that it presents plenty of descriptions and features. Researchers are able to learn a lot from particular phenomena. As Merriam (1988) explained, interview utilization is one of the major sources to obtain qualitative data from subjects. Hence, the method of conducting an interview is one of the most popular means to investigate, research and to inquire data from the one phenomenon.

The instruments used to collect the data for the present investigation consist of a thirty-minute (on the average) audio-recorded interview which were conducted with thirty six subjects to gain a deep understanding of the subjects’ varied backgrounds in vocabulary learning.

VI. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In answering the research question: “How do the ESL students’ formal learning environments (teachers, peers in school) influence their vocabulary learning strategies?” Several themes were emerged. These themes are including the role of teachers, the role of peers, and the role of classroom emerged as important influences on how the students acquire new words in English language.

A. The Role of Teachers

The Teachers’ Teachings Methods

Teachers are considered as a dynamic force of the school. A school without its teachers is just like a body without the soul. A teacher carries a big responsibility to her/his classroom. One reason is that all students depend on her/him for their academic pursuit. Everything the teacher says will have an impact on his/her students. In this regard, the majority of those who interviewed indicated that they acquired vocabulary learning strategies from their teachers in schools. Rose claimed that her teacher provides a good atmosphere for the students in school to learn new words, for instance the teacher asked her to prepare a notebook to write down new words. The teachers’ teaching methods has framed the subjects’ vocabulary learning strategies of the current study as they use same strategies to learn new words at present.

Teachers’ Encouragement

The students interviewed for this study asserted that their teacher encouraged them in various ways during their learning process every day. For instance, Rose’s English teacher’s teaching style and her responsibility as a language teacher have made a big difference in Rose’s life. At the moment she is currently studying English in the university.

Jim said his teacher in his drama class influenced his English vocabulary learning for the rest of his life. He mentioned the role of his drama class and the importance of pronunciation of the words. This teacher has taught him to learn new words in an easy and enjoyable way.

Jamal mentioned that, during primary school his teacher has helped him to transform into a more confident more committed and motivated person to pursue English vocabulary learning in specific and learning English in general. An instance which boosted his confidence was when he went to a new primary school in Kuala Lumpur.

Learning New Words in Classroom

The classroom was the supportive environment that impacted the subjects' vocabulary learning strategies. However in the classroom students are influenced very much by teachers and peers. Two concepts are emerged from the data to help the participants learn new words in school. These two concepts are doing assignments, and reading text books.

Doing Assignments

An ordinary attribute in the participants' vocabulary learning patterns was that they generally study vocabulary as slightly as it might be. In addition, many of them studied words vigorously just with the intention of doing assignments in schools. For example,

For Jim on the other hand, gratification towards teachers and doing what they asked to do was important. Besides, Jim talked about his drama class as an advantage which assisted him to enjoy learning English words.

Textbooks

Sarah commented that the only source for learning new words is classroom use by using two vital English resources: teachers and text books. However, she did not study new words outside the school environment, when she faced a problem in understanding the new words the only trustful source was her teacher. On the other hand, Eva has learnt the new words from text books used in classroom. Rose stated that her teachers were not speaking English in classroom and she learned new words from text books.

B. The Role of Peers

Unhelpful Peers' Reaction

The experience of speaking English along with peers produced both pressure and pleasure. The single most striking observation to emerge from the data comparison was the lack of positive attitude towards speaking English in schools. Several students mentioned that they couldn't practice their learned vocabulary by speaking English in schools because other students changed their mind toward them.

It is challenging to practice new words in their daily speaking in schools because of this perspective. In this regard Rose added that "As I like English language so when I was in school I spoke in English and some students told me that, you want to show us something that make you different from us in both secondary and primary schools." On the other hand, Jasmine wants to use new words in her daily conversation to practice her English.

Helpful Peers' Reaction

Some subjects reported that they had learned new words from their friends in school. Jim indicated that he had got some words from his friends. Jasmine describes her friends in secondary school as the people who corrected her wrong pronunciation of new words and spoke to her in English. On the other hand, Eva assisted her classmates to learn new words by clarifying them or spelling the meaning.

In short, the main point of dealing with peers in order to learn new words in the current study is that students can promote their new learned vocabulary through participating in conversation with their peers. Noteworthy, when students lived and studied in closer proximity to each other they can examine themselves freely (Anderson and Boud, 1996). Unfortunately the concepts of peer learning for some subjects of this study had a negative impact on their strategies.

C. The Role of Formal Learning Environment (Teachers, Peers, and Classroom)

The Role of Teachers

One of the aims of the present study was to determine the effect of teachers on the learners' choice of vocabulary learning strategies. Under this main factor two sub-factors emerged, the teachers' teaching methods and teachers' encouragements. The results of this study showed that some strategies which the students are using are related to the ways that they are trained by their teachers. These results are consistent with those of other studies such as (Briere, 1978; Carroll, 1967; Chihara and Oiler, 1978; Krashen, et al. 1978 and Krashen and Seligar, 1976) who suggested that the role of formal instruction on second language acquisition is undoubtedly important.

Teachers' Encouragements

In this study, teachers, peers, and classroom instruction were found to affect the students' perception of vocabulary learning strategies. Jamal mentioned that although there is lack of support by his parents to learn the English language, he is encouraged and given confidence by his teachers in the school. Jim described his drama class and his teacher as the important aspects which assist him to learn new vocabulary in the language. These findings are consistent with Gao (2006) noticed that "these mediating agents directly or indirectly caused the learners to adopt certain strategies" (p62).

Moreover, the present findings seem to be consistent with Ohta (2001) who found that teacher-learners communication facilitates learners to increase their knowledge in classroom and with those of Hall and Verplaetse (2000) which indicated that "teachers and students work together to create the intellectual and practical activities shape both the form and the content of the target language as well as the processes and outcomes of individual development (p.10)."

Learning New Words in Classroom

In this study, the classroom was found to cause the learners' choice of vocabulary learning strategies. Another important finding was that the learners tried to learn new words by doing their assignments in class. For instance Jim, Rose and, Jamal's ways of vocabulary learning strategies are adopted from their teachers. The possible explanation for these results which is also true for this study has been explained by (Rao, 2006). He clarified the fact that in Asian

culture the learners in classroom have to listen and obey their teachers and the teachers are the main source of knowledge and students are considered as passive learners.

The second sub-factor of the importance of classroom is using textbooks which were mentioned by participants of this study. These findings further support the idea of Richards and Mahoney (1996) and Richards (2005) who accounted the crucial role of textbooks in teaching and learning second language.

The Role of Peers

It is interesting to note that all the twelve participants of this study have shown both positive and negative attitudes toward learning new words with peers and classmates. This finding is in agreement with Lantolf and Thorne (2004) who advocated the role of peer group and classroom atmosphere on acquiring a second language.

Nevertheless, the findings of helpful reaction further support the idea of Anderson and Boud (1996) revealed that the psychological processes are not the only important factors involved in learning and that we should consider the learning as a social process. However they explained the role of peers as an important factor. "We learn from and with others and often learn best when we are forced to explain things to others" (p.17). In addition, positive behaviors and reactions of the subject's further support the idea of Seng (2006) who found that the students learned better when a classmate explains something to them.

On the other hand, the other finding of present study was unhelpful peer's reaction toward practicing new-learned words in their daily speaking. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Shah (1999) identified the negative peer's reaction and behavior as important patterns which contributed to the perception of low achiever ESL students about learning second language in Malaysia.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examines the influence of formal language learning environment (classroom, teachers, and peers) on the vocabulary learning strategies among ESL students in UPM. The purpose of the current study was to get acquainted with the topic of vocabulary learning strategies from the students' standpoint.

With regards to the importance of mediating agents such as the role of parents, English language teachers, peers, and classroom contexts, it is discovered that most of the students indicated that their teachers, peers and classroom environment are the most supportive factors that can be considered important to learn new words.

In addition, the reason why students wanted to learn the English language is that all of them wanted to be able to speak in the English language because they liked it and because it is an international language.

Based on the findings, some implications can be observed. The results of the current study can help language teachers to improve their teaching methods to facilitate students with regards to second language learning and teaching in Malaysia. Second, the findings of this research will assist language teachers to design their teachings based on factors such as learners' language learning experiences, home environment, peer groups, and individual differences.

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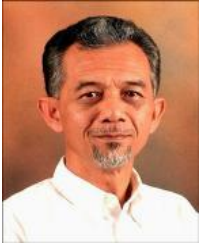


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Bilingual English-Persian Dictionaries from a Pragmatic Perspective: Labeling in Focus

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Abstract—The advent of pragmatics into language studies has benefited different areas of linguistics, including lexicography, in general and bilingual lexicography, in particular. To integrate pragmatics into dictionaries lexicographers provide their users with sufficient information about *style* and *register* or as Yong and Peng (2007) call it "the socio-cultural aspects of language use," and one widely accepted strategy employed by lexicographers is appropriate *labeling*. This study attempts to investigate the practice of the three most frequently used English-Persian dictionaries in allocation of labels to words with pragmatic peculiarities. In so doing, 282 words with such restrictions were sampled and categorized into four categories to see the treatment of these dictionaries as far as labeling is concerned. To evaluate the treatment of these dictionaries both internal and external criteria have been taken into consideration. The study revealed that the deficiencies in the labeling system of the existing English-Persian dictionaries can be attributed to the (1) low rate of labeling; (2) inaccurate labeling; and (3) inconsistency in the use of labels implemented.

Index Terms—pragmatics, bilingual dictionary, style, register, inclusion, labeling

I. INTRODUCTION

Bilingual dictionaries can be regarded as means of communication and comprehension between two groups with different languages, world experiences and cultural backgrounds. The development of pragmatics has influenced lexicography and changed the views toward the features of a dictionary with an optimal usability for either comprehension or production purposes. To be successful, a bilingual dictionary should provide the users not only with target language equivalents, but also with some information about the appropriate use of language. Now the question is how to integrate the achievements of pragmatics into the task of lexicography.

Zgusta (1988) enumerates three aspects of representing pragmatics in the existing reference works as (a) cultural setting in dictionaries; (b) equivalence in bilingual dictionaries; (c) definitions in monolingual dictionaries. Apresyan (1988 in Burkhanov, 2003) believes that pragmatic representations in lexicography reflect the speaker's attitude to reality, the message and the interlocutor. Based on Svensén's view (1993), the specification of "the occurrence of the words and their combinations in different dimensions of language" can be regarded as the manifestation of pragmatics in lexicography. He notes that such information should be provided by register and field labels. Kipfer (1984) also links pragmatics to factors such as time, place, language varieties and the relation between addresser and addressee, adding that this kind of lexicographic specification is provided by usage labels. Landau (1989 in Burkhanov, 2003) believes that pragmatic information, including restriction on the use of words which distinguishes between standard language as opposed to non-standard language as well as geographical, social and temporal limitations should be integrated into dictionaries through labels, special notes and qualifications within definitions or equivalents given in dictionaries. Taking the importance of appropriate use of language into consideration, Yong and Peng (2007) confirm the vital role of pragmatics in learner dictionaries as well as general purpose dictionaries, especially the bilingual ones. They also believe that providing the entries in dictionary with an accurate, consistent labeling system for the words with register and stylistic restrictions can be a good way for integrating the achievements of pragmatics into the task of lexicography, in general, and bilingual lexicography, in particular.

As it is evident, labeling, as one inherent part of all dictionaries meeting average requirements of standard norms, is generally accepted as one way for representing pragmatic peculiarities. Even those who believe that labeling should not be the only strategy to show stylistic and register restrictions, like Landau, do not deny the importance of labeling; instead, they think of these strategies as complementary to one another.

When it comes to bilingual dictionaries, such specification can be even more vital. The reason lies in the fact that inappropriate use of language and communication failure mostly happen between people with different cultural backgrounds and languages, and the users of bilingual dictionaries are certainly among this population. Anyway, in spite of the importance of bilingual dictionaries in production, comprehension and translation related purposes and in

spite of the fact that these dictionaries have a wide range of users in Iran. They suffer from major shortcomings (Qaneifard, 2003; Ahmadian & Askari, 2008). Qaneifard (2003) refers to some of the reasons leading to the failure in existing bilingual dictionaries. Unfamiliarity of the lexicographers with modern approaches to lexicography as well as the lack of any systematic, scientific and realistic criticism are among them. He believes that no attempt has been made to bring the quality of bilingual dictionaries under close examination, and if any criticism with a focus on the deficiencies could be found, it is either subjective or so general that is far from constructive. As a result, the only work the researchers can refer to focusing on the quality assessment of bilingual English-Persian dictionaries is that of Ahmadian and Askari (2008). They have mentioned some of the deficiencies existing in these dictionaries very generally and briefly. The dictionaries they analyzed are “the four popular English-Persian dictionaries,” as they put, namely: Aryanpur (1377), Bateni (1369), Jaafari (1383), and Haghshenas (1381). The study is mainly a contrastive one, putting the mentioned dictionaries against one another, and focusing on their shortcomings in three areas of (1) the choice of Persian equivalent; (2) the use of abbreviations; and finally (3) the pronunciations. Then, for each category one or two examples are mentioned to show the failure of the dictionaries in providing the users with sufficient information. Finally, the treatment of the four dictionaries regarding the chosen word is discussed.

Due to the scarcity of the researches conducted in order to assess bilingual English-Persian dictionaries, no work could be found evaluating them from a pragmatic point of view. This study aims at assessing the three most frequently used English-Persian dictionaries in terms of their application of pragmatic information through their labeling system.

II. DICTIONARY CRITICISM

One of the aspects of “metalexicography” or academic lexicography is looking at the products of lexicography and subjecting them to rigorous critiques (Jackson, 2002). Dictionary assessment or criticism, like all kinds of evaluation, should be based on a well-defined framework. For dictionaries, there are two possible sources of evaluation, “internal criteria” and “external criteria” (Jackson, 2002). If evaluation is carried out based on the claims a dictionary or the editors make about it, the evaluation is one based on internal criteria. Dictionaries often point out their features, especially the distinguishing ones, in their front matter. They try to show the superiority of them over other existing dictionaries and these all can be regarded as a good basis for dictionary evaluation as these claims are testable. External criteria, on the other hand, in order to criticize dictionaries, take linguistic requirements into account, making use of the application of the related linguistic areas to the task of lexicography.

This study makes attempt to take both internal and external criteria into consideration.

A. *Internal Criteria*

Going through both front and back matter of the three dictionaries under investigation, we tried to find their claimed features, as far as labeling was concerned.

Aryanpur in his one-volume Aryanpur Progressive English-Persian Dictionary believes that one of the salient features of the book is “labels that reveal the field to which a word primarily belongs (e.g., “chemistry” or “biology”) and the particular limitations of certain words (e.g., “slang” or “vulgar”)”, adding that being “aware of the importance of bilingual dictionaries in language learning, in translation, in cultural interaction and, ultimately, in international understanding, I have taken pains to make this dictionary as comprehensive and accurate as possible.” In the two-volume dictionary, a similar claim regarding labeling is made, and finally, in the Six-Volume Aryanpur Progressive English-Persian Dictionary he claims that in this dictionary many of the words are accompanied with labels for the first time in Iran, so that the users easily understand the subject field of the words as well as the restrictions on their usage.

Haghshenas (2003) and his assistants in compiling the One-Volume Millennium English-Persian Dictionary (Hezaareh) believe:

“this dictionary offers Persian equivalents together with a wealth of dialectal, stylistic, situational, contextual, grammatical and orthographic information. This will, no doubt, enable users to arrive at the most suitable equivalents with the least possible efforts.”

They claim they provide the users with a wide range of information, including dialectal information, like “in Britain”, “in America”, “in Scotland” and etc., stylistic information, like “informal”, “formal”, “written”, “spoken”, “literary”, “old-fashioned” and etc, pragmatic information like “ironic”, “humorous”, “offensive” and etc. They also make reference to an article entitled as Bilingual Dictionary (Samei, 2000). They claim that they have followed the principles mentioned there, asking the reviewers to judge their job based on those principles as well as the framework determined in the front matter of the dictionary. In the article lexical adjustment is believed to be at work at different levels: semantic level, grammatical level, pragmatic level and sociolinguistic level. As the last two levels are in line with our study, we elaborate more on them.

With regard to the pragmatic level, some factors such as setting, topic of discussion, the relation between addresser and addressee are all among determining variables leading to different varieties such as formal, informal, literary, offensive, disapproving and humorous. Concerning the sociolinguistic level, different dialects, the currency of the words and the social connotations the words convey are the implications a word might carry. As he believes, since in some cases it is not possible to find a target equivalent having all the implications existing in the source word, bilingual

lexicographers should think of a way compensating for the nonexistent features and one important way to fulfill this aim is labeling, especially at pragmatic and sociolinguistic levels.

Unfortunately, Bateni and his assistants in the Farhang –e- Pouya's front matter have not provided the users with any information regarding the use of register and stylistic labels.

Mention should be made that both Aryanpur and Hezaareh dictionaries emphasize that the works are based on the latest findings in linguistics, lexicography and lexicology, paving the way for the researchers' review based on external criteria, as well.

B. External Criteria

Distinguishing between linguistic competence and communicative competence and emphasizing on the importance of the latter, modern linguistics has proved that appropriate use of words and sentences to the context in which they occur is what language learners should acquire. The importance of this distinction in cross-cultural communication is undeniable due to the fact that grammatically correct productions on the part of non-native speakers sometimes turn to be considered inappropriate to the addressee (Yong & Peng, 2007).

With the rise of pragmatics and sociolinguistics, dictionaries are expected to apply those findings to become more practical for the users. When it comes to bilingual dictionaries this integration is regarded even more crucial because of the important role they play in intercultural production and comprehension. Nowadays, no doubt, one of the principles of lexicography is making use of restrictive labels to show register and stylistic peculiarities of the words (Gove, 1967; Kipfer, 1984; Zgusta, 1988; Apresyan, 1988; Landau, 1989; Svensen, 1993; Landau, 2001; Jackson, 2002; Yong & Peng, 2007). Yong and Peng (2007) believe the microstructural presentation of a passive bilingual dictionary should go as follows:

Headword → pronunciation (IPA) → word classes → stylistic and register labels → translation equivalents, which may be preceded or followed by semantic, cultural and pragmatic glosses → SL examples, with TL translation → (etymologies: distant or immediate sources)

As it is obvious, stylistic and register labels are indispensable parts of each entry, if the entry is one with these restrictive features. Based on Jackson (2002), such labels may relate to time, dialect, formality, evaluation, status, field or topic. He believes that "the extent to which dictionaries are consistent in using their range of usage labels and how they apply them are matters for the critic to evaluate."

III. METHODOLOGY

To choose the English-Persian dictionaries serving as the objects of this study, the researchers made use of a simple questionnaire asking 208 B.A. EFL students about the English-Persian dictionary they used. They were chosen from among English students due to their frequent look-up needs. The views obtained from this questionnaire revealed that Aryanpur is the most frequently used dictionary among English students. Hezaareh and Farhang Moaaser -e- Pouya turned out to be the second and third frequently used dictionaries, respectively. That way, the three English-Persian dictionaries were chosen as the objects of this study.

To be more systematic in dealing with pragmatic specifications, the researcher made use of the six-partite classification proposed by Yong and Peng (2007). In this classification words with style and register restrictions are grouped as follow: (1) words that are limited to a particular region; (2) words that have come to English from foreign origin but still not naturalized; (3) words that have special meaning when used in special field or subject; (4) words that are confined to certain time period; (5) words that can suggest particular attitude or evoke particular reactions or feelings on the part of the users; and finally (6) words that have other restricted uses like the ones used in certain dialects, non-standard speech or special social groups. Considering some of the shortcomings of our dictionaries and due to some practicality reasons, we made some modifications in the above classification. For one thing, we excluded the second category from our study because it was difficult for us, non-native English speakers, to decide which word has been naturalized in English and which has not, as our only frame of reference has been monolingual trusted English-English dictionaries. These dictionaries, at times, provide us with the origin of some words coming into English from other languages like Latin or French, but do not give us any information regarding their naturalness in English. Another modification we have made is combining the fifth and sixth categories into one category, as there is sometimes no clear cut distinction between the words of these two categories. Besides, the labeling system of the English-Persian dictionaries under investigation is not that much exact and consistent to take such trivial distinctions into consideration. With these modifications, we came up with four categories as explained below.

Regionalisms are the first category of the sampled words in this study. In fact, they are geographical restriction, and we can take this to include both national varieties and regional dialects within a national variety (Jackson, 2002). This category consists of 74 randomly selected words. They include 30 Britishisms, 30 Americanisms, 7 Australianisms and 7 Scottish English words. Such proportion is due to the fact that the rate of inclusion of Britishisms and Americanisms in English-English learner dictionaries is much higher than other regionalisms used in other varieties of English (Buzon, 1979; Grenon-Nyenhuis, 2000; Xu, 2008), and this is also true about bilingual English-Persian dictionaries. Other varieties such as Irish English or Indian English are rarely treated in English-Persian dictionaries, if treated at all.

The second category of the sampled words consists of those items restricted to specialized fields. To examine the treatment of these bilingual dictionaries with the words restricted to a special field or subject, 30 words were randomly selected. 20 of them were the words used in special subject fields. The words could be legal, medical, biblical and etc. The remaining 10 words were those related to trademarks. Altogether, these words gave rise to our second category.

30 words were selected representing the third category; e.g., words related to certain time periods comprising of 15 old-fashioned and 15 old-use words. Mention should be made that the distinction between these two subcategories is to some extent vague in our bilingual English-Persian dictionaries, while such distinction is well-recognized in the time tested, trusted monolingual English-English dictionaries. For example, the OALD (2000) defines and labels old-fashioned items as those which “are passing out of current use.” However, it defines and labels old-use expressions as the ones which “are no longer in current use.” For the purpose of this study, as far as labeling in English-Persian dictionaries was concerned, we took a labeling indicating the oldness of the word as appropriate, and disregarded the distinction, because except for Aryanpur, other dictionaries do not draw the distinction at all. The reason for subcategorizing the sampled words of this category as such was to find if these dictionaries have treated them differently. With regard to neologisms, we excluded them from our study because paying attention to the date of the last edition of the chosen English-Persian dictionaries, we could not expect them to include neologisms which are being added to the lexicon of English with an ever increasing rate.

As it was mentioned before, due to the lack of any clear cut distinction between the words of the fifth and sixth categories, they were combined into one category consisting of 148 words. This category includes 40 formal words, 40 informal words, 30 literary words, 8 humorous words, 15 slang words and finally 15 taboo words.

In order to make sure that the chosen words are the ones required to be included in a general dictionary and the claimed social and register restrictions on them are appropriate, two trusted English-English learner dictionaries were used, Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English and Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary in this case, as the frame of reference of this study. In fact, all of the selected words are included in both dictionaries and checked to make sure about register and stylistic peculiarities. Then, the sampled words were looked up in the three English-Persian dictionaries for their inclusion as well as labeling rates. To evaluate the dictionaries both internal and external criteria have been taken into consideration.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The First Category: Words Marked with Special Regions

As Table 1 indicates, Aryanpur with the highest rate of inclusion of regionalisms (77.02%), labels only 47.36% of the regional words it contains and leaves more than half of these words unlabeled. Pouya and Hezaareh which include 75.67% and 70.27% of the sampled words, label 16.7% and 49.15% of them, respectively. These figures suggest one major deficiency of the dictionaries under study: low rate of labeling; they leave a high percentage of the marked words they contain unlabeled giving the users no chance of perceiving the restrictions.

TABLE 1
INCLUSION AND LABELING RATES OF THE WORDS OF THE 1ST CATEGORY

Regionalism	Aryanpur		Hezaareh		Pouya	
	Inc. R.	Lab. R.	Inc. R.	Lab. R.	Inc. R.	Lab. R.
Briticisms	63.33	52.63	80	41.60	80	4.16
Americanisms	90	33.33	56.66	52	70	4.76
Australianisms	57.14	75	57.14	100	71.42	40
Scottish Eng.	100	71.42	100	85.71	85.71	83.33
Total	77.02	47.36	70.27	49.15	75.67	16.07

The treatments of Aryanpur toward Americanisms, and Hezaareh toward Briticisms are also worth considering. A closer look to Table 1 shows that Aryanpur does not include enough of Briticisms (63.33%), while it has a much higher inclusion rate of Americanisms (90%). When it comes to labeling, Aryanpur labels only 33.33% of the Americanisms it contains. The reason might lie in the fact that Aryanpur is mostly based on American English, so the percentage of Americanisms exceeds that of Briticisms and Americanisms are to some extent taken for granted and apparently, that is why many of Americanisms are left unlabeled. But the fact is that this dictionary is not totally an American one, and words of other varieties of English are also observable in it. This necessitates the dictionary to distinguish between these varieties. The same point is true about the treatment of Hezaareh toward Briticisms.

As for the rates of Australianisms and Scottish English words reported in Table 1, one point is noteworthy. The fact is that the rates reported in Table 1 are not good representatives of these items in the three bilingual dictionaries under study. The reason is that these rates are achieved with a sample of only 7 words, as listed in Appendix 1. As it was mentioned above, only those words have been chosen which are both included and labeled in the monolingual dictionaries which served as our frame of reference, *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* and *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* in this case, and these dictionaries rarely include words of varieties other than Americanisms and Briticisms. The fact that we could not sample more words is itself expressive of the inadequate treatment of *LDCE* and *OALD* toward regionalisms other than Americanisms and Briticisms. Xu (2008) came to the

same conclusion, while studying these items with the prime purpose of examining the practice of the “Big Five” in allocation of the examples to different items. He concluded that “other varieties of English have not received sufficient attention in the ‘Big Five,’” either in inclusion and labeling or in exemplification rates. Grenon-Nyenhuis (2000) also believes that dictionaries are biased in treating less dominant cultures and linguistic varieties and do not list all the words that are in usage in a neutral way. Buzon (1979 in Grenon-Nyenhuis, 2000) also believes that dictionaries function as filters. Apparently, the inadequate treatment of these trusted dictionaries toward regionalisms have had negative effects on the practice of English-Persian dictionaries as well, due to the fact that monolingual, time-tested dictionaries are used as primary references of bilingual lexicographers, in general, and English-Persian lexicographers, in particular.

B. The Second Category: Words Marked with Subject Fields

As the results indicate *Aryanpur* has the highest rates of entry inclusion (93.33%) and labeling (71.42%) among the three dictionaries. *Pouya* is in the second rank of entry inclusion (83.33%), while it has the lowest rate of labeling (32%). *Hezaareh* and *Pouya* have equal rates of entry inclusion (83.33%); they differ in their labeling rates, though. *Hezaareh*, after *Aryanpur*, with a labeling rate of 48% is in the second rank, and *Pouya* with the lowest labeling rate (32%) is in the third rank.

TABLE 2
INCLUSION AND LABELING RATES OF THE WORDS OF THE 2ND CATEGORY

Subject field	Aryanpur		Hezaareh		Pouya		Total	
	Inc. R.	Lab. R.	Inc. R.	Lab. R.	Inc. R.	Lab. R.	Inc. R.	Lab. R.
Technical words	100	65	85	70.58	90	44.44	91.66	60
Trademarks	80	90	80	0	70	0	76.66	30
Total	93.33	71.42	83.33	48	83.33	32	86.66	50.47

While *Aryanpur* labels 90% of trademarks, *Hezaareh* and *Pouya* do not provide the users with any labels for such words. Table 3 lists the rates of the inclusion and labeling for the words restricted to a special subject field.

C. The Third Category: Words Marked with Currency

Table 3 lists the rates of inclusion and labeling for the words marked with currency. As it is shown, the three dictionaries have the highest rate of inclusion for these items (100%), while they do not function well with regard to labeling these items. *Hezaareh* which has the highest rate of labeling among the three dictionaries labels only 55.17% of these words, followed by *Aryanpur* and *Pouya* with labeling rates of 37.93% and 27.58%.

TABLE 3
INCLUSION AND LABELING RATES OF THE WORDS OF THE 3RD CATEGORY

Currency	Aryanpur		Hezaareh		Pouya		Total	
	Inc. R.	Lab. R.	Inc. R.	Lab. R.	Inc. R.	Lab. R.	Inc. R.	Lab. R.
Old-fashioned	100	13.33	100	26.66	100	26.66	100	22.21
Old-use	100	62.28	100	85.71	100	28.57	100	58.85
Total	100	37.93	100	55.17	100	27.58	100	40.22

The interesting point about words marked with currency is that although our sample words are all the items not in use in today English, the three dictionaries have the highest possible inclusion rate (100%) for them. It could be regarded as a positive point providing that these dictionaries had also high rates of labeling for these items, while it is not the case. Having high rate of inclusion without appropriate labeling which enables the users to distinguish old words from the words used in current English, misleads them, doubtlessly. This is why it is very important to label old-fashioned and old-used words, if they are to be included in a general purpose dictionary.

D. The Fourth Category: Words Marked with Special Styles or Attitudes

With regard to the words marked with a specific style or attitude, formal and literary words have the highest inclusion rate (100%), but these words are not treated well in *Aryanpur* and *Pouya* as far as labeling is concerned (0%). Informal words have also a rather high rate of inclusion with a total average inclusion rate of 94.16% in all three dictionaries. Among them *Pouya* is in the first rank (97.5%), while it has the lowest labeling rank among the three dictionaries (15.38%).

As it is shown in the Table 4, *Pouya* has the highest inclusion rate of slang words (93.33%) and the lowest labeling rate of those words (64.28%). *Hezaareh*, with a labeling rate of 100% is in the first rank among the dictionaries. Of course, mention should be made that *Hezaareh* uses the same labels for informal, slang and taboo words and does not distinguish them in terms of labeling. That is why labeling rates of slang and taboo words are marked with asterisks. Although having 100% inclusion rate for taboo words, *Hezaareh* does not provide even one appropriate label for them (0%). In this case *Aryanpur* has the highest rate (83.33%).

TABLE 4
INCLUSION AND LABELING RATES OF THE WORDS OF THE 4TH CATEGORY

<i>Style and attitude</i>	Aryanpur		Hezaareh		Pouya		Total	
	Inc. R.	Lab. R.	Inc. R.	Lab. R.	Inc. R.	Lab. R.	Inc. R.	Lab. R.
Formal words	100	0	100	72.5	100	0	100	24.16
Informal words	95	60.52	90	80.55	97.5	15.38	94.16	52.15
Literary words	100	6.66	100	23.33	93.33	0	97.77	9.99
Slang words	60	88.88	60	100*	93.33	64.28	71.11	84.38
Taboo words	87.71	83.33	100	0*	92.58	38.46	93.43	40.59
Humorous words	87.5	0	87.5	28.57	87.5	14.28	87.5	14.28
Total	96.59	30.28	92.51	55.88	95.91	14.18	95	33.44

With regard to words marked with a special style and attitude, it is surprising to see that *Aryanpur* and *Pouya* do not have even one label marking formal items. In the view of these dictionaries there is no difference between *occur* as a formal word and a word like *crop up*, as far as labeling is concerned. One might claim that labeling is not the only way to show the peculiarities of the words; appropriate translation equivalents in bilingual dictionaries can do the same function. But, the fact is that no two languages have exact lexical overlaps to be reflected by means of translation equivalents. In order for two words to be perfect equivalents in two different languages, they should have semantic, grammatical, pragmatic and sociolinguistic overlaps (Samei, 2000). In many cases it is not possible to find a translation equivalent in the TL, totally representative of the SL word; the equivalent in the TL might overlap with the SL word with regard to the semantic level, but the pragmatic and sociolinguistic implications might differ (Ptrowski, 1994). An example can be the word *sagacious*, one of our sample formal words which is labeled neither in *Aryanpur* nor in *Pouya*, making no difference between this word and a word like *wise*. The point is that even the translation equivalents they offer do not distinguish between these words, and it is very natural because it might be very difficult to find a Persian equivalent for the word *sagacious* implying exactly the same pragmatic implications as those in English word *sagacious*.

Similar problems exist with regard to literary, humorous, slang and taboo words. These are all different aspects of style and attitude, implicit in the words, and taking all these different aspects into consideration is certainly an important step to not only production related purposes -which is not our main concern here, as the dictionaries under investigation are passive dictionaries, aiming at comprehension and translation related purposes (Hartman & James, 2002) - but also the comprehension of the text in which such words are included. No doubt, comprehension is not achieved only by knowing about the semantic components of the words, but all the overtones, stylistic features, social and cultural information loaded in the words are crucial to the proper understanding of the text. The importance of these factors becomes even more salient if viewed from a translation related perspective, since, there, except for the mere comprehension of these implications, another factor comes also into the play which is the creation of these peculiarities in the TL.

The allocation of labels to some of these subcategories seems to be even more important. A case in point is that of taboo words. A Taboo word as defined by *Dictionary of Lexicography* (2002) is “a word, phrase or name the use of which is considered unacceptable for social reasons.” The *LDCE* defines these words as the ones people avoid because of being “offensive and embarrassing,” and finally based on the *OALD*, they are “words that many people consider offensive or shocking, for example because they refer to sex, the body or people’s race.” In bilingual dictionaries where there are certain sociocultural gaps between the two languages, it is very important to warn the non-native users, unaware of negative social implications of such words, against them, as this subcategory is one of the sensitive ones, expected to have the highest possible labeling rate. But, despite the importance of an appropriate labeling system for this category, the results of this study showed that the total labeling rate of the three dictionaries for these items is less than 50%, and it is far from desirable.

Apart from the low labeling rate of these dictionaries for the items discussed above, inappropriate and inaccurate labeling is another deficiency observed in Hezaareh. Hezaareh does not distinguish between informal, slang and taboo words as far as labeling is concerned, and this is very misleading to the users. In fact, the reason why Hezaareh has a labeling percentage of 0% is not the lack of labeling, but inappropriate labeling, and as Yong and Peng (2007) rightly believe, it is worse to label the words incorrectly than not to label them at all. In this dictionary the word عاميانه is used to mark informal, slang and highly offensive forbidden taboo words.

Table 5 shows the total inclusion and labeling rates and ranks of the three dictionaries under study for all the sampled words. As the results indicate, *Aryanpur* has the highest total inclusion of the sampled words (90.84%), while it has a low labeling rate for these words (38.11%) leaving more than 61.80% of them unlabeled. Regarding labeling, Hezaareh sits in the first place, with a total labeling rate of 54.95%. As evident, *Pouya* has a very low labeling rate. This dictionary does not label more than 82% of the words with special usage restrictions.

TABLE 5
TOTAL INCLUSION AND LABELING RANKS OF THE THREE DICTIONARIES

<i>Dictionary</i>	<i>Total Inclusion</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Total Labeling</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Aryanpur	90.84	1	38.11	2
Hezaareh	82.03	3	54.95	1
Pouya	85.42	2	17.85	3

In general, the dictionaries under investigation do not seem to follow any systematic procedure for providing words with labels. Another negative point in their labeling system which has been overlooked in our results is the lack of a unified labeling system. For example, *Aryanpur* in order to show slang words uses labels such as ناخوشایند، خودمانی، زنده and تحقیرآمیز، while in its front matter does not provide the users with any information about these labels or the differences among them. *Pouya* also uses the labels فحش and عامیانه for these words. *Hezaareh* uses two labels for marking informal words، محاوره and عامیانه، without distinguishing between them. Mention should be made that these inconsistencies are not limited to the examples mentioned.

V. CONCLUSION

Advances made in the area of linguistics, in general and lexicography, in particular, have changed bilingual dictionaries as a mere reference book to a communicative device intending to ease interlingual and intercultural communication, production and comprehension. It is believed that the dictionary related studies can not expect to make substantial progress “unless socio-cultural dimensions are taken into the lexicographic scene, for dictionary making is essentially a socio-cultural behavior” (Yong & Peng, 2007). One manifestation of the integration of socio-cultural aspects of language into the task of lexicography is to integrate register and stylistic peculiarities of the words into dictionaries. One widely used and accepted way to achieve that aim is making use of appropriate labels to mark such words.

This study aimed at examining the practice of three frequently used English-Persian dictionaries in treating words restricted with pragmatic peculiarities; that is, style and register restrictions. Although the study is far from exhaustive, it revealed the fact that English-Persian bilingual dictionaries have not provided the users with an adequate, accurate and consistent labeling system, and this inadequacy is in contrast with both the lexicographic standards governing dictionaries and the claims they make as to their making use of labels to show particular attitudes as well as limitations on the use of words in particular situations. The study revealed that the deficiencies in the labeling system of the existing English-Persian dictionaries can be attributed to (1) the low rate of labeling; (2) inaccurate labeling; and (3) inconsistency in the use of labels implemented.

APPENDIX

TABLE 1
WORDS MARKED WITH SPECIAL REGIONS

Regionalisms	Sample Words
Briticisms	abseil, backcomb, bap, barmy, box junction, cartridge paper, cheeky, dicky, don, gazump, git, granny flat, ginormous, hoick, identikit, invigilate, linctus, lippy, minster, nosy parker, polling day, poof, question master, quid, raver, singlet, suss, telephonist, wage packet, whinge
Americanisms	absent ballot, auto, baby carriage, back talk, baggage car, bald-faced, bolo tie, box car, defy, demagogue, dishpan, filbert, flunk, gonzo journalism, knobly (knobby), lawn bowling, line, liquor store, mini van, paddy-wagon, palimony, rappel, red-eye, schlep, simulcast, snow job, street smart, valediction, way station, zucchini
Australianisms	barbie, bathers, beaut, chunder, cobber, pom (pommy), sheila
Scottish Eng.	baim, bonny, brae, kirk, lass, loch, sassenach

TABLE 2
WORDS MARKED WITH SPECIAL SUBJECT FIELDS

Subject Field	Sample Words
Technical Words	abrasion, autosuggestion, catatonic, capsicum, genome, igneous, impeach, ligature, liquidity, neurosis, ocular, palpate, quarto, rectum, simian, sputum, surety, torque, tort, velocity
Trademarks	Austro-Turf, Babygro, Band-Aid, Dictaphone, Dolby, Frisbee, Jeep, Tannoy, Teflon, Vaseline

TABLE 3
WORDS MARKED WITH CURRENCY

Currency	Sample Words
Old-fashioned	aviator, boor, buffoon, dishy, gentry, manservant, marriageable, nosegay, parson, rattling, salad days, simpleton, vamp, (the) vitals, wager
Old-use	bedchamber, damsel, ere, gentlewoman, harlot, hither, methinks, perchance, quick silver, quoth, thither, thrice, unto, whence

TABLE 4
WORDS MARKED WITH SPECIAL STYLES OR ATTITUDES

Style and attitude	Sample Words
Formal Words	abate, assiduous, avarice, await, capacious, castigate, causality, chicanery, confabulate, convene, defray, deleterious, elapse, elucidate, germane, gratuity, gravitate, ignoble, ill-mannered, jurist, lineage, martinet, nonetheless, obsequies, odious, palliate, ponder, probity, quiescent, rationale, relinquish, sagacious, salubrious, torpor, tumult, undue, valediction, vapid, venal, venerate
Informal Words	Aussie, backside, baloney, bankable, beefy, bombshell, brainy, butty, confab, death trap, demo, dicey, diddle, famished, falsies, grey matter, goofy, icky, junk food, jittery, lifer, mish mash, nab, no place, nose job, oodles, psycho, rattler (rattle snake), saggy, scoot, scraggly, snooze, teaser, top-notch, unflappable, veep, wacky, weedy, zit
Literary Words	aflame, augury, aureole, baleful, baneful, bard, bedeck, bower, bucolic, carouse, deflower, dell, glade, halcyon, honeyed, limpid, noonday, odyssey, paean, philter, quest, ravaging, ravish, sequestered, seraphic, sightless, silken, thrall, vanquish, wellspring
Slang Words	bollocks, crappy, dick, dick-head, dude, fag, ganja, git, knockers, mule, pillock, ratarsed, slapper, wuss, yo
Taboo Words	coon, cunt, fart, fuck, mother fucker, nigger, prick, pussy, shit, turd, twat, wank (wanker), whore, yid
Humorous Words	beauty sleep, compos mentis, hirsute, impecunious, incorrigible, warpaint, well-endowed, yokel

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The Effective Role of Language Supervisor in the Enhancement of Foreign Language Education in Developing Countries

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Abstract—It is clear today that people all over the globe find proficiency in foreign languages vital in the development of their communities in such a competitive global growing economy, where skilled workforce is an asset in the social and economic growth. The massive bulk of data demands faster and reliable means of access to this knowledge. The realization of this fact has urged governments and individual persons as well, to cater for foreign language education to bridge the physical gap between producers and consumers of knowledge. Foreign language teachers are the frontiers, who are directly concerned to secure and accomplish this mission, so they need to be literate and skillful in their field, by the assistance of language supervisors. Teaching is no longer that simple mechanical job of handing over information from teacher - as active agent to pupil as passive agent. Teaching now is a highly complex job, applying very sophisticated techniques and implement advanced machines to facilitate *professional* classroom presentation. This paper examines the role of language supervisors-in developing nations-in enhancing the foreign language education as providers of both: core subject knowledge and teaching skills to their supervisees.

Index Terms—foreign language education, supervision, effective teaching, knowledge transfer

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *The Role of the Teacher in the Modern Times*

Teachers were and still are the frontiers that were and still are concerned with imparting knowledge and skills from one generation to another. But this role was –once - tailored for them to carry out as players on the stage, subject to the directions and moods of the stage director. But the modern role of teachers is more important now, as teachers are active factions, who create the events, control them and most of the time modify their directions. They do not only impart knowledge, but they make it and add much flavor to it. Teaching –in the broad sense- is the job that everybody thinks he can do, but the effective teaching can only be done by professional teachers who like this job and who are trained to do this job, with its pedagogical and technical implications. High quality teaching secures core knowledge and high know-how skills, in this highly sophisticated and refined community of today.

My story with teaching: Teaching was an attractive job, so I found myself involved in doing small business of teaching, where I had my first training with my young brothers and neighbors. But the actual beginning was when I had been contracted to teach English for young people in Saudi Arabia in general education, at the intermediate and secondary schools. As a beginner teacher, I ran into two significant experiences that were to shape my teacher personality. Those experiences equipped me with practical knowledge that I needed, and would be needed by all professional teachers.

As a part of training we had to do some teaching practicum in secondary schools in my country in the Sudan. A teacher supervisor had to follow our teaching development. After each class the group of the trainees was to convene in the supervisor's room to discuss how things had gone in their classes, with their students. Everybody had a story to tell but most of the stories were normal cases. As all the trainees were lacking the techniques of classroom management and learners control, they used to complain from the students' bad behavior in classrooms. The supervisor was to comment on each story and give his advice. He told them that, what all seemed to them as big problems with students, would soon be manageable and drivable in the long run, when they gain teaching experience in the future.

It was my second day. I was assigned to teach literature to grade (1). I had to teach a simplified version of "Flowers for Mrs. Harris". As a part of home assignment, I asked my students to read some pages at home so we could begin the next class by going through the story. Next day I happened to wake up very late as I had been watching an action TV film. I got to bed at the very small hours of the morning. When I was up, there were less than 15 minutes before me, in which I had to go to the bathroom, brush my teeth, have a wash and dress up myself, then take my books and head off to school, which was luckily happened to be separated from our college by a short wall. I did all those things in those 15 minutes, and then I rushed off to school and got into my class in time. I said good morning to my students and wanted to begin my class. But I did not know how to begin, as I had not read the story myself and had not prepared my lesson. Consequently, I had to go a hell of embarrassment. I could not utter one word. I began to lose grounds and sweat began

to come down from my forehead. I felt very uncomfortable, tied in a very small corner like small wet bird. My students did not take much time to discover that their teacher was not ready, as it was obvious that I hadn't read the story which I had asked them to read. Some students were murmuring, but some were quite daring enough to say it into my face that was a failure! There was no way. I had to admit that I had not prepared my lesson. Luckily and quickly, I was able to change the subject into a football discussion, as it happened that the two major teams Hilal and Merikh were playing a hot match last night. I got out of it, but some bright students were not happy with my performance. Then, I told the whole story to the supervisor that:-

- I jumped over the wall to cut the way short.
- I made a poor presentation because I had not prepared my lessons before getting into class.
- I received very embarrassing remarks from students, because I had not made myself ready, to dress in suitable manner to make good appearance before my students.
- In fact, a young man in the front seat told me that my trousers were unzipped. Truly they were!!!
- I also realized that my shirt was one button down and one button up. Unfortunately it was!!!
- My hair was not that tidy.
- All in all, I was entirely in a real mess.

The man commented that it was one of the best stories he ever had. Then he said that I was *very lucky* to run such experiences of *too* many situations during *only* one day. He said; that experience would make a good teacher out of me. I learned that I had committed many mistakes such as:

- Jumping over the wall: he described it as uncivilized and un-educational behavior. He said it was a thief's behavior not a teacher's.
- The second lesson I learned was to prepare my lessons before getting into the classroom even if I would want to teach an ABC to beginners.
- The third lesson was I should always have to make acceptable appearance before students - as some people judge one by his coat from the very first look, then they form unforgettable image in their memories.

That was an unforgettable experience which made me take any teaching situations seriously during my entire teaching career, even when conducting an easy lesson to a child. The supervisor's words and advice were always ringing at the back of my years.

The second teaching experience was in Saudi Arabia. It was a turning point in my teaching career. After one month, I was to be visited by the English language supervisor - an Egyptian fellow, by the name Filmy Jabr.* I hope he is still there to read these lines which should be presented at his honor. The man came to see my work. After attending three periods, he asked me to sit for a while. He said, "Ustaz/Ahmed! I am sorry to say that your performance was not that good!!! You were not teaching the language. You were actually lecturing them." I was stunned. Then I tried to defend myself and told the man that I was doing the best to show him all my craftsmanship in teaching. I expressed my dissatisfaction with his frustrating comments and I told him that it was unfair assessment to my work. He kept silent for a while and continued, "But let me tell you something; your English is very good. You have full presence in the classroom and your classroom management is fine. Let me tell you something about conducting a language lesson. You need to follow these three easy steps:

- Presentation: Present the subject to them in few words and in less than five minutes then...
- Practice: Let them practice the language, as the classroom is the only environment in which your students are exposed to semi real language situation. Give them all the time in classroom to allow them practice by making dialogues and doing much speaking, then ...
- Application: Then you have the back feed by making them apply the lesson by doing some drills as home assignments.

I thought I learned the whole tricks. I thanked the man. He volunteered to make some model teaching for me. He took my preparation book and came next day to do the teaching by himself in my three classes. First, we got into Grade 2. I told him that those students were (...). He said, "No. Ustaz/Ahmed, these boys are not (...). It is the teacher who is the big (...)!". Oh!!! I felt embarrassed. I could not utter any more words. We got into the classroom. He began teaching. Most of the work was done by the boys. The boy would just sit down to grasp his breath, but he would soon have to stand up again to answer a shooting question. He kept them busy all the time. I could not believe that, those were really my own same (...) students as I had described them. They did very well and almost everyone participated in the class. It was marvelous. The same was done with the other two classes. I could not imagine that those people were really so brilliant-so gifted. He revised the alphabet with grade (1). He used many colored chalks. The board was something like color festival. He gave the children too much freedom to move inside the classroom. When I talked about what seemed to me as sort of chaos in the classroom, he said that kids would learn better through games and competition.

That day I realized that teachers were/are responsible for everything as Ustaz/Fahmy put it by saying that, "...you have to realize that behind any failure student, there must have been a failure teacher. Do you want to be a failure teacher, Ustaz Ahmed?" I said, "NO". It was the last time I saw the man. He did not pay me any more visits because as he said I would need no more advice. It was me who was to go to him in his office, instead. I used to go there frequently to talk to him and seek his advice. He was a wonderful teacher and supervisor. He made me love teaching as a helping

profession. I found that to help young people achieve mental and physical growth is a wonderful job, especially when you are sure that those young men and women would be able to use those small machines in their heads effectively, to solve their life problems, when they leave school. From that moment I realized *the important role of the language supervisor in providing teachers with the core knowledge in the area of language pedagogy, as well as enhancing the teachers' performance in their classrooms.*

B. Building Trust

Supervision is about building working relationships with employees. Building a trusting relationship takes time. But when supervisor and employee trust one another, both of their thoughts and efforts can be applied to each situation. The likelihood of time-wasting conflicts is reduced. The supervisor has to trust the employee to get assigned tasks done in a satisfactorily manner. The employee needs to be able to trust the supervisor to back him fairly. missouribusiness.net. So the supervisor and supervisees both have to exchange positive feelings and attitudes for the benefit of their organization and the development of work. But the relation between supervisors and supervisees becomes complex when it comes to evaluation and judgments. The language supervisor has to make judgments about the performance of teachers. Assessment is one of the most challenging aspects of supervision. It should be much more in-depth than a simple judgment. If evaluation is carried out fairly we would expect constructive feedback from supervisees. Constructive feedback is a powerful tool to reinforce desired behavior because everyone likes to receive positive feedback on work well done. Good supervisors provide training and development for their employees and are glad to make the investment in refining employee skills. (missouribusiness.net). Through the feedback we would be able to judge the needs of our supervisees and provide them with suitable training and development opportunities that enable them to do their teaching.

II. FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION

It is quite evident that, one of the most important features of our modern time is the work nearly everyone does now; needs some interface with technology. If an organization embraces technology and has provided training for teachers in using that technology effectively, a great progress in pedagogical aspect will spread everywhere and benefit every learner. As mentioned before, that people all over the globe now find proficiency in foreign language of vital role in the development of their communities, in such a challenging growing economy. Language is the vehicle of thoughts and feelings. It is also the means, through which human communities were and still are able to establish warm contact and exchange feelings and ideas with mutual understanding. Through language man was able to set down this bulk of literature, which saved and conveyed the human heritage from one generation to another. Language was and still is the means of handling our daily life needs. Through language we can exchange commodities and services to satisfy our human physical, psychological and spiritual needs.

Governments and individual persons realized this language role; therefore language education has flourished as a social activity and as an economic tool as well. In this respect, as HİŞMANOĞLU (2010), put it English Language Teaching (ELT) has its own progress and is highly demanding due to several reasons, which implies that English language teachers are to keep up with the novel innovations and recent changes in this field. And as cited in (Bailey, Curtis and Nunan, 2001), staying abreast of the rapidly evolving field of ELT is a valid reason for participating in professional development. In the same vein, Pachier and Field (1997) propose that being an effective foreign language teacher requires a commitment to keep up with the developments in the field and a willingness to engage in continuous professional development. Furthermore, Çoşkuner (2001) argues that English language teachers should be able to satisfy the expectations of regularly increasing number of students by using up-to-date teaching methodologies performed adeptly with dedication and enthusiasm.

To achieve this purpose, HİŞMANOĞLU:(2010) says:[teachers] should be concerned with recent knowledge and comprehend many factors and variables that control and govern the learning and teaching in the classroom context. To maintain ongoing professional development, English language teachers must get involved in many professional activities to build up their own self-development strategies either individually or collaboratively. Peer-coaching, study groups, action research, mentoring, teaching portfolios, team teaching, and in-service training are some of the effective professional development strategies. But Clark (1992, p.81) believes that professional development is basically 'a solitary journey'; however, almost all teachers need assistance and support during that journey from colleagues or supervisors to enhance their own development, by which they can gain an inside perspective on other teachers' experiences and raise their awareness via reflecting on their own situation. At this point, Bailey et.al (2001) note that working in isolation holds teachers back and subjective experience shared with no one cannot contribute to their development, but through the quality collaboration, teachers have chance to escape from subjectivity and draw some conclusions regarding their experiences and opinions. HİŞMANOĞLU:(2011) concludes that educational supervision, as a cooperative problem-solving process, can be regarded as a key concept in English language teachers' professional development. Language supervision is an important issue. It has been tackled by many educationists such Wallace (1991), Ur (1996), Freeman and Johnson (1998), Richards and Farrell (2005) who all pointed to the impact of supervision on developing language teachers' skills.

Foreign language teaching provides the national budgets of some countries like America, Britain, France and Spain with huge income, as the languages of these people are of great importance in this modern time in the exchange of thoughts, feelings, and services and as means of handling trade activities, and above all modern advanced technologies. Most people got independence from their old colonizers but they are still tied up to them through language and culture. Many people in Africa, South America and some parts of Asia still adopt their old colonizers' languages and cultures in their independent states. Some of these states have even given the old colonizer's language social status as lingua franca, among its people, as it is the case in India, where English is given official status, as the language in the government offices and the language of education in higher institutes.

A. *The Need for Language Education*

People need to learn a second language because of globalization that urges inevitable connections among nations, states and organizations. There is a huge need for learning foreign language or be multilingual. The uses of common languages are in areas such as; in trade, tourism international relations between governments, technology, media and science. (en.wikipedia). The foreign language education is not the concern of developing countries only but it is the concern of all. So it is not strange that many countries such as Japan create education policies to teach at least one foreign language in primary and secondary school level. However, some countries such as India, Singapore, Malaysia and Philippines make a second official language in their governing system. The Chinese people are giving enormous importance to foreign language learning especially learning English Language. Spanish is another widely learned second language, having a slightly higher figure than English at 332,000,000 speakers. (en.wikipedia.org). The developing and the least developed countries are in much need than others because they are lacking behind in the possession of knowledge in almost every field, from sciences and technologies to arts and humanities. The foreign language teacher with the aid of the language supervisor may be practically much more needed professions than even physicians or engineers in these developing countries. As through the efforts of these teachers, highly qualified personnel in those fields can gain the knowledge, through their own personal effort by reading in the foreign language, or by benefiting from the translations done by these language factions in transferring knowledge from its original resources to the target languages.

B. *Major Foreign Languages outside their Home*

European and other languages are dominant outside their homes. English, Spanish, Arabic, Prot é g é s are spoken all over the world as shown in the table below.

English	Spanish	Arabic	Portuguese	French
594.000.000	311.000.000	260.00.000	131.000.000	161.000.000

The French language is spoken by 51.000.000 as mother tongue in France and by 128.000.000 people as first language in about 53 countries round the world; 23 countries are in Africa according to Statistics of 1999. The French is making influence after the Fran ç oise Mitrane's announcement in the Dakar Francophone Summit in May 1989, where he declared, that France would drop all its debts of 16 billion Francs, against 35 African countries, if those countries give the French language superiority on other languages in government offices and in education. The English language is spoken by 55 million people in the United Kingdom as mother tongue, while it is spoken by 508 million people in 104 countries, as first or second language round the world. It is spoken in 22 countries in Africa. English is making its way in the world, as it is the language of the computer, internet communication and businesses round the world. Portuguese is spoken in the former Portuguese colonies of Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and S ã o Tom é and Pr íncipe. It is spoken by around 170 - 210 million people as mother tongue in the world, while it is spoken by 9.9 million people in the motherland Portugal and 151 million people in Brazil. The Policy of Portugal to offer full right of citizenship to the speakers of Portuguese language produced positive results to increase the number of speakers of this language. (Encarta.encyclopedia)

C. *The Political, Cultural and Socioeconomic Role of International Language*

TOEFL & ILETs are two famous language examinations taken by millions of people all over the world for educational and cultural purposes. These two examinations are a must for everyone who wants to admit to a higher educational institute in America, Canada, Britain and Australia and many other countries. The results are also used for immigration purposes to some of these countries. These two tests are used as yardsticks to determine the degree of language proficiency of a newcomer or immigrant to those inviting communities such as America, Britain, Canada and Australia. But the results may also be used as political or socioeconomics tools with hidden government agendas. See (Shohamy: 2006), (Siddiek:2004)

TOFEL: This test is the most widely respected English-language test in the world, recognized by more than 7,500 colleges, universities and agencies in more than 130 countries. The ETS organization is the body that, "develops, administers and scores more than 50 million assessment tests annually in more than 180 countries, at more than 9,000 locations worldwide. In addition to assessments, it conducts educational research, analysis and policy studies and develops a variety of customized services and products for teacher certification." The ETS provides its services to

English language learning and elementary, secondary and postsecondary education. More than 2,500 people are carrying out this job worldwide in nine offices. For more details you can see (ets.org)

IELTS: is the English copy of TOEFL as it is one of Britain big business and supplies the British budget with very big income. IELTS is the world's proven English test. Over 1.4 million candidates take the test each year to start their journeys into international education and employment. IELTS is the International English Language Testing System, the world's proven English language test. IELTS was one of the pioneers of four skills English language testing over 21 years ago, and continues to set the standard for English language testing today. Close to 6000 organizations and more than 1.4 million test takers around the world. IELTS is jointly managed by British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (Cambridge ESOL) through more than 500 locations in 130 countries. It is recognized by more than 6000 institutions in over 135 countries. (ielts.org.com)

D. Foreign Language Education in Europe

European Commission's White Paper "Teaching and learning – Towards the learning society", stated that "upon completing initial training, everyone should be proficient in two Community foreign languages". The Lisbon Summit of 2000 defined languages as one of the five key skills. In fact, even in 1974, at least one foreign language was compulsory in all but two European member states Ireland and the United Kingdom (apart from Scotland). (wn.com/Certificate). By 1998 nearly all pupils in Europe studied at least one foreign language as part of their compulsory education, the only exception being the Republic of Ireland, where primary and secondary schoolchildren learn both Irish and English, but neither is considered a foreign language although a third European language is also taught. Pupils in upper secondary education learn at least two foreign languages in Belgium's Flemish community, France, Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Greece, Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Slovakia. On average in Europe, at the start of foreign language teaching, pupils have lessons for three to four hours a week. Compulsory lessons in a foreign language normally start at the end of primary school or the start of secondary school. In Luxembourg, Norway, Italy and Malta, however, the first foreign language starts at age six, in Sweden at age seven and in Belgium's Flemish community at age 10. About half of the EU's primary school pupils learn a foreign language.

E. Language Education in the United States

In most school systems, foreign language is taken in high school, with many schools requiring one to three years of foreign language in order to graduate. In some school systems, foreign language is also taught during middle school, and recently, many elementary schools have begun teaching foreign languages as well. However, foreign language immersion programs are growing in popularity, making it possible for elementary school children to begin serious development of a second language. In late 2009 the Center for Applied Linguistics completed an extensive survey documenting foreign language study in the United States. The most popular language is Spanish, due to the large number of recent Spanish-speaking immigrants to the United States (Spanish in the United States). According to this survey, in 2008 88% of language programs in elementary schools taught Spanish, compared to 93% in secondary schools. Other languages taught in U.S. high schools in 2008, in descending order of frequency, were French, German, Latin, Mandarin Chinese, American Sign Language, Italian, and Japanese. During the Cold War, the United States government pushed for Russian education, and some schools still maintain their Russian. (examiner.com.) A bill in the Congress dramatically expanded Mandarin Chinese language classes for American students. The measure, the U.S.-China Language Engagement Act, would award competitive grants to schools to "establish, expand or improve" Chinese language and cultural classes. It also expanded technology options to help American schools establish "virtual connections" with schools in China. While an estimated 200 million Chinese school children are studying our language and culture, less than 50,000 American elementary and secondary students are studying Chinese, seeking to improve our competitive edge and relationship with China." (examiner.com) Foreign languages are needed in USA for national security as national security experts have said that the U.S. has a shortage of qualified "critical language" speakers – specifically Mandarin and Arabic. Both the CIA and FBI regularly advertise positions with their agencies for Americans who possess some Chinese ability. The 9/11 Commission Report criticized the weak foreign language capabilities of the government's national security agencies.

On the campaign trail, then-candidate Barack Obama stressed that foreign language instruction should be expanded in American schools. "I don't speak a foreign language. It's embarrassing," he said. "It's embarrassing when Europeans come over here, they all speak English, they speak French, and they speak German. And then we go over to Europe and all we can say is *merci beaucoup*, right?" (ibid)

F. UNESCO's Work on Languages and Multilingualism

According to UNESCO, languages are humankind's principle tools for interacting and for expressing ideas, emotions, knowledge, memories and values. Languages are also primary vehicles of cultural expressions and intangible cultural heritage, essential to the identity of individuals and groups. Safeguarding endangered languages is thus a crucial task in maintaining cultural diversity worldwide. UNESCO's work on languages and multilingualism takes many forms – building capacity, research and analysis, raising awareness, supporting projects, developing networks, disseminating information. (unesco.org). As these activities are interdisciplinary in nature, they are spread throughout UNESCO's five

programme areas, each one addressing particular aspects of language issues: Such as the cultural diversity, dialogue and exchange, protecting cultural heritage, monitoring languages policy, language endangerment and translation flows and safeguarding endangered languages, particularly through support to professional in the field of translations and publications. The activities of the Education Sector concern promoting inclusion in education and quality learning enhancement by supporting bilingual education, especially the use of mother-tongues, at all levels of the education system and in formal and non-formal settings; paying special attention to policy advice, teacher training, the development of textbooks and learning materials and collecting and disseminating good practice in bilingual and multilingual education and literacy. (unesco.org) It is evident that we in the developing countries do agree with the international organization's mission, that there is a growing awareness that languages play a vital role in development, in ensuring cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, but also in attaining quality education for all and strengthening cooperation, in building inclusive knowledge societies and preserving cultural heritage, and in mobilizing political will for applying the benefits of science and technology to sustainable development. But how is this bright picture reflected in reality? This is something we will go over somewhere on the next pages of the survey.

G. Language Education in Developing Countries

The UNESCO believes that the quality of learning is and must be at the heart of everybody. All stakeholders - teachers and students, parents and community members, health workers and local government officials - should work together to develop environments conducive to learning. To offer education of good quality, educational institutions and programmes should be adequately and equitably resourced, with the core requirements of safe, environmentally friendly and easily accessible facilities; well motivated and professionally competent teachers; and books, other learning materials and technologies that are context specific, cost effective and available to all learners. (www.unesco.org) The organization also believes that teachers are essential players in promoting quality education, whether in schools or in more flexible community-based programmes; they are advocates for, and catalysts of, change. No education reform is likely to succeed without the active participation and ownership of teachers. UNSECOC sees teachers at all levels of the education system should be respected and adequately remunerated; have access to training and ongoing professional development and support, including through open and distance learning; and be able to participate, locally and nationally, in decisions affecting their professional lives and teaching environments. Teachers must also accept their professional responsibilities and be accountable to both learners and communities.

Theoretically, this is all perfect but in reality little is done to raise the standard of education in developing countries. The Dakar declaration about primary education for school age boys and girls promised the developing nations with (dreams) to promote education in their countries for young men and women. The World Education Forum (26-28 April 2000, Dakar) adopted the Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All, that all children must have the opportunity to fulfill their right to quality education in schools or alternative programmes at whatever level of education is considered 'basic'. All states must fulfill their obligation to offer free and compulsory primary education in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international commitments. The international agreement on the 2015 target date for achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) in all countries will require commitment and political will from all levels of government. (unesdoc.unesco.org). So it was expected that by 2015 that every child should have a place at school and be able to read. But it seems that all those dreams were deferred. In my country Sudan as an example- the rate of primary school enrollment among school age children is very low as somewhere 90% of children at school age do not find places in primary school education, especially in rural areas. (www.alwatansudan.com). The case is applicable to many other African countries. But we can trace some bright attempts where real efforts are exerted to promote children education.

India: Some developing countries like India have made big progress in primary education. The Indian government promised school children with access to computer networks even in the very remote villages in the Himalaya. The Indian government was planning to provide cheap laptop machines to young generation. The buzz and hype surrounding the Indian Education Ministry's breathless announcement ...that it would be unveiling a \$10 laptop aimed at the poor fizzled out like a wet firecracker. (foxnews.com/). Language education in India witnesses great development as English has official status as the second language in the country as lingua franca among the peoples of India. We can easily notice the linguistic performance of Indian experts outside India, where Indians efficiently use English, although with heavy Indian accent which sometimes make it difficult to understand the speaker. Nevertheless, the Indian are holding great position in education, finance, banks and private sector in the Gulf region as highly qualified personal in computer, accounting and management. For further details on language see: (www.languageinindia.com)

Saudi Arabia: This is another example, where the education budget has come to 26% of the national GNP during this fiscal year 2011/2012. There are big projects under construction, as about ten new regional universities were launched and thousands of young Saudis are sent abroad in what is known as King Abdulla's Project for Scholarship. This programme would *qualify* thousands of Saudi young men and women to get higher degrees in almost every field. Special attention is given to language education especially the English language, where thousands of Saudis leave to USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Britain to improve their language skills or proceed for further degrees. Saudi Arabia is a monolingual country where the population speaks only Arabic as mother tongue with very little variations of accents in the different regions. English is taught as a foreign language from the junior secondary school, at the age of 12, but new orientation is there to start teaching the language from age 6 in the primary education. English

is the working language of many leading industrial corporations such as Aramco, Sabic and other major leading educational institutes as King Fahad University for Petroleum and Minerals, in addition to the new renowned King Abdullah University in the Western Region in Tool, an 80 KM drive from Jeddah.

The need for foreign languages in Saudi Arabia is very demanding as the country is the Qibla of more than one billion Muslims who *practice* their Islamic rituals every day facing the Kaaba in the Holly City of Makkah. In addition to some other millions who frequently come to Saudi Arabia to perform their Hajj or Omra every year. These millions of people need to exchange ideas, feelings and services either in their own languages or they have to shift to English as a practical media of communication. So we can see the importance of this language in this country. Young Saudis are supposed to be trained so as to help these Pilgrims in the airports, seaports, medical centers or in the Masha'ar in Mina and Arafat. English is also important as Saudi Arabia is the guest home for than 7 million expatriates who are participating in the big development projects in the Kingdom in almost every field, from industry to health services to education and other economic fields. These foreign experts use English to communicate with their employers especially in private companies and banks.

H. Foreign Language Education in Africa

According to Obanya (2010), most African countries (referring specifically to Africa South of the Sahara) were colonized from about the middle of the 19th century to the 1960s. The only notable exception to this general trend is Ethiopia, but the fact that the country was occupied in the 1930s by the Italians also meant that it cannot completely escape from the colonial stamp. That each colonial power imposed its own language on the African countries it colonized is a well known fact. Obanya (2010) notices that the imperial educational and colonial policies often determined the level of entrenchment of the colonial language, and the extent to which indigenous languages were tolerated and consciously promoted in the educational system. In general, the colonial languages policy in education in Africa followed the colonizers' policy, so as countries colonized by the French taught the French language at all levels, and from the first day in school, while countries colonized by the Spanish and the Portuguese had a practice very similar to that of the French. However, as Obanya said, 'the countries colonized by the British taught English at all levels, but always made sure that the first years of formal education were conducted in the first language of learners or in the language of their immediate environment. But countries colonized by the Germans, while seriously promoting the German language, also gave prominence to indigenous languages in the early years of schooling.' (fafunwafoundation/id1.html)

I. Foreign Language Education in Sudan

The Sudan was once under the British rule up to 1956, when it announced independence from within the parliament. The English language was the medium of handling work in the government offices and in education in the secondary school, where all subjects were taught in English except, of course, Arabic and Islamic Religion subjects. English was also the medium of instructions at higher education in Gordon Memorial College which was established in 1902 to provide higher education in the Sudan. The teaching of English was encouraged by the government and it was also the interest of individuals, as mastering the language was an authorization for getting a promising job in the government offices. After independence, Sudan joined the Organization of the Arab Union and adopted Pro-Arab policy where Arabic began to find its way in education institution and government offices. In 1989 a huge movement of Arabization took place where the ruling regime finally took the side of the Arabs and set a policy of Arabization and Islamization of the country. Arabic then was nominated as the language of the government and education. This resulted in an immediate drop of standards in foreign language education –English and French- and the situation was worsening every time and then. English is now taught from grade 6 primary and three books are taught here. Then another three textbooks are taught at the secondary school 3 periods per week in comparison to 8 periods per week in the past. The syllabus had been written in a hurry, so it seems it has not achieved positive goals as continues complaints from teachers about the poor performance of students in languages has not stopped. Teachers show great dissatisfaction with the syllabus and described it as poor, un-oriented and purposeless. And due to shortage of teachers; untrained teachers do the teaching of English as a school subject. The general achievement tests show low attainment in language competency and practically oral communication is totally lacking, as the teachers are not alert with new teaching trends methodology or they lack the educational aids which can help facilitating the language teaching. See Siddiek (2009).

During my own teaching experience, I saw the supervisor several times. It was just a piece of luck, because I was working in one of the best private schools in the city with relatively good facilitates. But to my colleagues in the public schools no supervision or even (inspection) visits were paid. We can conclude from this that the picture of foreign language education in Sudan is not that bright and the role of the language teacher and language supervisor is almost lacking.

III. MODERN EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION

A. Characteristics of Modern Educational Supervision

Bailey: (2006), sees the modern educational supervision is characterized as follows:

- It is a technical process which aims to improve teaching and learning through the care, guidance and simulation of continued development for not only teachers but also any other person having an impact on the educational context.
- It is a consultation process, based on respect for the opinion of teachers who are mainly affected by the work of supervision.
- It is a collaborative process in different stages since it welcomes various views that represent the proper relationship between the supervisor and the teacher so as to address the educational problems and find appropriate solutions.
- It is an academic process which encourages research and experimentation whose results can be used to improve setting and achieving clear, observable and measurable objectives in the educational setting.
- It is a leadership process which requires the supervisor to have the ability to coordinate teachers' efforts by aiming to achieve the teaching objectives.
- It is a humanitarian process in which the supervisors recognize the value of individuals as human being so that they can build a mutual trust between themselves and the teachers and know the exact and varying capacities of each teacher they deal with.

B. Historical Perspectives of Language Supervision

Some years back the departments of education used to judge the quality of teaching by examining teachers' performance though what was to be known as (inspection visit). The department of inspection used to hire a group of inspectors with relative experience in school disciplines such as languages, mathematics, sciences or social sciences. Inspectors of education used to pay sudden visits to examine the students' achievements in schools subjects; and on the light of that visit they formed their decisions and judgments on the teachers' performance. Then the teacher would either be promoted, dismissed or if he was lucky enough, he would be moved to another place. But in the last thirty-something years, education researches have come to new inventions. New terminology was employed due to modifications in the core message of scholastic inspection, which was turned to be technical orientation rather than inspection tours. The process was changed into a tool aimed to help the teacher in his/her work and develop his/her performance and cared for the growth of teachers' knowledge and skills rather than just seeking their faults and weaknesses. Educational supervision was then seen as an effort aimed at helping teachers to grow in the profession and develop efficiency in their teaching performance. Then gradually the whole process was directed towards the growth of the learners' - based concerns. The development of the whole education process became the ultimate of education. From here we have come to see the new concept of what is known today as educational supervision, a new term with new features and contents.

Educational supervision as I see it is a process of social human interaction aimed at raising the level of teacher professionalism to the highest possible degree in order to raise educational adequacy and achieve ultimate pedagogical goals, as those embedded in the taxonomies of education such as Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. The educational supervision – therefore - is to be seen as a cooperative democratic process composed of two partners: the educational supervisor as leader and teacher as supervisee. The process aimed at exploring and understanding the objectives of education and helping the teacher to assimilate the goals and seriously work towards achieving them. This definition represents a quality leap very far from the old concept and practice, because it at once canceled the superiority of old inspectors upon teachers and stopped harming them by what was seemed to be only hunting teachers' mistakes. This new practice has improved the contact between the supervisors and supervisees into warm human interaction based on natural mutual respect.

The definition has also gone beyond the technical guidance as from just being just a follow-up of teachers in schools, to correct the practice on experience and advice, drawn from outside the school, to link technical guidance with the distinction of the supervisor in one specific educational subject matter. This new concept of educational supervision has removed the psychological barrier between the supervisee teacher and the educational supervisor as it considered both sides as cooperating partners, together in one single process to attain shared objectives. Thus, the very end of educational supervision is the development of the educational process, and not the teacher in his helplessness or vulnerability in the presence of the educational supervisor.

Educational supervision was also defined as a process of leading a cooperative teaching organization, with all the elements of the curriculum, educational aids and methods of teaching, in educational environment with teacher and pupil. The aim was to study the affecting factors in such situation and make assessment of the work to improve learning in the organization, in order to achieve better the goals of learning and teaching. Educational Supervision is also defined as including all the ongoing cooperative educational activities carried out by supervisors, educators, school administrators, peers and teachers themselves, in order to improve the skills of teachers and achieve educational development, which all leads to achieving the objectives of the educational process - that is composed of the teaching and the learning.

C. Development of Concepts of Supervision

There were two major powers affected the rapid growth of educational supervision. The first represented the outcome of the socio-cultural factors, such as population growth, the change of the community around the school, and the

attention given to the quality of education. The second power represented the modern theories that have emerged in this area; such as the new theories and studies in behavioral sciences which have opened up new horizons of thinking in the nature of the objectives and practices of educational supervision, and the role of educational supervisor, his status and the extent of his authority in his community. Developments in pedagogical theories and educational technology have direct effect on the adoption of new conception and functions of language supervisor. The concept of educational supervision has developed from that one visit type- as it was used to be- which was not sufficient for the inspector to form a fair idea about the performance of his supervisee. That one visit would not enable him to judge and evaluate the teacher in term of the outcome of his work, as reflected in the responses of his students. These responses were limited to a number of questions addressed to them from their school subject in this one visit time. So the one period visit paid by the supervisor to the teacher in his classroom, was not enough also to enable him realize the adequacy of the teacher's performance and the degree of his awareness of the purpose and practice of the methods of the subject, to raise interest in students in and take into account their abilities, need and their preparedness. So this made educators move from knowledge to the development activities of thinking. Here the role of educational supervisor in the evaluation of curriculum development and its contribution in the training of teachers is highlighted; where he would move from evaluating the knowledge of the teacher to establishing values in the teacher. This required the supervisor to immerse himself deeply in this field to help teachers overcome problems which they face while carrying out their duties, by focusing and addressing the students' mind. The basic principles of education consider education as an integrated process. So the separation between the tasks of supervisors as a specialist in limited topic of study, confirms the move away from paying attention to the conditions of the school, and the other administrative aspects; which are considered as important integrating factors in the success of the whole education process. The teacher at the school does not work in a vacuum, but he sets off from the educational system in relation to other social, economic and religious policy. So the language educational supervisor cannot provide the educational support and learning unless he is positively affected by the educational system in general and the general surrounding environment conducive to teaching and learning.

Responsibilities of Language supervisors: First, the conditioning and reconditioning of new teachers for their work: Teachers are usually trained in teacher training colleges and assigned to carry out field work as requirements their study. But due to problems facing them when engaged in actual work in schools where they are recruited to work, here comes the role of the educational supervisor in collaboration with the school administration to shoulder the responsibility of preparing these new newcomers for their work.

Second: sessions for teachers during the service: The educational supervisor is always in the field so he is alert of the problems faced by teachers, and the deficiencies in the educational services provided to students. He has to see these problems as evidences of good learning and positive growth of the supervisees. On the light of this, language educational supervisors in collaborative effort suggest some courses that address the weaknesses which they observe in their supervisees. Through their keen observations they would be able to judge the practical needs of their supervisees. Accordingly, language supervisors can help these teachers by many tricks such as: holding session on computer literacy, cooperative teaching, workshop in educational evaluation and measurement to help teachers improve their testing skills, workshops on implementation of local materials from the local environment as educational tools. Language supervisors can also hold session in helping language teachers to develop interests in students in outdoor activities and engagements such as visiting educational institutes or places where they can safely mingle with foreigners to listen and practice the language in natural situations. The language supervisor can be of great help to his supervisees to enable them to have easy access to library resources to help develop their learning and study skills. But the most places where the language supervisor is badly needed, is to help providing his supervisees with the latest trends in language teaching methods and approaches, as well as explaining to them the latest theories in the field of pedagogy, educational psychology and trends in the philosophy of education which are all supposed to be fields of shared concern.

Meeting with language teachers: These meetings should be at the beginning of the new academic year, where the language educational supervisor can chooses one aspect of language teaching, to discuss in respect to the curriculum and the textbooks to see its adequacy on teacher's guide. The fruits of this meeting will raise the awareness of teachers to some important aspects of the curriculum and they make them think of the time factor to deal with this aspect from the beginning. The meeting can also take place after examinations in a form of workshop in which the supervisor can make analysis of previous examinations with his supervisees.

Curriculum Development: The process of developing the syllabus should not remain the mission of the general administration of education alone- although this is the place which is responsible of tailoring and developing curriculum, as action that is individually carried out by this administration, but curriculum development should come as a result of developments contributed to by joint efforts of the language educational supervisors as leaders in the fields, and keen collaboration with teachers, who practically carry out the directives of the curriculum from mere programmes into practice with their students in school.

Classroom models: The success of the teacher in his classroom is mainly affected by his ability to manage his classroom, so it is not sufficient for the teacher to *only* master his subject matter. It is also not enough to adopt specific approaches of teaching but using sophisticated educational tools is a must. The supervisor can introduce himself as a model by showing his craftsmanship and his experiences of teaching by carrying out practical teaching tasks before the teacher in the classroom.

Selection and recruitment of teachers: The language supervisor through his visits could recognize the teachers who can be taken as models for their peers. He could assemble all his staff in a meeting at the end of each term to discuss some teaching strategies which one specific teacher followed in his teaching. They can also help by suggesting new approaches if the old ones did not work. The language supervisor as a link between the administration and the teacher in the field is in a position to allow him effectively picture the situation and know the needs of each school for specific teachers, in one specific language aspect; thus he can recommend the selection of teachers who are suitable for the work or the specific school needs.

Encouraging teachers to go beyond the textbooks: Most of the time teachers tend to literally keep to the textbook as they would believe that these textbooks materials are well selected teaching materials. They think that this would help them avoid committing mistakes, but they should understand that these textbooks are just models that represent the overall requirements of the syllabus, but they do not *entirely* reflect the whole truth about it. So if the teacher literally keeps to the textbook and if he does not find the one who helps him about the importance of the additional sources of learning outside the syllabus, this behavior would make the teacher close down one of the widest windows for acquiring knowledge, far away from textbooks. In this case the supervisor has to tell the teachers about the diversity and availability of other sources of education from within their learners' local environment.

Examinations: Examinations awareness should be one of the most important tasks for the active supervisor as through examinations he will be able to judge the success of the teaching strategies adopted by his supervisees. He can also be able to evaluate the success of the syllabus from the feedback of the examinations' results exams and determine the attainment of the national, local or personal educational objectives of the course. He can also infer the usefulness and the credibility of the whole educational philosophy of the country through the success of the whole educational process embedded in the performance of both teachers and students. To create examination awareness, supervisors have to hold meetings and sessions for training their supervisees about examination literacy. Teachers should know first the importance of examinations as high –stake tasks on which very critical decisions are made to determine the fate of examinees. They should know the types of examinations and be aware of key concepts and terms such as reliability, validity, comprehensives and washback and how to apply these concepts in practice.

IV. MECHANISM OF SUPERVISION

Classroom visit: In this type of education supervision, the language supervisor usually pays a direct visit to the teacher in his classroom. It was the oldest way of supervision. This kind of visit might help the supervisor to form a fair idea about the teaching and the learning processes, as well as inspecting the educational environments under which the education process is run. He might also be able to see the suitability of educational aids. Many education departments depend on the supervisors visit to help the organization plan its general educational policies.

Sudden visit: This is an undeclared visit but it is no longer acceptable now. This type of visit comes as a result of the language supervisor receiving frequent reports from school authorities about a poor performance of one specific teacher. In this case the language supervisor will pay a sudden visit to investigate the case and make certain judgments on it. This kind of visit is considered as an inspecting visit and not for teacher's orientation or instructions, so it is not expected to serve directly the teacher nor the education process.

Programmed visit: It is expected to serve two objectives: to assess the teacher's performance and serve attaining the goals of the supervision department in the educational organization which can be the ministry of education in this case.

A visit required by the headmaster: The school director may need the technical and academic advice of the supervisor, so he might ask him to pay a visit to the school vicinity to solve such pending problems.

Exchanging viewpoints between the language supervisor and the teacher: The interaction between the language supervisor and his supervisees is the core objective of his visits to school. This exchange of ideas has an enormous psychological effect on the teacher to modify his behavior and enhance his knowledge and education. This will be reflected as a positive incentive to the teacher and helps in the development of his students' achievement in the long run.

Practical Model of Teaching: In my long teaching experience *I am* still indebted to the first visit of my English language supervisor. The man took the burden of showing me how he was doing teaching. He taught three different classes. It was marvelous and most the time the students were to do the whole of the work practicing the language in the classroom. I felt that he was able to elicit the right performance and achieve the right objectives of the lesson, as he was able to establish an authenticated learning environment for the kids. That was a modeling experience through which I was able to modify my teaching practice and check the efficiency of my performance from the immediate feedback of my students. Some teachers may doubt the probability of the implementation of innovative ideas in teaching. So this kind of modeling practice can give them confidence and encouragement, as well as telling them the truth, that almost all educational objectives can be applied and interpreted into real learning situations and can be fully assimilated by the learner, if they are well handled. Innovation is one important feature of creative teaching. We have to tell teachers not to stick to one specific approach of teaching. S/he can try many tricks to make oneself clear to students. We also need to tell teachers that the textbook – although it is an effort of good men and women- but it is still a human effort to which s/he can add some modifications gained from their knowledge and from their own personal teaching experiences.

Peers in Classroom: Language supervisors should spare no efforts to help teachers do the job, but they cannot do all of it by themselves. They may miss some points or ideas. Teachers can fill the gap by paying exchangeable visits to

their peers in class. This event would be a good moment of exchanging experience with each other. Teacher-to-teacher visit would be of little tension as teachers share the same worries and have the same attitudes. This would definitely reduce the degree of tension, worry and fear because both teachers feel the naturalness of the situation and the normalness of the environment in which the whole teaching is done.

Refreshing Sessions: The language supervisor is responsible for satisfying the practical needs of teachers in qualifying them by developing their teaching skills. So on the light of his educational visits to teachers; he would always be in a position to judge what these teachers would practically need to develop their performance in the classroom. The language supervisor through these tours would be able to see the pinpoints of weakness in his staff. He would discover that some teachers lacked behind and not up-to-date in their knowledge and skills. They did not know how to follow the new innovations in educational development. This exploration requires an immediate response from the language supervisor to make refreshing sessions to provide teachers with new development in the field of language teaching, developmental psychology and betterment of school environment in general.

Educational Conferences: Educational conferences are lively events where experts in specific trade would gather in one place to exchange new ideas, innovations and data in their specialty filed. Definitely this kind of gathering is not always accessible to everybody in the field of education. And that, almost the majority of teachers may not be lucky enough to witness such gatherings. The language supervisor may suffice his supervisees by attending such meetings and convey the new ideas to this audience. The supervisor through his official position is always in access to the resources of education and decisions, so his envelopment and participation in such meetings would be of great help to his supervisees.

V. CONCLUSION

The position of a foreign language supervisor offers advantages above and beyond that of a generalist teacher. The language supervisor possesses specialized knowledge of language acquisition, materials, content, methodology, second language learning styles, and best practice knowledge. Content specific knowledge can help to articulate a program knowledgeable, provide specific information, ideas, methodology, and techniques to maintain and improve language programs.(ncssfl.org/paper). So the role of the modern language supervisor is not to impart his expertise to supervisees but his role is to make change in the whole education process as he is the first man in the education arena. He is the middle ring between the organization at the administrative level and the teachers at the technical and practical level in the field. Language supervisors can make considerable positive change in his supervisees, because he posses the core knowledge of the subject and the craftsmanship & the know-how to keep sustainable teaching and learning situations in their educational organization. The language supervisor as a specialist, can: -

- Provide leadership in the ongoing design and implementation of the foreign language program dealing with program, curriculum, and articulation.
- Work with teachers on improving methods, techniques, and skills through professional development for instructional improvement based on current research, trends in language teaching, and district needs.
- Stay knowledgeable about the development of foreign language learning materials by publishers and others, as well as supervising the selection and acquisition of appropriate textbooks, ancillary materials, and technology.
- Serve as a resource on effective foreign language instruction, national issues, and related legislation for all staff and the community.
- Stay abreast of trends and issues in foreign language education and brings innovation and renewal to instruction.
- Collaborate with teachers to promote instructional consistency and shared direction and with colleagues in other content areas on interdisciplinary curriculum and staff development.
- Stay actively involved in foreign language organizations and provides up-to-date knowledge to the district. For details see :(<http://www.ncssfl.org/papers/index.php?supervisor>)

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- (English Language Teaching) CANADA <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/elt/issue/view/240>
- (Asian Social Science) CANADA <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ass/issue/view/294>
- (International Education Studies) CANADA <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ies/issue/view/231>
- (European Journal of Social Sciences) UK http://www.eurojournals.com/ejss_16_4.htm
- (Research Journal of International Studies) UK http://www.eurojournals.com/RJIS_17.htm
- (International Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences) U.S.A
http://www.ijhssnet.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=55&Itemid=10

The Role of Zone of Proximal Development in the Students' Learning of English Adverbs

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Abstract—The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) first articulated by the Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky. It is the difference between what a learner can do without receiving any help and what he can do after receiving help. Not much research has been conducted in the role of ZPD and the students' learning of learning English grammar. This study attempts to investigate ZPD in the realm of teaching English adverbs. For this purpose, 86 students studying in grade one of high school were selected. They were randomly divided into three groups, i.e., a control group, a ZPD error correction experimental group and a non-ZPD error correction experimental group. During a four-week period, certain units from *Book One* of High School, in which English adverbs had been covered, were taught. The first test was administered to see the possible differences between ZPD and non-ZPD groups. Then, after six weeks, the second test was used to investigate whether teaching within the frameworks of ZPD leads to better long-term retention. It was found that students learn better and deeper if they are taught English adverbs, within their ZPD. Learning is significantly enhanced when the class atmosphere is in a cooperative and supportive mood.

Index Terms—The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), cooperative learning, corrective feedback, English adverbs, scaffolding, error correction

I. INTRODUCTION

The idea of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) was first articulated in the 1930's by the Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky. (Beheshti, Bowler, Large & Nasset, 2000) Vygotsky's notion of the ZPD, being the gap between learners' current of actual development level determined by independent problem-solving and the learners' emerging or potential level of development, was suppressed until 1958. It, found its way back to the research community in the late 1970's. However, Schutz (2004) holds that although Vygotsky's ideas were lying dormant for so many years, his "theories of cognitive development have had a profound effect on education in Russia, as well as the United States and Canada, helping to shape theories of teaching and learning in each country" (p. 13).

Within the last three to four decades many research studies have been conducted in different areas of learning while taking into account Vygotsky's notions. However, there are stills rooms for investigating the degree the ZPD can affect learning different language components and skills. It has become clear that many students face problems in grasping the true sense of adverbs and using them in well-structures sentences. What has been taken as the main concern in the present research is to see whether teaching within the frameworks of the ZPD can enhance students' learning of English adverbs and whether it can benefit them to use adverbs with more accuracy and confidence.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A. Zone of Proximal Development

The ZPD is the gap between what a learner has already mastered, his actual level of development, and what he can achieve when provided with educational support, called potential development. The ZPD is believed to point out the difference between the child's capacity to solve problems on his own, and his capacity to solve them along with receiving assistance (Schutz, 2004). In fact, all the tasks that a child is able to do alone can be referred to as developmental level. On the other hand, ZPD comprises scaffolding process which is performing the activities with the help of teacher, a parent, caretaker, language instructor or another peer who has already mastered that particular function. The notion of the ZPD clearly reflects Vygotsky's view on the nature of human development and interrelation between learning and development. Learning, which is distinct from development, may lead to development and ZPD is the abstraction that describes the mechanism and potential effect of learning on development.

So in scaffolding process peers or teachers' help is necessary for a child's development within the ZPD. It is possible to describe another kind of teaching and the way of helping teacher in this process by human sciences of the last half

century. Wertsch and Stone (1985) believe that research on teaching has been galvanized in the past few years by some seminal concepts from recently translated works of Vygotsky. His thoughts affect our understanding of learning and teaching. Vygotsky's insights have also affected our understanding of teaching. In his theory, what a learner can learn without the help of others can be considered as developmental level. Assisted versus unassisted performance is distinguishing point so that teaching must be redefined as assisted performance and teaching occurs when performance is achieved with assistance through a child's ZPD.

As stated above, it is clear that ZPD emphasizes the distance between what a learner can learn by him/herself and what he/she can learn by assistance of teachers or peers. In this regards, two main concepts, i.e., problem solving and corrective feedback which have essential roles need to be elaborated. Scott (2008) supposes that corrective feedback helps learners in retrieval of the target language form rather than providing the correct form. He holds that:

Language learners will benefit from corrective feedback that makes them retrieve the target language form (rather than immediately supplying the correct form). The retrieval and subsequent production stimulates the development of connections in the learner's memory. Error feedback can be effective, but it must be sustained over a period of time, and it must be focused on something which learners are actually capable of learning. Instruction then draws learner's attention to language features and permits them to develop knowledge of those features if they are developmentally ready to do so. The rate a teacher has to give corrective feedback to her students is usually a good indication of what current stage of interlanguage the students are on. (p. 35).

B. Cooperative Learning

Among the popular approaches towards learning language components are those which manifest learning by collaboration and interaction. As Dillenbourg (1999) discussed, collaborative learning is not one single mechanism. In fact learners perform the tasks and activities since they produce specific learning processes not because they are two. One of the most important methods of learning is Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) that is considered as a part of Collaborative Learning (CLL) which is an instructional approach. Olsen and Kagan (as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001) believe that:

Cooperative Learning is an approach to teaching that makes maximum use of cooperative activities involving pairs and small groups of learners in the classroom. Cooperative learning is group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others. (p. 192)

Because in the realm of collaborative situation learners and teacher interact with each other, it can be said that a kind of social interaction is performed. Dillenbourg (1999) emphasizes that 'collaborative learning' describes a situation in which particular forms of interaction among people are expected to occur, which would trigger learning mechanisms, but there is no guarantee that the expected interactions will actually occur. In this way, creating a chance to develop different kinds of interactions can help peers to perform the tasks. Concerning the profits of collaborative learning and effects of group working in the learning context, Widdowson (1990) asserts that cooperative learning is one of the best researched of all teaching strategies. There are some definite methods which show that teachers and students are more successful in groups because they have the opportunities of collaborative work in which the students can learn better and faster and also they can feel that they are an important member in the group that help develop the processes of learning and teaching. So, when they have a positive view towards the learning process, they will learn more efficiently. Of course it is not true that just making a group and assigning a project that learners should do can necessarily end in success. Nevertheless, the teacher should be aware of the essential methods of cooperative learning and social interactions among the peers.

Cooperative learning is a general term for different small group interactive instructional processes. Students work together on academic tasks in small groups to help themselves and their partners learn together. Students are responsible for their learning and they perform the task of learning as if they need each other. So the learners can learn better and deeper in groups with positive interactions than doing the tasks alone. In this regard Gokhale (1995) emphasizes that:

The term 'collaborative learning' refers to an instruction method in which students at various performance levels work together in small groups toward common goals. The students are responsible for one another's learning as well as their own. Thus, the success of one student helps other students to be successful. (p. 4)

Collaborations between teacher and students and among students comprise the classroom interaction in which students work together in small groups to learn and they are responsible for their learning. These methods emphasize the use of team goals and team success which can be achieved only if all members of the team learn the objectives being taught. Mayer (2003) declares that in order to teach, begin with a familiar, concrete example or analogy and help students relate the information to personal experiences, then explicitly state how and why material will be useful and use personalized speech. Helping students feel confident that they can master the material can be the next important item affecting on motivation development. As a matter of fact, tasks are not something to do together as a team but to learn together as a team. Collaborative learning happens when students work in pairs or groups. Students and teachers negotiate the rules that govern them. They discuss what are to be taught and how they should be taught. Descriptions of classroom interaction focused initially on the language used by the teacher, especially teacher questions and the learner responses. An important feature is how a teacher can create the interaction opportunities in learning context.

Fortenberry (1998) considers that collaborative learning skills are designed to maximize four attributes among students, which are 'positive interdependence', 'individual accountability', 'equal participation', and 'simultaneous interaction'.

In traditional models of classroom learning there used to be no or very little cooperative interaction among the learners themselves on the one hand and between the teacher and the students on the other. In fact, in that teacher-fronted model competition was more fostered than cooperation. It is now held that there are advantages in learner-centered approach over teacher-fronted methods. According to Brown (2001), there are certain characteristics shared in approximately all cooperative learning methods:

- Students work together on the tasks which are better done in group work.
- Two to five members should be in every small group.
- Students use cooperative, pro-social behavior to accomplish their ordinary tasks or learning activities.
- Students are positively interdependent.
- Activities are structured in a way that students need each other to complete their common tasks or learning activities.
- Students are individually accountable or responsible for their work or learning.

In second language teaching, Cooperative Language Learning has been embraced as a way of promoting communicative interaction in the classroom and is seen as an extension of the principles of Communicative Language Teaching. Learner-centered approach has more advantages over a teacher-centered because it helps improve learner's motivation and decrease his stress of performing the task alone, and also it provides the opportunity for communication strategies, social interactions and doing interactive tasks. Accordingly, through interactive group activities a variety of curricula can be applied.

C. *Corrective Feedback*

Celce-Murcia (1991) holds that "The history of second language teaching has witnessed changing perceptions of corrective feedback" (p. 244). Moreover, Gass (1997, p. 34) believes that views on the role of corrective feedback can be highly diverse, even polarized. The Audiolingual method of language teaching, for example, advocated minimal or no tolerance of learner errors. It suggested that every effort should be made to prevent errors. On the other hand, the Natural Approach considered error correction unnecessary and counterproductive. The latter view is also shared notably by the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach that has come to dominate L2 classrooms since the early 1970s.

Regarding deep changes of researchers' attitudes toward corrective feedback for a long time, it is necessary to have some pieces of information about the principles of corrective feedback and its meaning. Gass (1997) affirms that corrective feedback is referred to as any behavior of supplying an appropriate item in response to what is perceived and interpreted to be an error committed by students. It seems to be a current tendency that many teachers and researchers treat producing incorrect forms as a positive phenomenon in which learners are trying to form and test their interlanguage systems. In this respect, whatever reactions teachers will make to learners' errors are considered a crucial aspect of language teaching, recognizing that making errors is the representative of the learning processes.

Corrective feedback is categorized into two different branches, explicit corrective feedback and implicit one. Gass (1997) disagrees with some researchers who believe that experienced teachers use more implicit corrective feedback than explicit corrective feedback, because explicit corrective feedback breaks the main sequence of communication. It is expected that this feedback occurs less frequently than implicit corrective feedback. Teachers should keep in mind a good balance between explicit feedback and implicit feedback. Explicit feedback tends to push the students forward to alter the interim grammar and implicit feedback is likely to let the communication flow smoothly. Experienced teachers allow their students to self-correct more often than other-correct and they react to errors with much more explicit corrective feedback than implicit feedback. As to feedbacks provided by teachers or supervisors Scheeler, Ruhl, and MacAfee (2004) hold that teachers should insist on receiving feedback for improving the new teaching methods they might try to apply in their classrooms. They also talk about the different forms feedbacks may take.

Teachers who attempt to try new teaching methods must receive regular feedback about the impact of new practices on student learning. In order to provide effective feedback to teachers, supervisors and others involved in teacher preparation must first know the attributes of effective feedback. However, feedback may take many forms, may be delivered in many ways at different parts of the learning process, and by different individuals. The nature of the behavior that is the focus of the feedback may also impact feedback effectiveness. (p. 31)

Some of the researchers concern the error in learning context as a precious matter by which students are helped to learn the points more carefully and learning in this kind of process hardly will be forgotten. Negative feedback is essential to L2 learners when positive input is inadequate to lead the learners towards the correct form of the target language. Due to the incompleteness of relevant data available to L2 learners, such learners need to be provided with feedback. Feedback can help the L2 learners learn the subject matters deeply. The usefulness of corrective feedback is highly dependent upon the nature of the transaction and mediation provided by the expert in this procedure. Nassaji and Swain (1997) suppose that within the Vygotskian sociocultural perspective and drawing the Vygotskian notion of the ZPD, corrective feedback can result in better and deeper learning. Error correction is considered as a social activity involving joint participation and meaningful transaction between the learners and the teachers.

One aspect of ZPD in language acquisition is the role of corrective feedback. There seems to be a general consensus among researchers that corrective feedback has a role to play in second language (L2) learning. Nassaji and Swain (1997) find out that negotiated help provided within the learners' ZPD is more effective than help provided randomly. A difference between ZPD and non-ZPD students' performance is revealed in a way that ZPD students outperformed non-ZPD students in the final task. Furthermore, ZPD students exhibited consistent growth over time, a pattern not observed in non-ZPD student's performance. This lack of consistency can be interpreted in light of the nature of the random help and the mismatch between the random help and the level of feedback the learner needed. So more learning took place in the case of ZPD learner versus non-ZPD learner. Several cases of intra-session (micro genetic) and inter-session (macro genetic) growth were observed among ZPD students. Such learning indicators are not observed in non-ZPD students. Much of the time, the random prompts failed to help non-ZPD students. These findings are consistent with the Vygotskian sociocultural perspective in which knowledge is defined as social in nature and are constructed through a process of collaboration, interaction, and communication among learners in social settings and as the result of interaction within ZPD.

Finally, it should be noted that the direction in ZPD classes is neither a bottom up process nor a top down one, but activities are directed in double-move processes. This means that sometimes a general rule was considered first; then the details were discussed and at other times the detailed and minor subjects took the priority (Lantolf & Throne, 2006).

III. THE PRESENT STUDY

The researchers intend to find a new trace in the old-used and traditional ways of teaching grammatical items in high school classes. If the pupils are engaged in the process of learning more actively and bring into practice the highly-emphasized, but less utilized notion of learning by cooperation and interaction, then both teaching and learning are facilitated. If teachers employ certain strategies to engage students in their peers' learning and indicate that they can have helpful roles in this process, they will not only be promoted in better and deeper learning but also they will find a very good feeling towards their learning context. Of course in these kinds of classes the teacher will feel more relaxed to think about other aspects of her students and bring more complex and up-to-date methods that can facilitate processes of learning and teaching. In addition, since teaching in the domain of the ZPD asks for taking into account some neglected areas of language teaching and learning in high schools, a noticeable growth in these areas might show up. In fact, in the domain of the ZPD, every feature in classroom context will find more effective role, the role which is almost neglected.

The present research is an attempt to examine whether teaching adverbs, specifically adverbs of time, manner place, based on the ZPD of the learners can produce better results in students' learning or not. In fact, this study is an attempt to compare students' learning of adverbs both in the domain of ZPD and out of it to conclude the role of ZPD in enhancing the learning of English adverbs by high school learners. Moreover, error correction is another important challenge in the classroom context that teachers and students face, so it is noticed, while teaching in the students' ZPD, which kind of assistance can help them more in correcting errors, random or negotiated, i.e., organized. It is more favorable to know how much attention to the ZPD can lead to a more stable and deeper long term learning of adverbs, too.

The present study investigates the role of ZPD in learning English adverbs by Iranian high school learners and addresses the following questions:

- 1- Does teaching adverbs within students' ZPD lead to a better learning of adverbs?
- 2- Can corrective feedback provided within learners' ZPD improve their knowledge of adverbs as opposed to feedback provided randomly and irrespective of the learners' ZPD?
- 3- Does teaching based on students' ZPD improve students' retention of learned adverbs?

IV. METHOD

A. Participants

The participants were three classes of female students who had newly entered in grade one of high school. They will be randomly divided into three groups, i.e., a control group and two experimental groups. Each group consists of 25 to 30 students. These students will be chosen among at least 120 students. In order to be sure that the three groups are equally proficient, after choosing the groups, a pretest, devised according to the students' previous knowledge, was administered. Then, the mean score of the three groups were compared. This pretest both helped with the initial homogeneity and final comparison.

B. Instruments

The materials used in the present study include the grammatical points of lesson five adverbs of English Book One at high school. In order to examine the effect of ZPD something which is slightly above students' level of ability must be taught (Lave, 1988). Since adverbs are presented in students' official textbook, and nearly all students are unfamiliar with them, it is expected to be relevant to this study. In lesson five of English Book One, adverbs are presented in details. So the grammatical structures of this lesson, including adverbs and their rules, were taught to the three groups

during four weeks. Each week consisted of two sessions: a 90- minute-session and a 45-minute one. It is worth noting that in order to comply with the educational system the instruction was limited just to those adverbs presented in the book. A 30-item-test was devised according to the adverbs covered in the students' textbook. There were 10 four-option multiple-choice items, 5 items which asked for constructing an adverb by the use of the verbs given in parentheses, 10 scrambled sentences to be unscrambled to test the position of adverbs in sentences, and 5 questions to be answered by using the adverbs given in parentheses in this test. This layout was what the students were already familiar with and the examination board of the ministry of education confirmed.

C. Treatment

While adverbs are taught to the control group based on the traditional ways of teaching including providing the students with explicit explanation of the rules, doing drills and exercises in the book. Teaching adverbs within the realm of the students' ZPD will be directed to the two experiential groups. In those cases, the teacher's role is that of a facilitator, or a collaborator. The students work in groups. Social interaction among the group members and between the teacher and the students is emphasized and the teacher works as a mediator. Assistance is given whenever necessary. To be more precise, each group received the followings:

1- The control group received explicit instruction, a traditional grammar lecture followed by translation exercises. The rules were taught deductively. The learners' native language was used without any limitation. Students were asked to do the exercises individually and error correction took place on the spot by the teacher. Students were also required to find the adverbs from the reading text in their textbook and write them down in a table in each session.

2- The two experimental groups received the treatment. Both groups were engaged in the same treatment except for the error correction section (to be explained later in this paper). After a brief explanation of adverbs by the teacher in English, they dealt with doing tasks in reading and writing phases. In the reading phase, students read the reading text in their textbook. They were asked to find the intended adverbs and write them down in their notebooks in a table while they provided the missing parts.

3- As said above, another treatment was error correction. One experimental group received corrective feedback within its ZPD and the other experimental group received corrective feedback randomly and irrelevant of its ZPD (hereafter the non-ZPD error correction group).

D. Procedures

The present study has been done in real classroom situations exactly similar to what really happens in many high schools in Iran. So, the three groups will attend their classes two times, each taking three hours. The treatment lasts for four weeks based on the curriculum.

The adverbs were presented to all the three groups in three separate classes. As said earlier the two experimental groups worked within the ZPD. The students were exposed to situations or tasks and the teacher only gave support whenever necessary. The support was implicit as much as possible while leaving the students to discover the rules and the correct responses to questions by themselves. As students improved in each phase, the scaffolding strategies were withdrawn or faded out little by little.

One of the techniques for the two experimental groups was ten written sentences each containing one mistake in the adverb and the students were supposed to read and correct the mistakes. This approach was merely employed during the teaching phase. Therefore, in certain cases, the teachers provided help and support in accomplishing this task. However, for the ZPD error correction group, beginning from zero level and grew up little by little where and when necessary. But for the non-ZPD error correction group the teacher offered help randomly.

The 30-item test devised according to the content of the textbook used in the present study was administered two times, once after four weeks of instruction and once after six weeks. The purpose of the second administration was to see how much of the adverbs the students could recall if they had learned them within their ZPD.

E. Results

As stated earlier, after four weeks of instruction the 30-items test was administered to all the three groups. It is worth noting that all the scores of the students were taken within the range of 0 to 20. Table 1 shows the statistics for the three groups after administration of this test

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE SCORES OBTAINED BY ALL LEARNERS IN THE FIRST ADMINISTRATION OF THE TEST

Groups	Mean	SD
The Control Group	14.07	3.21
The ZPD Error Correction Experimental Group	17.07	2.98
The Non-ZPD Error Correction Experimental Group	16.60	2.72
The Two Experimental Groups	17.07	2.98

It can be seen in the table above that the mean score of the control group is less than that of each of the experimental groups. Moreover, the table shows that the ZPD experimental group performed better than Non-ZPD experimental group. The result of the t-test indicated that the difference between the performance of the control group and that of the both experimental groups was significant (Table 2).

TABLE 2
RESULTS OF THE COMPARISON AMONG THE PERFORMANCES OF THE GROUPS IN THE FIRST ADMINISTRATION OF THE TEST

Groups	Mean	SD	Standard Error Mean	Sig	Sig(t-tailed)	t	df
The Control Group	14.07	3.21	0.78	0.59	0.001	-3.82	84
Both Experimental Groups	17.07	2.98					

Moreover, the comparison between the scores obtained by the two experimental groups, i.e., ZPD experimental group and Non-ZPD experimental group, reveals that they performed very closely to each other in this test and the difference between them is not significant (Table 3).

TABLE 3
RESULTS OF THE COMPARISON BETWEEN THE PERFORMANCES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS IN THE FIRST ADMINISTRATION OF THE TEST

Groups	Mean	SD	Sig	Sig(2-tailed)	t	df
The ZPD Error Correction Experimental	17.07	2.98	0.41	0.57	0.56	54
The Non-ZPD Error Correction Experimental	16.60	2.72				

In order to see how much students could recall adverbs when they had learned them based on their ZPDs, they took the same post-test six weeks after the first administration of the test. In this way, a comparison was done between the groups in the two administrations of the test. Table 4 shows the statistics regarding the performance of the students in the second administration.

TABLE 4
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE SCORES OBTAINED BY ALL LEARNERS IN THE SECOND ADMINISTRATION OF THE TEST

Groups	Mean	SD
The Control Group	10.80	3.37
The ZPD Error Correction Experimental Group	15.16	2.32
The Non-ZPD Error Correction Experimental Group	14.71	2.74
The Two Experimental Groups	14.87	2.54

As table 4.4 shows, the students in the experimental groups obtained higher scores in the second administration of the test than the control group. Moreover, there was a slight decrease in the means of the groups compared with the first administration of the test. This might have happened due to the relative failure of retention in all groups. Results of a t-test revealed that the difference between the performances of the control group and that of the experimental groups was significant (Table 5).

TABLE 5
RESULTS OF THE COMPARISON AMONG THE PERFORMANCES OF THE GROUPS IN THE SECOND ADMINISTRATION OF THE TEST

Groups	Mean	SD	Sig	Sig(2-tailed)	T	df
The Control Group	10.80	3.37	0.52	0.0001	-5.31	54
Both the Experimental Groups	14.87	2.54				

V. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

The present study aimed at finding out whether or not teaching English adverbs within learners' ZPD would lead to better learning adverbs and longer stability of them. To this goal, three research questions were posed. The first question asked whether teaching adverbs in students' ZPD would lead to a better learning of adverbs. By analyzing the results reported in table 1, it can be understood that it does make a significant difference to teach based of learners' ZPD. It was confirmed that those students who received the treatment did much better than those who did not. Since they were taught by applying and/or activating their ZPD, they could internalize adverbs better and deeper and consequently could obtain higher scores in the test.

The second question, however, dealt with application of corrective feedback provided within learners' ZPD as well as the application of corrective feedback irrespective of the learners' ZPD could improve learners' knowledge of adverbs. The results showed that the students in the ZPD error correction experimental group obtained higher scores than those in the Non-ZPD error correction experimental group. However, the difference between the two groups was shown to be insignificant.

The third research question asked whether the students' retention differs when they are taught within their ZPD. In fact, after six weeks of administering the first post-test, the same test was administered again to analyze the results. It was shown that the experimental groups did much better than the control group. Another t-test was conducted to compare the experimental groups' performances against that of the control group. As indicated in table 5, the observed t is 5.31 which is higher than the critical value of $t=2.00$. So, it can be said with some degree of certainty that teaching within learners' ZPD matters and leads to better retention of the materials taught.

It was shown in the present study that the learners learn better and deeper if they are taught language components, e.g., adverbs, based on their ZPD. When the class atmosphere is in a cooperative and supportive mood and the learners themselves take the responsibility for accomplishing the learning task, learning is enhanced. On the other hand, it does

not seem that the teacher needs to explain everything in details to the learners. She can only give assistance, if needed, of course, beyond the learners' ZPD and this support gradually decreases as the learners' ability is enhanced. Also, the study indicated that giving students support based on their ZPDs to correct grammatical errors has a minor role in learning grammatical points. Moreover, when learners' ZPD is taken into account, long term retention is facilitated.

The findings of the present study are to a large extent in line with the studies conducted by Portes and Zady (1994), Gokhale (1995) and Torres (1996) as they also came to the conclusion that teaching grammatical issues within learners' ZPD can enhance learning well. Gokhale (1995) also concluded that collaborative learning is more productive than individual learning. Portes and Zady (1994) also found that students are more successful in problem solving when they work cooperatively. Another reason for students' improvement might lie in their feeling of being autonomous and self-dependent. This has also been shown to create a more convenient atmosphere for better learning and longer retention.

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Empirical Research on the Chinese Ability of New Vietnamese Female Immigrants in Southern Taiwan

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Abstract—This research is to investigate the relationship between the demographic data variables of new Vietnamese female immigrants in southern Taiwan and their Chinese language ability. Through statistical analysis, the research shows that the demographic data variables had a significant influence on the “Chinese speaking ability” of new Vietnamese female immigrants in southern Taiwan. This study discovered that (1) new Vietnamese female immigrants working in the service industry are better in Chinese than housewives; (2) new Vietnamese female immigrants with a household income between 40,000-60,000 NT are better in Chinese than those with a household income between 20,000-40,000 NT; (3) new Vietnamese female immigrants that studied Chinese for 6-12 months before they moved to Taiwan are better in Chinese than those that did not; and (4) new Vietnamese female immigrants that studied Chinese for 3 or more semesters after they moved to Taiwan are better in Chinese than those new female immigrants who studied none. Furthermore, new Vietnamese female immigrants that studied Chinese for 2, 3, or more than 3 semesters are better in Chinese than those who only studied Chinese for 1 semester.

Index Terms—Chinese ability, new female immigrant, Vietnamese spouse, Taiwan

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Research Motivation, Purposes, and Expected Contribution

In recent years, the number of foreign spouses has increased dramatically in Taiwan. In 2008, of all the foreign spouses who were married to Taiwanese, 58.78% were Chinese from mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau with a population of 12,772, and 41.22% were from other countries. In 2009, the non-Chinese foreigners were mostly from south-east Asia with a population as high as 6,009, which represents 67.09% of the non-Chinese foreign spouses; by observing their country of origin, 4,037 were from Vietnam, 1,109 were from Japan, and 830 were from Indonesia (National Statistical Office 2009). This group of new female immigrants who speak different languages and have different living habits, customs, and cultures are under pressure from the language barrier, differences in eating habits, differences in customs and cultures, and stress from childbirth and educating their children. This pressure is derived from many problems and could have a significant impact on Taiwanese society. In order for these new female immigrants to blend in with Taiwanese society, the priority should be improving their Chinese ability (Hsia 2003). Chang (2008) even pointed out that lack of Chinese ability is the biggest pressure for these new female immigrants. Language is the most important tool for communication and promoting self-interest, and it is also the fastest way to assist new female immigrants to blend in with Taiwanese culture. Only once new female immigrants have Chinese speaking ability can they adopt and develop a personal relationship with the new culture. Therefore, with the increasing numbers of new female immigrants, the improvement of their Chinese ability has become a topic of concern. Nevertheless, the system of compulsory education for all Taiwanese citizens has been implemented in Taiwan for a very long time. With the few exceptions of elders who have not attended school since they were young, and hence have problems reading and writing Chinese, there is almost no illiteracy in Taiwan. This is also a big problem for the future elementary and secondary civil education in Taiwan.

The purpose of the present research is to analyze the relationship between the demographic data variables of new Vietnamese female immigrant and their Chinese ability, and further investigate the influence of these different variables. Currently, the topic centers around the phases of society, system, policy discussion, and adoption on life (Chen and Wang 2005). Therefore this research hopes to contribute to the shortage of resources on new Vietnamese female immigrants learning Chinese language, and further provide suggestions regarding the policies and government aid agencies that are helping new Vietnamese female immigrants who are learning Chinese to increase their learning efficiency and to promote social harmony in Taiwanese society.

B. Literature Review

In 2003 the Awakening Foundation started to refer to this group of foreign spouses in Taiwanese as “new female immigrants” (Lee 2006). These foreign spouses are usually younger: 30% are less than 20 years old, 35% are between 21-25 years old, and their education level is usually low, with 40% of them having elementary education and another 40% with junior high education. In recent years, the percentage of new female immigrants has been gradually increasing, and this group of immigrants has had problems regarding life adjustment, education for children, society adjustment, and cultural shock after they came to Taiwan; among these challenges, the biggest problem is the language barrier and reading Chinese (Hsia 2003). Chen (2008) pointed out that language is the most important tool and medium for understanding and recognizing one’s culture; therefore, when new female immigrants came to Taiwan for the first time, Chinese ability became the most important tool to connect them with the world around them. Chinese ability is not only a medium to enhance one’s ability to adapt to a new life, it is also a tool and a medium for the weak to live and survive independently; it is as important as the regulations and laws of a country to the living habits and interaction with others. Therefore, new female immigrants could easily be isolated if they have problems with the Chinese ability.

The Ministry of Education agreed in 2002 that the foreign spouses who had acquired “Taiwan district (or alien) residency” or a “Republic of China (Taiwan) passport” could enter a cram or professional school to obtain a formal diploma. Furthermore, they could request that all county and city governments actively establish a new female immigrants’ Chinese reading class and promote new female immigrants to enter this class to cultivate their listening, speaking, reading, and writing ability in Chinese. The actual practice measures from the Ministry of Education to promote new female immigrants have been: first, since 2003 all city and county governments have started their own new immigrants Chinese reading classes, with a class size of 20 people for beginner, medium, and upper levels. Secondly, they have also started events such as new female immigrants’ teaching classes and observations (Liou 2006). At the moment, the Taiwanese new female immigrants’ Chinese language and life education has two types. One type involves accepting new female immigrants in elementary schools or adult education classes. In this form of class, new immigrants often attend along with elders in Taiwan. The other type of class, offered only to new female immigrants, not only educates them in the Chinese language but also provides them with education on different information and techniques useful for living in Taiwan (Chang 2009). Chen (2003) stated that through these classes, new female immigrants could not only learn Chinese but also understand the related regulations; therefore, reading becomes an indispensable ability. Popularizing these Chinese classes will provide immigrants with rich learning resources.

Some researches showed that these new female immigrants have very poor study patterns. Tseng (2004) discovered that over time new female immigrants often have a high absent rate from classes as a result of giving birth, work, or lack of transportation. Yu and Chang (2009) pointed out that in some cases, husbands worried that their new female immigrants spouse will compare themselves with their classmates and therefore forbade them from attending Chinese class. Thus, new female immigrants’ education is often interrupted and results in poor learning. Many of these new female immigrants have low learning desires, and as a result, many of these classes are cancelled.

II. RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA ANALYSIS

A. Research Scope and Subjects

The female population for this research focused on new female immigrants from Vietnam who are living in areas such as Yunlin County, Chiayi City, Chiayi County, Tainan City, and Tainan County of southern Taiwan. The survey used the purposive sampling method to draw out samples of new female immigrants who were willing to answer the survey. A total of 289 questionnaires were distributed, and 246 were returned. There were 203 valid questionnaires, for a return rate of 70.2%.

B. Data Processing and Analysis

This research used quantitative methods, including descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics utilized analyses such as average, frequency distribution ratio, and standard deviation. The purpose is to understand the demographic data variables of new female immigrants, including age, education, family condition, occupation, household income, length of residency in Taiwan, and time spent studying Chinese before and after they moved to Taiwan. Inferential statistics utilized in this research are the one-way ANOVA and t-test. The purpose of the one-way ANOVA is to investigate the differences of two or more variables; here, it was used to investigate whether or not the demographic data variables of new female immigrants and their Chinese ability differed significantly. When the results of the one-way ANOVA analysis were significant, then the Scheffé method posteriori comparisons were used to understand the differences between the variables.

C. Research Instruments

The questionnaire for the quantitative study included two parts: “Demographic data questionnaire” and “Chinese ability scale.”

a. Demographic data questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire was to understand the new Vietnamese female immigrants’ basic demographic data variables including “age,” “education level,” “family condition,” “occupation,” “economic condition,” “length of

residency in Taiwan,” “time spent studying Chinese before they moved to Taiwan,” and “time spent studying Chinese after they moved to Taiwan.”

(1) Age: below 20; 21-30; 31-40; 41-50; and 51 and above.

(2) Education level: new female immigrants’ education level in Vietnam including elementary school, junior high school, high school, and university/college.

(3) Family condition: lives with husband only; lives with husband and children; lives with husband, children and his family; and lives with husband, children, his family and relatives, and others.

(4) Occupation: housewife; agriculture/forestry/fishing/animal husbandry/engineering; service industry; self-own business; and others.

(5) Household income: under NT 20,000; NT 20,000-40,000; NT 40,000-60,000; NT 60,000-80,000; and NT 80,000 and above (NT: New Taiwanese Dollar).

(6) Length of residency in Taiwan: 1-3 years; 3-5 years; 5-8 years; and 9 years and above.

(7) Time spent studying Chinese before they moved to Taiwan: none; under 3 months; 3-6 months; 6-12 months; and above 1 year.

(8) Time spent studying Chinese after moving to Taiwan: none; 1 semester; 2 semesters; 3 semesters; and above 3 semesters.

b. Chinese ability scale

This scale was designed according to the Test of Chinese as a Foreign Language, TOCFL (2010) made by the Chinese Language Testing Committee commissioned by the Ministry of Education. There are several abilities tested: “Chinese phonetic system application ability,” “Chinese listening ability,” “Chinese speaking ability,” “Chinese literacy,” “Chinese characters writing ability,” “Chinese reading skill,” and “Chinese composition ability,” which are for a total of seven questions. Since the participants of this research did not take the TOCFL test, for each question they had to self-evaluate their Chinese ability using a 5 point Likert scale ranked from bad to good: bad = 1, not so good = 2, satisfactory = 3, good = 4, excellent = 5; the higher points meant the better the performance. After finishing making this scale, the language education department and Chinese language teaching professors all helped with modifying and adding questions, then it was translated into Vietnamese by a professional translator and grammatically checked by two Vietnamese who had been in Taiwan for a long time to make sure it was fluently and easily understood by the Vietnamese participants. This scale used Cronbach’s α coefficient to test the dimensions of each factor to assess the balance and consistency of the scale. As a result, the new female immigrants’ Chinese language ability scale reliability of Cronbach’s α is 0.92, which shows that the chart content is consistent and trustworthy. In the validity part, in order to test the scale content and subject relevance and representativeness, the content validity analysis is very important and was determined through the size of the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy. The Chinese ability scale shows a KMO of 0.83, which represents that the internal efficiency is highly representative.

III. RESEARCH RESULT

A. *Data Analysis of New Vietnamese Female Immigrant’s Demographic Variables*

According to the results, 52.4% of new Vietnamese female immigrants are between the age of 31-40; 51.2% of them were educated till junior high school; 40.9% of them lived with their husband and children; 48.3% of them were in the occupation sector of agriculture/forestry/fishing/animal husbandry/engineering. The average monthly household income was between 20,000-40,000 NT (41.9%), and 57.6% of them had been residents of Taiwan for more than 9 years. The possible cause for this result might be that most of the surveys were distributed to Vietnamese moms whose children were between grades 1 to 6 in elementary school. It was found that 51.2% of the respondents had studied Chinese less than 3 months prior to coming to Taiwan, and 29.6% of them had studied Chinese for 1 semester after they moved to Taiwan, as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1:
DATA ANALYSIS OF NEW VIETNAMESE FEMALE IMMIGRANT'S DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Variables		Number	Distribution
Age	21-30	88	43.3 %
	31-40	110	54.2 %
	41-50	5	2.5 %
Education level	elementary school	24	11.8 %
	junior high school	104	51.2 %
	high school	65	32.0 %
	university/college	10	4.9 %
Family condition	lives with husband only	2	1.0 %
	lives with husband and children	83	40.9 %
	lives with husband, children and his family	68	33.5 %
	lives with husband, children, his family and relatives	37	18.2 %
	others	13	6.4 %
Occupation	housewife	69	34.0 %
	agriculture / forestry / fishing / animal husbandry / engineering	98	48.3 %
	service industry	10	4.9 %
	Self-own business	18	8.9 %
	others	8	3.9 %
Household income	under NT 20,000	82	40.4 %
	NT 20,000-40,000	85	41.9 %
	NT 40,000-60,000	23	11.3 %
	NT 60,000-80,000	2	1.0 %
	NT 80,000 and above	11	5.4 %
Length of residency in Taiwan	1-3 years	12	5.9 %
	3-5 years	20	9.9 %
	5-8 years	54	26.6 %
	9 years and above	117	57.6 %
Time spend in studying Chinese before they moved to Taiwan	None	27	13.3 %
	under 3 months	104	51.2 %
	3-6 months	27	13.3 %
	6 months -1 year	16	7.9 %
Time spend in studying Chinese after moving to Taiwan	above 1 year	29	14.3 %
	None	52	25.6 %
	1 semester	60	29.6 %
	2 semesters	23	11.3 %
Total	3 semesters	20	9.9 %
	above 3 semesters	48	23.6 %

B. Analysis of New Vietnamese Female Immigrants' Chinese Ability

a. Current situation of new Vietnamese female immigrants' Chinese ability

From table 2, "Chinese listening ability" has the highest score (M = 3.47) follow by "Chinese speaking ability" (M = 3.43) and "Chinese phonetic system application ability" (M = 3.10). Among these indicators, the average falls around 2.55-3.47, between "satisfactory" and "good." As a whole, new Vietnamese female immigrants in Southern Taiwan have an above average level of Chinese (M = 3.01).

TABLE 2:
ANALYSIS ON NEW VIETNAMESE FEMALE IMMIGRANTS' CHINESE ABILITY

Items of Chinese ability	Mean	Standard Deviation
Chinese phonetic system application ability	3.10	0.79
Chinese listening ability	3.47	0.77
Chinese speaking ability	3.43	0.77
Chinese literacy	2.96	1.05
Chinese characters writing ability	2.57	1.03
Chinese reading ability	2.99	0.93
Chinese composition ability	2.55	1.07
Total	3.01	0.73

b. Analysis on the relationship between demographic data variables of new Vietnamese female immigrants and their Chinese ability

Through a one-way ANOVA, the findings showed that new Vietnamese female immigrants' "occupation," "household income," "time spent studying Chinese prior to Taiwan," and "time spent studying Chinese after moving to Taiwan" demographic data variables had significant differences in their Chinese ability; moreover, the demographic data variables "age," "educational level," "family condition," and "length of residency in Taiwan" had no significant

differences.

(1) Difference analysis on new Vietnamese female immigrants' occupations and their Chinese ability.

Table 3 shows that new Vietnamese female immigrants' Chinese ability had significant differences in different job fields ($F = 4.206$, $p = .003 < .05$). Through Scheffé method posteriori comparisons, the findings illustrate that new Vietnamese female immigrants that were in the service industry sector had better Chinese ability than that of housewives in southern Taiwan. Therefore, new Vietnamese female immigrants with better Chinese ability had many more job opportunities than those with little Chinese ability, especially in the service industry sector. As new Vietnamese female immigrants improved their Chinese ability, it increased their job opportunities, and they also had a better chance of finding a good job.

TABLE 3:
DIFFERENCE ANALYSIS ON NEW VIETNAMESE FEMALE IMMIGRANTS' OCCUPATIONS AND THEIR CHINESE ABILITY

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	F value	P value	Scheffé Method
Housewife	20.17	4.627			
Agriculture / forestry / fishing / animal husbandry / engineering	20.77	5.147	4.206	0.003**	service industry > housewife
Service industry	25.50	2.991			
Own business	23.94	6.530			
Others	20.25	2.712			

$p < .05^*$ $p < .01^{**}$ $p < .001^{***}$

(2) Difference analysis on new Vietnamese female immigrants' household income and their Chinese ability

In table 4 the results show that the new Vietnamese female immigrants' household income had significant differences on their Chinese ability ($F = 3.185$, $p = 0.15 < 0.5$) in southern Taiwan. Through Scheffé method posteriori comparisons, the research found that new Vietnamese female immigrants who had a household income of more than NT 40,000-60,000 had a higher Chinese ability than those with an income of only NT 20,000-40,000. In other words, families that have a better financial situation also have better Chinese ability. This is perhaps because new Vietnamese female immigrants who are wealthier can spend more time going out, interacting with others and learning Chinese rather than spending their time at work to reduce the financial burden.

TABLE 4:
DIFFERENCES ANALYSIS ON NEW VIETNAMESE FEMALE IMMIGRANTS' HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND THEIR CHINESE ABILITY

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	F value	P value	Scheffé Method
Under NT 20,000	20.59	5.070			
NT 20,000-40,000	20.41	4.706			
NT 40,000-60,000	24.09	5.125	3.185	0.015*	NT 40,000-60,000 > NT 20,000-40,000
NT 60,000-80,000	25.00	5.657			
NT 80,000 and above	22.55	6.517			

$p < .05^*$ $p < .01^{**}$ $p < .001^{***}$

(3) Difference analysis on new Vietnamese female immigrants' time spent studying Chinese before they moved to Taiwan and their Chinese ability

The new Vietnamese female immigrants' time spent studying Chinese before they moved to Taiwan and their Chinese ability difference analysis can be seen in table 5. The new Vietnamese female immigrants' time spent studying Chinese before they moved to Taiwan had significant differences on their Chinese ability ($F = 3.910$, $p = .004 < .05$). Through the Scheffé method posteriori comparisons, the findings revealed that new Vietnamese female immigrants that studied Chinese for 6-12 months before they moved to Taiwan were much better than those that had never studied. It means that studying Chinese before they moved to Taiwan was very helpful for the new Vietnamese female immigrants of Southern Taiwan.

TABLE 5:
DIFFERENCE ANALYSIS ON NEW VIETNAMESE FEMALE IMMIGRANTS' TIME SPEND IN STUDYING CHINESE BEFORE THEY MOVED TO TAIWAN AND THEIR CHINESE ABILITY

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	F value	P value	Scheffé Method
None	18.70	4.186			
Under 3 months	20.63	4.446			
3-6 months	21.63	4.575	3.910	0.004**	6 months-1 year > none
6 months-1 year	23.94	5.949			
Above 1 year	22.69	6.924			

$p < .05^*$ $p < .01^{**}$ $p < .001^{***}$

(4) Difference analysis on new Vietnamese female immigrants' time spent studying Chinese after they moved to Taiwan and their Chinese ability

Table 6 shows that the new Vietnamese female immigrants' time spent studying Chinese had a significant impact on their Chinese ability ($F = 4.298, p = .000 < .05$) in southern Taiwan. Through Scheffé method posteriori comparisons, the findings show that those new Vietnamese female immigrants that studied Chinese for 3 or more semesters had much better Chinese ability than those who had studied none; those who studied Chinese for 2, 3, or more than 3 semesters also had better Chinese ability than those who had only studied for 1 semester. From this, it shows that the new Vietnamese female immigrants who studied more Chinese were better in Chinese ability than those who had only spent a short time studying.

TABLE 6:
DIFFERENCES ANALYSIS ON NEW VIETNAMESE FEMALE IMMIGRANTS' TIME SPEND IN STUDYING CHINESE AFTER THEY MOVED TO TAIWAN AND THEIR CHINESE ABILITY

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	F value	P value	Scheffé Method
None	18.65	5.967	4.298	0.000***	3 semesters > none
1 semester	19.45	3.942			above 3 semesters > none
2 semesters	21.04	3.082			2 semesters > 1 semester
3 semesters	23.85	5.040			3 semesters > 1 semester
Above 3 semesters	24.52	3.820			above 3 semesters > 1 semester

$p < .05^*$ $p < .01^{**}$ $p < .001^{***}$

IV. CONCLUSION

In this research, most of the new Vietnamese female immigrants of southern Taiwan had been in Taiwan for a substantial period of time, with the majority of them in their 30s, and mostly working in the sector of agriculture/forest/fish/animal husbandry/engineering. Their average household income was between NT 20,000-40,000, and most of them had studied Chinese for less than 3 months before they moved to Taiwan and studied Chinese at the most 1 semester after they moved to Taiwan; this could be because new Vietnamese female immigrants are stuck doing housework or spending time working to assist the family financially; therefore, they could not spend enough time studying Chinese. Moreover, in terms of their Chinese ability, they scored the highest on "Chinese listening ability" followed by "Chinese speaking ability" and "Chinese phonetic system application ability." Their average Chinese ability score is 3.01 (total mean = 3.01), which represents that most of them have above average level of Chinese ability. This research discovered that new Vietnamese female immigrants' "occupation," "household income," "time spent studying Chinese before they moved to Taiwan," and "time spent studying Chinese after they moved to Taiwan" are all factors contributing to their Chinese ability in southern Taiwan. The research results found that: (1) New Vietnamese female immigrants in the service industry sector are better in Chinese than housewives. (2) New Vietnamese female immigrants with a household income between NT 40,000-60,000 are better in Chinese than those who make between NT 20,000-40,000. (3) New Vietnamese female immigrants that studied Chinese for 6-12 months before they moved to Taiwan are better in Chinese than those that did not; and (4) New Vietnamese female immigrants that studied Chinese for 3 or more semesters after they moved to Taiwan are better in Chinese than those new Vietnamese female immigrants who studied none. Furthermore, new Vietnamese female immigrants that studied Chinese for 2, 3, or more than 3 semesters are better in Chinese than those who only studied Chinese for 1 semester.

New Vietnamese female immigrants of southern Taiwan who are better in Chinese ability have more job opportunities than those with little Chinese ability, especially in the service industry sector. As new Vietnamese female immigrants improve their Chinese ability, their job opportunities increase and they can find better jobs; new Vietnamese female immigrants with poor Chinese ability will face bigger challenges in job hunting and would be limited to their family and being full-time housewives. From this finding, having a good level of Chinese ability will help new Vietnamese female immigrants find a job in southern Taiwan. The results of this study are consistent with Dustmann (1994), Chiswick and Miller (1995), Chiswick et al. (1997), and Berman et al. (2000): these analyses from the US, Canada, Australia, Israel, and Germany show that fluency and literacy in the dominant host country language are important components in explaining new immigrants' labor market success. Moreover, the study by Shields and Price (2002) indicates that language is also positively related to the occupational success of some new immigrant groups in the UK. In other words, language proficiency is likely to be a decisive factor in determining employment probabilities. Language may help to acquire information about optimal job search strategies. In this research, new Vietnamese female immigrants who are not sufficiently proficient in the dominant language may have difficulties convincing prospective employers of their qualifications in southern Taiwan. Further, many jobs, for instance in the service industry, require better communication skills. This research also has the same results as the research of Chen (2008). In another way, the Chinese classes the government has started indeed do help new Vietnamese female immigrants with their communication skills, social networking, and expanded job opportunities. By improving their Chinese ability, new Vietnamese female immigrants can expand their living circle beyond their own family in southern Taiwan.

In terms of household income, families that are better off financially could also have an effect on new Vietnamese female immigrants' Chinese ability in southern Taiwan. Possible reasons might be that new Vietnamese female

immigrants who are better off financially do not need to spend all their time on work, therefore they can have more spare time to go out and interact with others or learn Chinese. This result is similar to that of Chiu (2003) and the Ministry of Education (2007): family support offers motivation for new female immigrants to learn, and recognition from the husband's family is the key factor in supporting new female immigrants to learn Chinese.

New Vietnamese female immigrants that learned Chinese before they moved to Taiwan have better Chinese ability than those with no previous Chinese education. Moreover, new Vietnamese female immigrants that learned Chinese for a longer time than those with little or no Chinese education before they moved to Taiwan, had a higher level of Chinese ability in southern Taiwan; this research result is the same as Chang (2009). In other words, new Vietnamese female immigrants not only learned Chinese through class, but they also built a personal social network and developed personal relationships with the new culture. Therefore, popularizing the Chinese learning classes, it will improve new Vietnamese female immigrants' Chinese proficiency in southern Taiwan.

V. SUGGESTIONS

The suggestions for new Vietnamese female immigrants to learn Chinese: no matter whether it is before they move to Taiwan or after they arrive, new Vietnamese female immigrants should plan more time to learn Chinese in order to improve their Chinese proficiency. Improving their Chinese would be beneficial for them in several ways and would also allow them to blend and adjust to a new environment.

Moreover, the suggestions for government agencies: (1) The government should improve their promotion of the policy and encourage new Vietnamese female immigrants to learn Chinese before they moved to Taiwan to reduce the language barrier and learning difficulties. (2) When new Vietnamese female immigrants become residents or citizens of Taiwan, government agencies should grant adequate and stable funding to provide them with more Chinese learning opportunities, and implement and improve their Chinese learning so they can adjust to life in Taiwan which in turn improves their self-esteem, reduces their perception gap as a result of the language barrier, and raises the national competitiveness. As Jordan (2007) recommended, in relation to a study of new immigrants across the U.S., the problem is not the unwillingness of new immigrants to learn the host country language. The real problem is governments do not provide enough classes, so that the U.S. government should be in the business of paying for language instruction for new immigrants. (3) Many new Vietnamese female immigrants have no time to learn Chinese or their learning was interrupted due to reasons such as giving birth to children, responsibility of taking care of the family, financial burden, escaping from the family, or divorce. Whether or not new Vietnamese female immigrants could step outside of their family and learn Chinese is reliant on support from their husbands' families. At the moment, the barriers for new Vietnamese female immigrants to learn Chinese are foreseeable. Therefore, government agencies should care more about this group of new Vietnamese female immigrants and understand the reasons and barriers that prevent them from learning Chinese, and develop relevant policies to actively reduce those factors and increase the efficiency of their Chinese studies.

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On the Role of Phonological Processing in L2 Reading

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Abstract—This paper provides a review of ideas and research regarding the role of phonological processing as a bottom-up, component processing mechanism in second language reading comprehension. Firstly, it sketches a brief history of approaches and theoretical models towards L2 reading comprehension in the SLA literature. Secondly, it acknowledges the fact that with the undue dominance of top-down psycholinguistic models, the role of bottom-up processes in L2 reading has been systematically neglected. And finally an accumulated body of literature is presented which comprehensively delineates the studies carried out to examine the contributory role of phonological processing as a type of bottom-up processing in L2 reading.

Index Terms—phonological processing, top-down psycholinguistic models, bottom-up processing

I. INTRODUCTION

Most scholars would agree that reading is one of the most important skills for educational and professional success (Alderson, 1984). In highlighting the importance of reading comprehension Rivers (1981; p. 147) stated that “reading is the most important activity in any language class, not only as a source of information and a pleasurable activity, but also as a means of consolidating and extending one’s knowledge of the language”.

Reading reinforces the learner’s other language skills. Krashen (1981) confirms that those who read more, have larger vocabularies, do better on test of grammar and write better (Kim & Krashen, 1997). Chastian (1988, p. 218) while accepting the significance of reading for meaning claimed that all reading activities serve to facilitate communication fluency in each of the other language skills.

According to Eskey (1988), in advanced levels of second language the ability to read the written language at a reasonable rate and with good comprehension has long been recognized to be as oral skills if not more important.

Reading comprehension, like any other language ability, is an abstract concept, and there are many arguments on its nature. For many years, language skills were classified as active and passive skills. Active skills included speaking and writing, because they provided overt evidence of language production. On the other hand, listening and reading considered as passive skills, because they did not display any apparent manifestation of language element – production. Rivers (1981; p. 67) states that:

reading is sometimes referred to as a passive or receptive skill, but if we examine the abilities that come into play influence direct reading with comprehension of meaning it is clear that readers are far from passive during this activity.

II. AN OVERVIEW OF APPROACHES

Contemporary to the emergence of cognitive code learning theory, scholars began to study the nature of reading as a mentalistic process. In this view, two main movements developed: the first claimed that reading comprehension can be divided into many sub skills, and the second maintained that reading comprehension is a general integrative ability.

Early investigation of second language reading assumed reading comprehension processes as a rather passive, bottom-up mechanism. From the adopted perspective of those days, reading comprehension process was viewed primarily as a decoding process of reconstructing the author's intended meaning via recognizing the printed letters and words, and building up a meaning for a text from the smallest textual units at the bottom (letters and words) to larger units at the top (phrases, clauses, links). As a result, the problems of second language reading and reading comprehension were viewed as being essentially decoding problems, deriving meaning from print. Eskey (1988) mentioned the need for reading teachers to ‘hold in the bottom’ on the grounds that ‘top-down’ orientation leads to neglect of the language data that reader is necessarily drawing upon. Within this orientation, some scholars proposed activities which encouraged automated processing of words by asking students to discriminate rapidly between graphonically similar words. Some other scholars highlighted the syntactic awareness of word and sentence structures.

This model starts with the printed stimuli and works its way up to the higher level stages. The sequence of processing proceeds from the incoming data to higher level encodings.

This model, basically, postulated the teaching of reading to be started with smallest linguistic units, single letters, mixture of letters, words and up to phrases and sentences, etc. The text-based view of reading implies that the proper approach in teaching students to read is to teach the language forms they need to know to be able to comprehend the reading (Chastain, 1988).

On the other hand, these models have not been away from criticism because of the heavy burden this process would make on the short-term memory. For example, there are more than 166 letter-to-sound correspondences in English, thus reading would be a slow and arduous process (Davies, 1995). In addition, this model does not account to make sense of the text (Barnett, 1989).

In the early seventies, Goodman's psycholinguistic model of reading (later named the top-down or concept-driven model) began to have an impact on views of second language reading. This approach was concerned with the strategies or resources which readers employ in reading and learning to read. Those favoring this approach conceptualize reading as a language activity as well as a psychological process. This model argued that reading is best seen not as the matching up of visual symbol to sound realization in a linear manner, but as a process heavily mediated by the reader's ability to make informed predictions as one goes through the text.

Quite contrary to text-based view of reading comprehension, stands the inside-the-head or top-down processing view of reading. Top-down model of reading postulates a non-linear view of the process in which comprehension begins with the reader's contribution, i. e. from higher levels of processing, and proceeds to use the lower levels selectively.

Thus, a top-down approach to reading is the "making of predictions about the text based on prior experience or background knowledge, and then checking the text for confirmation or refutation of those predictions" (Carrell, 1988, p.101). This approach is thus conceptually driven (Carrell, 1991).

Carrell (1991) states that readers contribute more information to interpreting a text than the print on the page. This holds that any written or spoken text does not carry meaning, but rather only provides directions for listeners or construct meaning from their own, previously acquired knowledge.

Thus, according to Goodman (1967, p.131), making sense of a text is a four-step process (reported in Barnett, 1989):

1. *Predicting*: readers predict the grammatical structures based on their knowledge of the language and semantic concepts to obtain its meaning.
2. *Sampling*: readers sample the text to confirm their predictions (this is indirect contrast to bottom-up reading because they do not need to see every word or letter).
3. *Confirming*: the readers confirm their guesses.
4. *Correcting*: the readers revise their predictions if necessary.

Additionally, Smith (1982) adds that readers use non-visual information (prior knowledge of the subject) in making and confirming predictions. Dubin and Bycina (1991) hold that, according to this newer model, the role of readers was considered to be quite active: They predict meaning as they read; they take in large chunks of text at a time. They do not attend to separate letters, rather they match what they already know with the meaning they derive from the text (cited in Celce-Murcia 2001).

However, this model has been criticized because it fails to account for the reader who can be frustrated by a text with a large amount of unfamiliar vocabulary (Barnett, 1989) or readers who are able to understand a text for which they have little background knowledge (Stanovich, 1980).

The top-down processing perspective into second language reading had an extremely profound impact upon the second language reading research, to an extent that it was viewed as a substitute for the bottom-up perspective, rather than its complement.

However, recent research indicates the potential for some rapprochement between opposing camps, particularly those who emphasize both reading as product and reading as process. As schema theory research has attempted to make clear, efficient and effective reading (in L1 and L2) requires both top-down and bottom-up strategies operating interactively model (Koda, 2005). Both top-down and bottom-up processes, functioning interactively, are necessary to an adequate understanding of second language reading and reading comprehension. (Carrell, 1988, pp. 1-4)

In spite of the emergence of the interactive model, most of the research in L2 and foreign language reading, still influenced by the dominance of the top-down psycholinguistic views of L1 reading, used to focus on the role of higher level knowledge sources such as background knowledge and the knowledge of syntactic and semantic structures in processing text (e.g., Barnett, 1989; Carrell, 1988; Cziko, 1978, 1980; Floyd & Carrell, 1987). This psycholinguistic framework, viewing reading as a game of guessing, sampling, predicting, and verifying top-down hypotheses, emphasizes the role of higher level syntactic and semantic processes and minimizes the role of component and bottom-up processes.

While the literature in L2 reading research is still overwhelmingly dominated by top-down psycholinguistic frameworks (Koda, 2005), the pendulum has swung back towards a more balanced view regarding the role of different component processes in L1 reading.

In line with this shift of attention and orientation in L1 reading research, in the last two decades, the attention of the SLA researchers has shifted from top-down views of reading process towards bottom-up view of investigating reading

comprehension mechanism. In recent years, there has been a great deal of work devoted to the study of component skills that are necessary to sustain a success in second language reading (e.g. Koda, 2005; Leong, Hau, Cheng, and Tan, 2005; Nassaji & Geva, 1999; Nation & Snowling, 2004; Segalowitz, Poulsen, & Komoda, 1991; Stanovich, 1986; Stanovich & West, 1989). From this perspective, it is claimed that information processing of text is driven by both bottom up and top-down information. Prior knowledge with the help of accelerated bottom-up processes influences the perception, speed, and conceptual framework in reading processes. This view proposes multiple, independent, parallel routes simultaneously processing information with a cross-checking mechanism. Active routes are contingent upon the information presented, the individual's knowledge and the task demands (Grabe, 2004). In this regard, an increasing amount of interest has been focused on the relationship between phonological awareness which is a basic, lower-level component processing and reading development (e.g. Bialystok, Majumder, & Martin, 2003; Blaiklock, 2004; Deacon & Kirby, 2004; Engan, 2002; Lafrance & Gottardo, 2005; Nassaji & Geva, 1999).

Phonological Processing as a Bottom-up Processing Mechanism in Reading

Reading, as one of the most attention-grabbing language skills, is a complex cognitive skill which uses various interactive processes. One of alluring issues in this skill is relationship between phonological component and semantic representation. From this perspective, it is known that information of several sorts (phonetic, lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic) is processed during the comprehension process as the meaning is constructed (Bialystok, et al. 2003; Blaiklock, 2004; Byrne, 1991; Carroll & Snowling, 2004; Coltheart et al. 1988; Harris and Coltheart, 1986). That said, comprehension in reading, which is affected by both lower-level components and higher-level components, is a multifaceted set of processes, not an all-or-none operation. The line of evidence in favor of the effect of phonological component comes from several sources.

In this regard, most of the recent body of research hold the view that there is an interaction between the processing of the physical stimuli (bottom-up processing) and the context provided by expectation and previous knowledge (top-down processing) (Carrell et al., 1998). In line with this perspective, Koda (1992, pp. 52-57) indicates that lower level verbal processing skills (e.g., phonological processing) is one of the four major reader-related skills. He further adds that little attention has been paid to the relationship between lower level verbal processing skills and reading comprehension, but a number of theorists in cognitive psychology claim that deficiency in lower level processing operations strains the limited capacity of short-term memory and inhibits text integration into a meaningful sequence (e.g., Leong et al. 2005; Lesaux & Siegel, 2003; Nation & Snowling, 2004). Based on his findings, he holds that efficient lower level verbal processing operations are essential for successful performance in FL reading comprehension tasks.

More specifically, one of the lower level verbal processing mechanisms is phonological processing which is the task of linking printed letters to phonemes. This reading-specific processing is especially difficult for FL readers because of the lack of one-to-one correspondence between phonemes and graphemes.

In one study done by Deacon and Kirby (2004), the roles of morphological and phonological awareness on the reading development were taken into account. It was a longitudinal study which took 4 years. They compared two factors, namely phonological and morphological awareness, in three aspects of reading development: pseudoword reading, reading comprehension, and single word reading. The results of their study divulged that morphological awareness contributed significantly to pseudoword reading and reading comprehension, after controlling prior measures of reading ability, verbal and nonverbal intelligence, and phonological awareness. This contribution was comparable to that of phonological awareness and remained 3 years after morphological awareness was assessed. In contrast, morphological awareness rarely contributed significantly to single word reading. They argued that these results provided evidence that morphological awareness had a wide-ranging role in reading development, one that extended beyond phonological awareness.

Another study done by Nassaji and Geva (1999) investigated the role of phonological and orthographic processing skills in adult second language reading. The subjects were 60 ESL graduate students; all were native speakers of Farsi. Three types of ESL reading measures were used as criterion variables: reading comprehension, silent reading rate, and the ability to recognize individual words. Data were analyzed using correlational and hierarchical multiple regression. The analysis of the collected data revealed that efficiency in phonological and orthographic processing contributed significantly to individual differences on the reading measures. In particular, efficiency in orthographic processing contributed to the reading measures independently of syntactic and semantic measures. The study suggested that it was useful to consider individual differences in ESL reading with respect to individual differences in lower level processes – particularly the efficiency with which readers process phonological and orthographic information.

This research (Nassaji and Geva, 1999) indicated that information about individual differences in the efficiency with which L2 readers process phonological and orthographic information helps us to understand individual differences in ESL reading. It suggested that the role of lower level graphophonemic processing should not be overlooked in L2 reading, even when readers are proficient adult L2 readers.

Droop and Verhoeven (2003) gave much importance to the role of oral language proficiency in reading comprehension because the L2 reading comprehension skills are more dependent upon lexical knowledge than the L2 decoding skills. Bilingual Turkish-Dutch children, although comparable in word recognition, performed more poorly in reading comprehension than their monolingual Dutch-speaking peers. The authors attributed this lower level of comprehension to the lower performance in syntactic ability and oral fluency. Measures of Dutch oral language

proficiency included both expressive and receptive vocabulary tasks, and an expressive syntactic task. However, both for native speakers and for L2 speakers, decoding skills played only a minor role in the development of reading comprehension, and according to the authors, decoding and reading comprehension appear to develop as independent skills from third grade on (Droop & Verhoeven, 2003).

In agreement with these findings, studies have demonstrated a significant effect of oral language proficiency in L2 reading comprehension, although measures of L2 decoding predicting L2 reading comprehension were not analyzed. Geva and Ryan (1993) conducted a cross-sectional study with 73 students in Grades 5 to 7, who were learning to read in English (L1) and Hebrew (L2) concurrently. Regression analysis showed that Hebrew oral proficiency, as measured by teachers' global ratings, accounted for 29.8% of the variance on Hebrew reading comprehension scores.

However, Lesaux and Siegel (2003) reported different results. A study with ESL second graders of diverse linguistic background found that oral comprehension and naming were not significant predictors of reading comprehension performance, whereas rhyme detection explained 17% of the variance, and letter identification explained 7% of the variance. ESL children performed at levels comparable to those in their L1.

Similarly to studies in the L1, oral language proficiency seems to account for greater variance in reading comprehension once students become proficient in decoding skills. Proctor, Carlo, August, and Snow (2005) analyzed the role of English vocabulary, listening comprehension, and word reading fluency in L2 English reading comprehension among fourth-year intermediate-level Spanish-speaking ELLs. The authors observed that whereas vocabulary, listening, and L2 alphabetic knowledge exerted a role in reading comprehension, speed of decoding did not contribute to significant variance in the model.

Torgesen (2000), having devoted some investigation, summarized the importance of phonological awareness in acquiring accurate word reading skills. According to Torgesen (2000): First, phonological awareness helps children understand the alphabetic principle. Second, it helps children realize the regular ways that letters represent sounds in words. Lastly, it makes it possible to generate possibilities for words in context that are only partially sounded out.

Moreover, as Koda (2005) states, poor readers uniformly are handicapped in a wide variety of phonological tasks. Furthermore, Metsala & Ehri (1998) state that comprehension is a meaning-construction process, which involves integral interaction between text and reader. Extracting phonological information from individual words constitutes one of the first and most important steps in this endeavor. Also phonological skills have a direct, and seemingly causal relationship with reading ability knowledge of letter patterns and their linkages to sounds facilitates rapid automatic word recognition; such knowledge evolves gradually through cumulative print-processing experience; and limited word-recognition skills tend to induce over reliance in context (p.254).

The central tenet of the mentioned studies is that links between phonological form and meaning can then produce meaning activation that is indirectly 'mediated' through phonology. One such model is the Interactive Constituency Theory (ICT) (Perfetti & Tan, 1998; 1999 cited in Perfetti et al.2003). The ICT assumes that a phonological form is routinely activated as part of word identification because it is a constituent of the identified word. This phonological activation rapid and may precede the direct activation of specific word meaning in many situations. However, the ICT further assumes that phonological activation is diffuse across characters sharing the same pronunciation.

William and Lovatt (2003) have considered phonological awareness not only as a fundamental factor determining learner's reading ability but also as an important element helping vocabulary learning in both normal and language-impaired adults and children in L2 acquisition.

Snowling et al. (1991) have suggested that phonological awareness training perhaps should be incorporated into classroom activities to help young FL learners enhance word recall and pronunciation-learning ability or to ameliorate word-learning problems in FL.

Segalowitz et al. (1991) have also argued that the modification and specification of the word-referent relationship cannot proceed if the phonological pattern is obscure and incomplete. Thus, even though FL word learning is not a simple phonological issue, the establishment of a complete and solid phonological representation for a word still appears to be the first and the most important springboard to success in early FL vocabulary acquisition for a young FL learner.

Phonological awareness is an important prerequisite for literacy acquisition (Dickinson et al., 2004). They have believed that a basic prerequisite to word decoding is to become aware of phonological structure of words. As William and Lovatt (2003) have argued phonological awareness is a critical precursor, correlate, and predictor of reading achievement. Experimental evidence of the importance of phonological awareness interventions comes from phonological awareness studies of 5-to-6-year-old children that boosted later reading achievement. (ibid).

Evidence has been put forth demonstrating phonological recoding during silent reading from an array of research paradigms (e.g., Read, 1983). Observational work on early reading behavior with children suggests that children sound out the visual information and in a sense listen to themselves (e.g., McCusker, Hillinger, & Bias, 1981).

Rubenstein, Lewis, and Rubenstein (1971) claimed phonological representations are used to search for lexical entries. They were the first to use a lexical decision task in their methodology. They examined factors consisting of orthography and phonology by manipulating the use of words, nonwords, pseudowords, homophones, and pseudohomophones. As a result of their findings they argued that a phonological representation must be used on visually presented words in order to search the lexicon.

Van Orden's (1987) findings support Rubenstein et al's (1971) claim. Van Orden (1987) argued for a phonological mediation hypothesis - meaning is accessed through sound from print. That is, as one reads the printed text the print is converted to sound prior to meaning or as a means to meaning.

Van Orden has conducted a series of experiments demonstrating the important role of phonological mediation in various tasks involving print to meaning. He argued that computed phonological codes are a potent force in word identification (Van Orden, Johnston, & Hale, 1988).

In an attempt to identify the component processes of reading that discriminate between skilled and less-skilled individuals, most of the research indicates that readers differ in their perception of spatial location information (Mason, 1980); in the speed with which they access memory codes for visually presented patterns (e.g. letters) (Jackson and McClelland, 1979; Jackson, 1980); in the efficiency of their phonological-coding processes (Perfetti and Lesgold, 1977).

In addition to the above-mentioned evidences in favor of the effect of phonological component on comprehension, other researchers suggest that different lower-level processing operations-sound discrimination and word recognition-are essential for successful performance in reading. on the basis of their research, it is also enunciated that the poor readers' problems in language comprehension result from insufficiencies of verbal working memory that are associated with general difficulties in phonological processing (Wagner and Torgesen, 1987; Cupples and Holmes, 1992; Koda, 1992; Carlisle and Nomanbhoy, 1993).

Reading, as an instance of language understanding system is basically concerned with the process by which words are recognized. Theorists have offered different speculations regarding the stated issue, in which the relationship between visual route, sound route, and semantic entry has differently been described (Perfetti et al., 2003; Van Orden, 1987).

In connection with the theories of word recognition, Garnham (1985, pp. 57-62) introduces the Phonological Recoding Hypothesis (PRH) as a solution to understanding words in the process of reading. Following the framework of the Indirect-Access Hypothesis, he suggests, "what is learned is a set of rules called Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondence (GPC) rules that translate letter patterns into sound patterns."

Garnham (1985) further explains that perhaps all comprehension depends on such translation, and the mental lexicon can only be accessed via sound patterns. In other words, according to PRH, letters recode into sounds and it is merely the sound of word which activates the mental lexicon and causes the access of relevant information from the mental lexicon.

Leong et al. (2005) pointed out that children's phonological sensitivity to the speech sound structure of spoken words was important in learning to read for alphabetic language system, for example, English (Adams, 1990; Byrne, 1991; Wagner & Torgesen, 1987). Phonological memory and phonological access to lexical items have been shown to be the predictor of reading acquisition (Wagner & Torgesen, 1987).

III. CONCLUSION

Given the abundance of studies (most of which presented in this paper) confirming the contributory role of phonological processing in reading comprehension, the importance of both the text and the reader in the reading process should be recognized, an amalgamation of the two leads the SL theorists to the interactive approach. Reading here is the process of combining textual information with the information the reader brings to a text. The interactive model (Stanovich 1980) stresses both what is on the written page and what a reader brings to it using both top-down and bottom-up skills. It views reading is the interaction between reader and text. The overreliance on either mode of processing to the neglect of the other mode has been found to cause reading difficulties for SL learners (Carrell 1988, p. 239).

To sum it up, good readers are both good decoders and good interpreters of text, their decoding skills becoming more automatic but no less important as their reading skill develops (Eskey 1988). To properly achieve fluency and accuracy, second language readers must work at perfecting both their bottom-up recognition skills and their top-down interpretation strategies. Good reading (that is fluent and accurate reading) can result only from a constant interaction between these processes.

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Cultural Awareness and Translation Teaching at Higher Vocational College: Problems and Solutions

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Abstract—In this paper, an investigation has been done on culture knowledge acquisition and cultural awareness of English majors at Higher Vocational College by taking the students at Quzhou College of Technology as the subjects. The problem of lack of culture knowledge and cultural awareness has been shown through the analysis. The strategies and techniques on integrating culture into translation teaching at Higher Vocational Colleges are given for translation teaching by laying stress on imparting culture knowledge as well as translation skills so as to reduce students' translation errors.

Index Terms—cultural awareness, translation teaching, culture integration

I. INTRODUCTION

Today, as the world evolves into the global world, various factors converge to drive people across national boundaries as never before, thus making intercultural contact a major concern and the importance of international communication takes on added urgency. However, distinct cultural perceptions and symbol systems have always stood in the way of intercultural communications. Translation always serves as an important means in cross-cultural communication in the history of human beings. Thus, translation involves two different languages, which are used to express what the two nations think, do, and say. Language is the carrier of culture. Culture influences language by way of symbols and rules as well as our perceptions of the universe. So, the process of translation, which is always regarded as bilingualism dealing, inevitably involves biculturalism. Since cultures are objectively different, translation is to deal with cultural differences, promoting cultural exchange. And the studies of translation are no longer limited to linguistic analysis and rigid comparison between the source text and the target text only, but in social and cultural contexts. To translate two languages involving two different cultures, the translators should cultivate the profound and comprehensive culture knowledge as well as the full familiarity with the language symbols so as to obtain the deep comprehension of the cultural differences. This brings great task to translation teaching, which has the responsibility of cultivating translators.

With the flourish of translation teaching, many studies have been made by scholars, translators or educators and teachers both in the west and in the east. Chinese scholars and translation teachers have also done a lot on translation teaching. For example, in the book "Translation Teaching: Theories and Practice", Liu Miqing (2003) advances three concrete guiding principles for translation teaching in China, discusses the aim and principles of translation teaching and gives some advice on both practical and theoretical teaching of translation; Mulei (1999) makes a research on "translation teaching in China", which focuses on the present situations of translation teaching in China from the aspects of subject construction, course establishment, teaching material compilation, teachers' training and teaching methods and gives some good advice on the reform of translation teaching. Besides, there are a lot of teachers who devote themselves to higher education, having done much on the study and research of translation teaching in universities.

On the basis of others' work, the author of this thesis wants to make a research on translation teaching at Higher Vocational College from cultural aspect for the purpose of finding some way out to improve translation teaching at Higher Vocational Colleges. In order to make it clear, the study is made on translation teaching at Quzhou College of Technology, which mainly concerns the influences of culture knowledge and cultural awareness on translation and translation teaching.

II. CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION

The English word "culture" comes from Latin word "cultura" whose primeval meaning is cultivation, crop and growth. The first definition reflects the Ancient Roman's understanding. And with the development of human civilization, the word "culture" has more extended meanings. According to the statistic of the Encyclopedia Britannia, there are more than 160 definitions of culture in all kinds of formal publications in the world (Bao Huinan, 2001). Culture is an ambiguous and intriguing concept. Probably the most classic definition of culture was provided by the 19th-century English anthropologist Edward Burnett Taylor, the founder of academic anthropology in the

English-speaking world and author of the first general anthropology textbook:

Culture... taken in its wide ethnographic sense is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. The condition of culture among the various societies of mankind, in so far as it is capable of being investigated on general principles, is a subject apt for the study of laws of human thought and action. [1871:1] (quoted in Harris, 1993, p.104)

According to Marvin Harris (1993), "...culture refers to the learned, socially acquired traditions that appear in rudimentary form among mammals, especially primates." (Harris, 1993, p.104)

Larry A. Samovar, Porter and Stefani (2000), in their works *Communication Between Cultures* (Third Edition), define culture as follows: "We define culture as the deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, actions, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and artifacts acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving." (Samovar, Porter & Stefani, 2000, p. 36)

Actually one person can put up one definition and ten persons can put up ten definitions. But today more and more scholars believe that culture should cover all of aspects of human society. This is also the consideration of this thesis. Thus the author defines culture as follows:

Culture is a complex whole, which includes everything of the human society such as the traditions, customs, norms, beliefs, values, attitudes, thought-patterns, experience, religion, etc. and which can be learned and passed down from generation to generation.

Just as Larry A. Samovar (2000) puts it, "Culture can therefore include everything from rites of passage to concepts of the soul." (Samovar, Porter & Stefani, 2000, p.36) And the author of this dissertation also agrees on the three basic traits that are common to all: culture is shared; cultural components are interrelated and culture is learned.

A. *The Relationship between Culture and Language*

As a product of the development of society, language takes an important role in society and serves its purpose as it provides the means to express, to share and to transmit the ideas and experiences of the people who practice the corresponding cultures. Culture and language are inseparably intertwined, just as Rivers says, "Language cannot be separated from the culture in which it is deeply embedded" (quoted in Xu, 2002, p.5). Language is closely associated with the culture and culture influences language by way of symbols and rules as well as people's perceptions of the universe. "... it is impossible to separate our use of language from our culture. In its most basic sense, language is a set of symbols and the rules for combining those symbols that are used and understood by a large community of people. When we study another language, we soon discover that not only are the symbols (words) and sounds for those symbols different, but so are the rules (phonology, grammar, syntax, and intonation) for using those symbols and sounds." (Samovar, Porter & Stefani, 2000, p.122) Any language can be seen as a signal system representing a particular culture. As a result of this feature of language, culture and language are tightly linked and inseparable. "... And declared as firmly as Sapir or Whorf that 'No language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture; and no culture can exist which does not have at its center, the structure of the natural language.' Language, then, is the heart within the body of culture, and it is the interaction between the two that results in the continuation of life-energy." (Bassnett, 2004, p. 22)

On the one hand, language is a product, a part of culture. It is considered the keystone of culture. Without language, culture is impossible. Language comes into being during the process of the social practice of a certain group of people and develops in the social and historical settings. On the other hand, language is the carrier of culture and reflects culture. It records all the material and spiritual achievements of human beings in history. Shen Xiaolong puts forward the idea that "Language like a colorful mirror reflects the characteristics, of a nation's economy, politics, cultural psychology, etc., and is filtered with spirit of a nation's culture." (quoted in Peng, 2004) Language serves as a guide to understand the thoughts, ideas, and ways of life of the people who practice the corresponding culture. Through the acquisition of languages, people can learn culture left behind by their ancestors.

B. *The Relationship between Culture and Translation*

In human's history, translations have contributed greatly to the exchange of information across cultural boundaries. But what is translation? What is the link between translation and culture? Why does translation have a great deal to do with culture?

According to Jeremy Munday (2001), "The term translation itself has several meanings: it can refer to the general subject field, the product (the text has been translated) or the process (the act of producing the translation, otherwise known as translating). The process of translation between two different written languages involves the translator changing an original written text (the source text or ST) in the original verbal language (the source language or SL) into a written text (the target text or TT) in a different verbal language (the target language or TL)." (Munday, 2001, p.4-5) This type of translation corresponds to "interlingual translation", one of the three categories of translation described by Roman Jakobson, the Czech structuralist. Jakobson's categories are as follows:

1. intralingual translation, or 'rewording': 'an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language';
2. interlingual translation, or 'translation proper': 'an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other

language’;

3. intersemiotic translation, or ‘transmutation’: ‘an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non-verbal sign systems’. (quoted in Munday, 2001, p.5)

So far as this thesis is concerned, the second one, that is, interlingual translation, will be taken into consideration. Thus translation process has to do with two different languages, i.e. Chinese and English. In this aspect, translation is a process of exchanging information from one language to another. Therefore, it is not strange that, nowadays, most people regard translation as a bilingual art of cross-cultural communication, for as we talked in 2.2 that language and culture are intimately bounded and depend on each other. And one of the most striking features in contemporary translation theory and practice is the orientation towards culture transfer. “Snell-Hornby (1998) claims that translation process can no longer be envisaged as being between two languages but between two cultures involving ‘cross-culture transfer’. Eugene Nida (1993) holds that translation is a reproduction of the message of the original work by means of the transformation of the closest natural equivalent.” (Fu, 2004) Liao Qiyi (2000) also says, “cultural concepts, which underlines the variety of language usage and language habits, come to be the key area of translation studies.” (Liao Qiyi, 2000, p.172)

As we can see in the above discussion, culture is an extremely complex concept and an enormous subject. It almost includes everything in the development process of human society and almost embraces everything in the world, no matter material or spiritual. Language, as the most important symbolic system in culture, contains all kinds of cultural deposits in the grammar, forms of address as well as texts. In this reason, “translation is associated with two cultural contexts in which their cultural content is conveyed in two different languages, and it lays emphasis on how to convey in a precise way the original cultural connotation and how to interpret it on the basis of the native cultural perspective so as to achieve communication.” (Fu, 2004)

Nida holds the view that “translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style” (quoted in Peng, 2004).

From the statements about translation given above, we can get the idea that translation takes place between two languages, which are separately intrinsic parts of a culture, and which are both culturally-bound. Susan Bassnett even uses the relationship between surgeon, heart, and body to vividly explain the relationship between translator, language and culture. She says, “Language, then, is the heart within the body of culture, and it is the interaction between the two that results in the continuation of life-energy. In the same way that the surgeon, operating on the heart, cannot neglect the body that surrounds it, so the translator treats the text in isolation from the culture at his peril.” (Bassnett, 2004, p. 22) This metaphor also tells us how important the role is, which the culture specifics play in the process of translation.

C. Cultural Awareness

Awareness, according to WTNID (Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, 1961), means “the quality or state of being aware”. Cultural awareness, is, according to Tomalin and Stempleski, “the term we have used to describe sensitivity to the impact of culturally-induced behavior on language use and communication” (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993, p.10). They think cultural awareness encompasses three qualities:

- awareness of one’s own culturally-induced behavior;
- awareness of the culturally-induced behavior of others;
- ability to explain one’s own cultural standpoint. (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993, p.10)

“Since translation is a peculiar type of intercultural communication, involving two linguistically different cultures, what should be concerned here is cross-cultural awareness, which refers to the translator’s perception of the cultural elements of the languages involved in the process of translation.” (Liao & Tu, 2004) Robert G. Hanvey classifies the cross-cultural awareness into four levels:

<u>Level</u>	<u>Information</u>	<u>Mode</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
I	awareness of superficial or very visible cultural traits: stereotypes	tourism, textbooks, National Geographic	unbelievable, i.e., exotic, bizarre
II	awareness of significant and subtle cultural traits that contrast markedly with one’s own	culture conflict situations	unbelievable, i.e., frustrating, irrational
III	awareness of significant and subtle cultural traits that contrast markedly with one’s own	intellectual analysis	believable, cognitively
IV	awareness of how another culture feels from the standpoint of the insider	cultural immersion; living the culture	believable because of subjective familiarity

(quoted in Liao & Tu, 2004)

Translator, as a cultural mediator, is destined to be equipped with cultural awareness. So, in order to attain intercultural awareness, foreign language teachers, especially, those who teach translation, have to make the students know Hanvey’s statement of four levels of intercultural awareness and should provide learners with maximum

experience to reach the higher level of intercultural awareness.

III. CULTURAL AWARENESS OF THE STUDENTS AT HIGHER VOCATIONAL COLLEGE

In order to have a clearer picture of the students' cultural awareness, the author made a survey among the students at Quzhou College of Technology. The subjects of this study are 35 sophomores in Class 3033, among whom 17 graduated from ordinary rural middle schools, 14 from ordinary city middle schools and 4 came from key city middle schools. The questionnaire was designed to investigate the students to get some general ideas of their cultural awareness, culture knowledge study and their opinions on the current translation teaching materials.

Totally there were 12 questions in the questionnaire. Of the twelve questions, three categories can be divided into. Questions 1, 2, 8 can be classified into the first category that is to find out whether the students have cultural awareness in learning foreign language. The second category includes questions 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 4, 5 and 12, which are about their culture learning and translation. Question 6 is grouped into the third category, which focuses on translation teaching materials and this category will not be discussed here in this thesis. The results of the investigation of the first and second categories will be illustrated in the following with the help of tables.

A. Cultural Awareness in English Learning --the First Category

The first category includes questions 1, 2 and 8, the purpose of which is to find out students' cultural awareness in English learning. The result that the students are lack of cultural knowledge and cultural awareness is found.

1. Question 1: How much concern do you show for culture knowledge during your English learning?

TABLE 2
CONCERN FOR CULTURE KNOWLEDGE

Don't Care	A Little	Some	Quite	Very Much
2.86% (1)	34.29% (12)	25.71% (9)	28.57% (10)	8.57% (3)

2. Question 2: When English teachers introduce cultural knowledge, how clearly can you realize it?

TABLE 3
RECOGNITION OF TEACHERS' CULTURE INSTRUCTION

Always Can't	Can't Unless the Teacher Reminds	Sometimes Can	Always Can	Very Clearly
0	25.71% (9)	45.71% (16)	22.86% (8)	5.71% (2)

3. Question 8: How much do you know about the values in the western countries?

TABLE 4
AWARENESS OF WESTERN VALUES

Nothing	A Little	Some	Much	Very Much
5.71% (2)	80% (28)	14.29% (5)	0	0

The above three questions are used to investigate students' cultural awareness. Q1 shows us that only 13 students were quite or very concerned about cultures in their English study, which only takes 37.14% of the whole class. One person (2.86%) said he concerned nothing about culture. 34.29% of the whole, that is, 12 students, showed a little concern for the culture. Another 9 persons, 25.71% of the total, voiced that they had some concern for cultures. So, we can get the conclusion that in Class 3033 most students didn't pay much attention to culture knowledge during their English learning, for 22 students, 62.86% of the whole class, which constitutes a large portion of the whole, showed some or a little or even no concern for cultures during their study.

In response to Q2, among the total of 35 students, 9 (25.71%) said that if the teacher didn't remind them, they couldn't realize that the teacher was introducing culture knowledge, while only 2 (5.71%) students thought they could clearly know that the teacher was talking about culture. And 16 students, which take up 45.71% of the whole, declared that sometimes they could get the idea that the teacher was introducing them some knowledge about culture. Another 8 persons, accounting for 22.86%, could always realize that the teacher was giving some culture knowledge.

For Q8, 30 students, 85.71% of the total, said that they knew nothing or only a little about the values in the western countries. The other 5 persons, that is, 14.29%, knew some. From the figures we can get some ideas that all the students were lack of the knowledge on Western values, which plays a very important role in the culture.

The data in Tables 2, 3, 4 indicate that most students in Class 3033 have weak cultural awareness and don't have some basic culture-bound knowledge about English-speaking countries. The above discussion gives a clear picture of the present condition of the students about their cultural awareness, too.

To some extent, this finding shows obviously the reason why the students can't do a good job in their translation exercises. It is the lack of culture knowledge and cultural awareness that directly causes some mistranslation or wrong translation. As we have discussed, translator, as a cultural mediator, is destined to be equipped with cultural awareness, for "translation is a peculiar type of intercultural communication, involving two linguistically different cultures" (Liao & Tu, 2004). This finding again tells us that it is emergency for the students to learn more about the western cultures and to strengthen their cultural awareness. As for the teacher, it is a crying need to give more stress on culture teaching

and introduce more about the western cultures in every aspect.

B. Culture Acquisition and Its Application in Translation-- the Second Category

This category involves questions 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 4, 5 and 12, which focus on students' culture acquisition and its application in translation. The data in this part will tell us something about students' culture learning and their opinions on culture learning and translation. The findings show that the students in Class 3033 regard culture knowledge helpful in translation, the lack of which may cause their translation errors, but they spent little time on culture learning and seldom carried out self-study in learning cultural knowledge.

1. Question 3: Have you read any books or other materials on cultures in the western countries?

TABLE 5
BOOKS READ ON WESTERN CULTURES

No	Few	A Few	Some	Many
8.57% (3)	40% (14)	42.86% (15)	8.57% (3)	0

Question 7: How do you learn culture?

TABLE 6
CULTURE LEARNING

Have No Idea	Only Depend on Teacher's Introduction, Without out-class learning	Mainly Depend on Teacher's Introduction, Also Learn It Out Class, But Not Often	Learn It Only Under Teacher's Requirement	Learn It Autonomously
2.86% (1)	20% (7)	45.71% (16)	20% (7)	11.42% (4)

When answering Q3, 3/8.57% said they had never read any books on western cultures, while 14/40% saying they had read few books in this field, 15/42.86% saying a few, and only 3/8.57% saying some, but no one said he had read many books about cultures in English-speaking countries by the time they did this investigation paper. In the investigation, the students were asked to mark whether the books they had read were in English or in Chinese. About one-third of all the respondents marked them, from which the author saw that only a few were in English and most of these English books were their textbooks. This also shows that the students in Class 3033 seldom get books on western cultures to read autonomously.

As for Q7, 4/11.42% indicated that usually they learned culture autonomously, while 1/2.86% said that he had no idea about it, that is, in his own words, he didn't know what should be done in learning culture. 7/20% among 35 students stated that they would not learn the knowledge about culture but only depended on teacher's instruction in the class. 23 of them, approximate for 65.71%, claimed that besides teacher's introduction in the class, they also learned culture knowledge outside class, among which 7/20% said they learned only when the teacher required them to.

From the findings in these two questions, we can get a clear fact that only a very small part in Class 3033 carried out autonomous study, while most students depended on their teachers. This result corresponds to the evaluation most of their teachers gave about them: most of them were too lazy, just waiting the teachers to tell them everything and they didn't do self-study. This again shows that some students in this class don't have a strong self-study motivation in learning. That is actually one of the reasons why they made some simple mistakes in translation, for they have a poor command of English and don't have some very visible, general culture knowledge. Some made mistakes in present tense, and some even didn't know the past participle of the word "teach", which they spelled as "tached" instead of the correct form "taught".

2. Question 9: At present, how many hours do you spend on culture learning in your English study outside class each week?

TABLE 7
TIME SPENT ON CULTURE LEARNING

No	One Hour	Two Hours	Three Hours	Other Answers
22.86% (8)	28.57% (10)	25.71% (9)	14.29% (5)	8.57% (3)

Question 10: How many hours do you think should be spent on culture learning in your English study outside class each week?

TABLE 8
TIME TO BE SPENT ON CULTURE LEARNING

One Hour	Two Hours	Three Hours	Four Hours	Other Answers
2.86% (1)	22.86% (8)	22.86% (8)	40% (14)	11.42% (4)

Question 11: How many hours do you think should be spent in introducing culture knowledge in translation classes?

TABLE 9
TIME TO BE SPENT INTRODUCING CULTURE IN TRANSLATION CLASSES

5% of the total	10% of the total	15% of the total	20% of the total	Other Answers
2.86% (1)	14.29% (5)	28.57% (10)	42.86% (15)	11.42% (4)

In Questions 9, 10, 11, the respondents told us how many hours they spent on and how many hours they thought should be spent on culture learning per week. The result of Q9 shows that 8/22.86% of all had not spent any time on culture learning by the time of the investigation, while 10/ 22.57% saying one hour per week, 9 /25.71% saying two hours per week, 5/14.29% stating three hours per week, and 3/8.57% others answering the question with the answers given by themselves. Among these three self-given answers, one was “learning it whenever I was free” and another two were: “every two days” and “didn’t have fixed time, but read some magazines or newspapers as possible as I could when I was free.” In other words, only 8 students, less than one-fourth of the whole class, spent three or more than three hours per week in learning culture knowledge, and the other 27 admitted that they only spent one or two hours or even no hour on culture knowledge that they all think is helpful or greatly helpful to translation, which can be shown in the result of Q4.

Answers to Q10 are about students’ opinions on how many hours should be spent on culture learning every week. Most of them aired their opinions that culture learning should take at least three or more hours each week, since 8/22.86% thought three hours should be spent every week, 14/40% declared four hours and another 4/11.42% gave other answers, among which one said “one hour per day”, one stated “three to four hours”, one thought “five hours should be needed”, and the last held the opinion that “the more, the better”. The rest 9/25.72% chose the first or the second choice. Of the nine students, 1/2.86%, who said he spent no hour in learning culture in Q9, chose the first choice, one hour and 8/ 22.86% chose the second, two hours.

Q11 is about their thoughts on the time spent in introducing culture knowledge in the classes of translation. 1/2.86% proposed 5% of the whole teaching hours should be spent; 5/14.29% said 10%; 10/18.57% suggested 15% be necessary; 15/42.86% thought 20% of the whole was needed; and 4/11.42% gave other answers, which were all above 20%: one was 25%, one 40%, one more than 40%, another was the more, the better.

The findings in Q10 and Q11 sharply contradict with that of Q9 in which a large portion spent less than three hours each week on culture learning. This contradiction, on the other hand, reveals a fact that although most students think culture should be emphasized in English language learning, they don’t spend much time on it in daily study. This can also reach the findings we have got in the above that the students in Class 3033 at Quzhou College of Technology are lack of learning autonomy and lack of culture knowledge, for they spent little time on culture knowledge study, which may directly result in their lack of cultural awareness.

3. Question 4: Do you think culture learning has some help to correct and accurate translation?

TABLE 10
CULTURE LEARNING AND CORRECT TRANSLATION

No	Little	Some	Much	Very Much
0	0	17.14% (6)	45.71% (16)	37.14% (13)

Question 5: How do you handle the relation between training your translation skills and leaning culture when you study translation course?

TABLE 11
TRANSLATION SKILL TRAINING AND CULTURE LEARNING

Only Concern Skill Training	Only Concern Culture Learning	Lay Equal Stress on the Two	Skill Training First, Culture Learning Second	Culture Learning First, Skill Training Second
5.71% (2)	2.86% (1)	45.71% (16)	31.43% (16)	14.29% (5)

Question 12: What is the main cause, do you think, of your mistranslation or wrong translation?

TABLE 12
CAUSES OF WRONG TRANSLATION

Don’t Know Some Words	Can’t Analyze Sentence Structure	Don’t Understand the Context	Don’t Know Some Culture Specifics	Others
40% (14)	17.14% (6)	11.42% (4)	22.86% (8)	8.57% (3)

Questions 4,5,12 have something to do with respondents’ culture learning and translation. Q4 deals with whether culture learning is helpful to accurate and correct translation. To this question, it was unanimously agreed that culture learning did function in translation, with 6/17.14% considering some help, 16 /45.71% stating much help and 13 /37.14% saying great help.

While in answering Q5, 2 students (5.71%) said that they only cared about the training of translation skills when studying the course of translation; 1/2.86% stated that culture learning was his only concern; 16/ 45.71% of the whole chose the third answer, i.e. laying equal stress on the two; 11/31.43% claimed that skills came the first and culture learning the second, while 5/14.29% just took the opposite answer, which was culture learning the first and skills the second.

When asked about the main reason of their present mistranslation or wrong translation, 14/40% questionees thought it was because they didn't understand some words. For this, the author made an oral investigation when giving class in Class 3033. Mainly there were two aspects. One was that they didn't know the literal meanings of some words, because these were new words for them. The other was that they didn't understand the intensive meanings of some words, that is, they knew the words but couldn't understand them, especially those culture-specified. 6/17.14% said the reason was that they couldn't analyze sentence structures; 4/11.42% regarded it as their failure in understanding the context; 8/22.86% took the consideration of their lack of culture knowledge; and the rest 3/8.57% gave other reasons. One of them said it was because he didn't study heartedly and hard enough; one supported all the given answers in choices 1,2,3 and 4, in the other words, he thought it was a complex reason of the four that caused his failure in translation; another one said that when the sentence structure was too complicated, he didn't know how to translate it.

So, from the results and the discussion of these three questions, we can find that the respondents regard culture learning helpful to translation and it is the culture knowledge that influences their translating correctness. But in the process of learning and practice, some students did not pay much attention to culture learning, which can be shown by the result of Q5 in Table11 that 5.71% of them only concerned translation skill training and 31.43% thought translation skills should come first before culture learning.

By now we have discussed the present situation of the respondents' cultural awareness, culture acquisition in English learning and its application in translation. The findings of all these questions show us some common problems of the students in Class 3033 at Quzhou College of Technology:

- a.) Most of them show little concern for culture learning during their study and have weak culture awareness.
- b.) They all agree that culture leaning needs more time. But in actual practice, most of them don't spend much time in learning culture and only a very small part of the students in this class learn culture knowledge autonomously.
- c.) All of them subscribe to the opinion that culture knowledge is of great help to translation and the same attention should be paid to both translation skills and learning of culture in the process of translation study, the later of which is the main reason of some mistranslation or wrong translation in their translation exercises. But in the process of learning and practice, some students did not pay attention to culture learning and some even don't know what to learn and how to learn.

IV. STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES ON CULTURE INTEGRATION IN TRANSLATION TEACHING

The analysis on the investigation shows that the students are lack of cultural awareness and cultural knowledge, but they think culture knowledge is very important in avoiding translation errors in translation practice. In order to improve students' cultural awareness and cultural knowledge, the following methods can be used in teaching translation.

A. *Integrating Culture into Classroom Teaching*

According to Kenneth D. Moore (1998), teaching can be defined as "the action of a person imparting skill or knowledge or giving instruction; the job of a person who teaches" (Moore, 1998, p.6). Clark and Starr (1986) suggested, "teaching is an attempt to assist students in acquiring or changing some skill, knowledge, ideal, attitude, or appreciation." (quoted in Moore, 1998, p.6) Classroom is an important place for the teacher to give instruction and to impart skill or knowledge. So, effective teaching is central to the process of learning and teaching. And effective teachers are, first, those who are effective decision makers. When culture teaching is concerned, the teacher must first consider what culture knowledge to teach and how to integrate it into classroom teaching.

1. Suggestions Regarding Teaching Program

Higher Vocational Education is to cultivate the talents in the front position in the fields of production, management, and service. For English majors, there is an inevitable need to communicate with foreigners either facially or through some media. As for English teaching, this requires that we should pursue cultural education to increase students' culture knowledge. Gao Yihong (1998), in the study for her doctoral dissertation, proves that learning culture plays a very important role in the expansion of the mode of thinking, the reconstruction of values and the remolding of personality structure. In her opinion, the learner's personality becomes more open and integrated at the same time he learns a language and the related culture (quoted in Lu, 2002, p.8-10). That is, language learning and culture learning are of great help in elevating students' personality as well as enlarging their knowledge scope. But the English Teaching Syllabus for Higher Vocational Colleges doesn't mention culture or development of cultural awareness. So, the revision of the Syllabus and the establishment of curriculum are in great emergency, though they will consume a lot of time and manpower. The following are some suggestions that may be practical under present circumstances.

- a. Cultural awareness and cultural ability must be made goals in the English Teaching Syllabus and Translation Teaching Syllabus at Higher Vocational Colleges; the syllabuses should include some cultural items that the students need to learn and grasp.
- b. Curriculum designers should keep in mind the cultural content courses. Optional courses such as "Communication Across Culture", "Language and Culture", "An Introduction of Western Society and Culture", "Foreign Film Appreciation", etc. should be provided for the students to increase their cultural awareness. And these will help a lot to improve their translation ability.
- c. Vocational practice should be a part of talent cultivation plan and be put more emphasis on, for culture acquisition

can not be achieved only through classroom teaching. Vocational practice does a good deed for English majors, and “it should be the gist of the construction of curriculum and the content of teaching system” (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2000).

2. Suggestions Regarding Teaching Facilities for the Conditions

The teaching facilities mentioned here mainly refer to teaching materials and teaching staff. Zhang Meifang (2001) made a research on translation teaching materials in China. In the research, she made a survey on the use of translation textbooks and required the responders to give the reasons why he or she liked or disliked the textbooks. The findings showed that most respondents regarded the present translation textbooks old and out of date, disorderly and unsystematic, lack of translation theories and out of contact with the practical need, and the suggestions that a series of authoritative textbooks should be designed by some academic authorities and that textbooks should be practical and suit the needs of the society were given (Zhang Meifang, 2001, p.133-135). Mu Lei (1999) in her research on Translation Teaching in China also raises the same questions about the textbooks used in translation course in China (see “*Translation Teaching in China*”, Mu Lei, 1999, p. 38-52). According to Mu’s research, another big problem translation teaching faces in China is the shortage of teaching staff. Her research shows that the translation teachers are mainly above 40 years old, young teachers under 35 years are only a small part in the whole staff, and that there are not enough translation teachers who have master or doctor degrees (Mu Lei, 1999, p.52). Their researches show us two big problems that do exist now in our translation teaching: lack of good textbooks and shortage of teachers. The whole higher education is facing the two big problems, let alone Higher Vocational Colleges, which are commonly inferior to other colleges or universities in every aspect. So, good translation teaching materials under the educational aims for Higher Vocational Colleges should be compiled and the teachers should be trained accordingly.

3. Infiltrating Culture Specifics through Teaching Process

When we do translation, we have to come across a lot of materials with different contents and styles in different literary forms. So, before asking students to translate a particular sentence or article, the teacher needs to introduce the relative cultural background knowledge if there is any. Besides, there are many culture-loaded words or expressions both in English and Chinese, the former of which some students may not have a clear picture of. Also, we will meet some socio-culture related expressions, especially in greetings. All of this calls our attention while teaching and learning. Teachers can use the following methods in teaching translation.

a. The Digging Method: This refers to digging out those culture-loaded words or expressions. These words usually have their denotations and their connotations or associations, closely related to their culture. Thus they always block students in their translation and also trap them in inter-culture communication. In English, the culture-loaded words or expressions can be largely founded in some single words, phrases, proverbs, allusions, idioms, etc. For example, in Chinese, “眼红(yanhong)” refers “jealous”, but in English, the color “red” doesn’t have this meaning. Instead, they use the color “green”. So, when we translate the sentence “当我给她看我的新车时，她很眼红”，we should translate it as “She was green-eyed when I showed her my new car.” In this sentence, we can find some equivalent words like “green-eyed”, “jealous” and “envious” for “yan hong”. But for some, we can’t find direct equivalents in English such as “阴(yin)”, “阳(yang)”, “三伏(sanfu)”, “臭老九(choulaojiu)”, etc. In turn, the English words such as, cowboy, individualism, hippie, gold rush, etc fail to find equivalents in Chinese.

From these examples, we can see that there are so many culture-loaded words in both languages that are really obstacles to learner’s understanding and translation. So it is necessary for the teachers to introduce cultures so as to help students release these traps and do well in translation.

b. Grammar Noted Method: In Chinese-English or English-Chinese translation, we have to deal with the two different languages with different sentence structures. Language itself is a part of culture which Nida calls lingual culture and language, as the most important symbolic system in culture, contains all kinds of cultural deposits in grammar, forms of address as well as texts. Therefore, translation teachers need to remind students of grammatical differences in the two languages as well as to impart translation skills and instruct knowledge with culture specifics, for those grammatical phenomena also have target cultural characteristics.

c. Example Comparison Method: In instruction, teachers can choose some examples of translations both in English and in Chinese with distinct cultural background or characteristics and ask the students to compare those translation versions to find out the best translated ones. During this process, the students can directly acquire some culture knowledge, and at the same time, it is a good way for teachers to show translation skills. Also it is an easy way for the students to understand the features between the two languages and avoid Chinglish in Chinese-English translation.

d. Culture Aside: Culture aside is often used in culture teaching in FLT. It refers to direct introduction or explanation of cultural background information in teaching materials. For translation teaching, in order to lower the mistakes in translating some culture-bound passages or materials, teachers can take some time aside to introduce related cultural information before students do the translation. Surely, teachers can leave this task for the students. That is to say, before the class, the teacher requires the students to find out some specific culture background knowledge that will be used in the translation task, and in the class the teacher asks the students to give presentations and analyze the translation material before actual translation task begins. Thus it not only can stimulate students’ learning autonomy, but puts students in the center of learning and teaching. Students, in this process, take the main part and the teacher is the guide who plans, guides and evaluates learning. Besides, multi-media or videos can be used to vividly show students some

cultural information.

e. *Situation Simulation*: Here the situation simulation refers to the simulation of real situation, which means that the teacher can create some real situations of interpretation in class. For example, the teacher can create a situation of package tour, in which the tourists speak English and they don't understand Chinese and a guide who can speak both Chinese and English. The tourists are visiting a local Chinese culture museum. But the interpreter in the museum can't speak English. So the guide has to translate what the interpreter has said into English for the tourists. In this situation, the class can first be divided into three groups, which take the roles of the three respectively. For the group of the tourists, they have to express what they want to ask in English; for the group who takes the role of the interpreter, they have to know a lot about the local culture; and for the group of the guide, they have to know both the English and Chinese languages well so that they can translate what the interpreter has said. And the situation can also be in some English-speaking countries where the tourists speak Chinese and the interpreter speaks English and they don't understand each other. Of course, this may be a difficult task for the students at Higher Vocational Colleges. But it will be a great help to both culture learning and translating training. At the same time, this kind of activity puts the students in a simulated situation, which they can take as a vocational practice.

B. *Laying Stress on Different Ways of Thinking between East and West*

Different ways of thinking between the east and the west cause the different ideas, values and even different language expressions. J. Needham (1956) suggests that the way of thinking of the Chinese is a global precedence. And the Chinese pay more attention to the whole picture than its details in their observation of the Chinese characters. Larry A. Samovar (2004) claims, "Because Chinese culture is distinctively collective, Chinese education emphasizes the goals of the group of society, fosters in-group belonging, demands cooperation and interdependence, and pursues harmony. The Chinese always stress moral education over intellectual and physical education." (Samovar & Porter, 2004, p. 236) Jia Yuxin (1997) maintains that logic, analysis, and linearity are the peculiarities pertaining to the thinking model of western nations. Conversely, the thinking model of eastern nations is famous for its intuitive holistic nature and harmonious dialectical nature (Jia Yuxin, 1997, p.98-100). Chunfen Feng, in her "*Contrasts between Western and Chinese Cultures*", says that "each culture is distinct in its patterning of values" and points out six contrasts "summarizing the distinct qualitative differences between western culture and Chinese culture" (Chunfen Feng, 2004). They are as follows:

1. Western culture emphasizes "active mastery" in the person-nature relationship, whereas traditional Chinese culture emphasized "passive acceptance" of fate by seeking harmony with nature.
2. Western culture tends to be connected with external experiences and the world of things, whereas traditional Chinese culture emphasized inner experiences of meaning and feeling.
3. Western culture is characterized by an open view of the world, emphasizing change and movement, whereas traditional Chinese culture was typified by a closed world view, prized stability and harmony.
4. Western culture places primary faith in rationalism and is oriented toward the future, whereas traditional Chinese culture rested upon kinship ties and tradition with a past orientation.
5. Western culture emphasizes horizontal dimensions of interpersonal relationships, whereas traditional Chinese culture placed more weight on vertical interpersonal relationships.
6. Western culture values the individual personality, whereas traditional Chinese culture weighted heavily a person's duties to family, clan, and state. (Feng, 2004)

So, the teacher should inform the students of these differences in teaching, and remind them of keeping in mind the different ways of thinking, which influence their language structures, when doing translation.

C. *Introducing Culture through Extracurricular Activities*

For college students, autonomous learning plays an important role in acquiring a language and its culture. They have a lot of spare time to spend either on study or on out-class activities that have nothing to do with their foreign language study. If they can combine the two together, isn't it a good way for both learning and enjoyment? And how can they acquire western cultures through extracurricular activities? The best way may be via intercultural activities, which refer to the activities of such kind as seeing foreign films, watching TV, intercultural communication, campus English festival, etc., in which students can have the opportunities for direct contact with the host culture.

Besides, lectures can be organized to introduce some particular western cultures. Experts or foreigners can be invited to give lectures on different cultures in English-speaking countries.

In addition, vocational practice is, for English majors, a good chance to gain comprehensive English competence, their translation ability and intercultural communicative ability. Of course, the main purpose here we have, is for the students to learn more about the western cultures during their vocational practice in which they can have more chances to meet and communicate with foreigners. And in their vocational practice, some students may have to do some written or oral translation work for the company. This is also a good chance for them to put what they have learned in the classroom into the real practice.

V. CONCLUSION

To avoid failures in both culture-bound translation and intercultural communication, culture teaching is in vital need to develop students' cultural awareness and cultural competence in foreign language teaching (FLT). It is also the task of translation teaching. However, how to teach culture knowledge and how to improve students' cultural competence remains a question. Translation teaching is a complicated problem, for culture itself is a complicated phenomenon and translation itself is, too, a complicated problem. The exploration in this thesis of how to introduce culture specifics in translation teaching at Higher Vocational Colleges only touches a very limited number of the issues. Rather than having discovered a comprehensive solution, this study only attempts to arouse attention to translation teaching at Higher Vocational Colleges in the hope of improving translation teaching at Higher Vocational Colleges so as to reach the goal of Higher Vocational Education.

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Differential Item Functioning: Implications for Test Validation

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Abstract—This paper attempts to recapitulate the concept of validity, namely construct validity (i.e., its definition and its approaches and role in language testing and assessment). Validation process is then elaborated on and proved to be integral enterprise in the process of making tests, namely English language proficiency tests. Then come the related concept of test fairness and test bias and its sources (e.g., gender, field of study, age, nationality and L1, background knowledge, etc) and contributions and threads to the validity of tests in general and in high-stakes tests of English language proficiency in particular. Moreover, in the present study, different approaches to investigate the validity of tests will be reviewed. Differential Item Functioning (DIF), among the other methods to investigate the validity of tests is also explained along with the description and explanation of its different detection methods and approaches mentioning their advantages and disadvantages to conclude that logistic regression (LR) is among the best methods till now.

Index Terms—validity, Differential Item Functioning, item bias, test fairness, logistic regression, IRT

I. INTRODUCTION

Testing language is always done for a particular purpose in a specific context. One of the most important tests nowadays is the test of English language proficiency used worldwide as an indicator of the overall English language knowledge of a person. As Kim (2001) states, English as a second or foreign language proficiency tests are used mainly to measure the English language ability of language learners whose L1 is not English. In other words, proficiency tests usually assess the extent to which an examinee is able to cope with real-life language use situations. These tests are used mostly to become aware of the level of language ability of examinees to make some hopefully correct and logical decisions.

To reach such right judgments it is necessary that a test be valid, since validity is one of the essential features of tests' interpretation and use. That is to say, it is the quality of interpretations made out of test scores (Bachman, 1995). To prevent such inappropriate consequences, Bachman believes, bias must be detected and removed, a complex procedure. It can be detected through various methods and procedures and present study mainly focuses on one of the most important and currently used procedures of bias detection, known as Differential Item Functioning (DIF, here after) and its different detection procedures and methods.

There is no single, absolute measure of validity to establish validity; however, various kinds of evidence can help to support it (Brown, 2004) so different facets of validity manifest involving content-related, criterion-related, construct-related, consequential, and face validity. Among these aspects, chiefly construct-related validity is scrutinized, and to some extents criterion-related and consequential validity are also investigated concerning one of the high-stakes tests administered in Iran the description of which is provide in chapter three. Therefore, the last two types are defined before turning to the first kind, construct-validity, and dealing with it in detail. Brown (2004) defines criterion-related validity which is divided into two kinds of concurrent and predictive validity as "the extent to which the 'criterion' of the test has actually been reached" (p. 24), and regarding consequential validity he declares "consequential validity encompasses all the consequences of a test, including such considerations as its accuracy in measuring intended criteria, its impact on the preparation of test takers, its effect on the learner, and the (intended and unintended) social consequences of a test's interpretation and use" (p. 26).

II. RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Validity and Validation Process

For validity, one of the most complex criterion of tests and the most fundamental in psychometrics (Angoff, 1988), various definitions have been proposed yet expressing the same central idea to which results of the tests must conform in order for them to be regarded as an effective and valid test. Before relation the concept of validity and approaches to

validation process to the purpose of the study and revealing how it is related to test bias and DIF providing definition of this concept and its related aspects seems helpful. As an example, one of the traditional definitions of validity is the correlation of test scores with "some other objective measure of that which the test is used to measure: (Bingham, 1937, p. 214; cited in Angoff, 1988). As another instance, one of the conventional definitions is suggested by Gronlund (1998, p. 226; cited in Brown H. D; 2004) who says "the extent to which inferences made from assessment results are appropriate, meaningful, and useful in terms of the purpose of the assessment". Anastasi (1986, as cited in Angoff, 1988) believes that validity should be considered from the very beginning steps of test construction as opposed to traditional criterion-related validation where validity is only limited to the final stages of test development. Brown (2005) too defines validity as "the degree to which a test measures what it claims, or purports, to be measuring" (p. 220) and gains especial importance when involved in making decisions about students; therefore, after taking into account issues of practicality and reliability, validity should be concerned.

Construct validity is a chief issue concerning validating large-scale standardized tests of English language proficiency (Brown, 2004). According to Angoff (1988) "Construct validation is a process, not a procedure; and it requires many lines of evidence, not all of them quantitative." (p. 26).

Brown (2004) defines construct as "A construct is any theory, hypothesis, or model that attempts to explain observed phenomena in our universe of perceptions. Constructs may or may not be directly or empirically measured-their verification often requires inferential data. "Proficiency" and "communicative competence" are linguistic constructs; "self-esteem" and "motivation" are psychological constructs". (p. 25).

Zumbo (1999) also points out that, the traditional view of validity is expanded in this regard. Principally, the current view of validity makes validation a central issue which is not simply evaluated by computing correlations with another measure, for explicit statistical studies which examine bias and concept-focused and policy studies of value implication for decision making are needed. Therefore, in validation process, we begin with the construct definition stage followed by writing the items or selecting a measure, and we continue through item analysis while using a measure.

Research in investigating the validity, namely construct validity, is abundant in the field. For instance, Salehi and Rezaee (2008) used the design of multitrait-multimethod (MTMM) to investigate the construct validity of a high-stakes test (i.e., the University of Tehran English Proficiency test, the UTEPT) where two traits-grammar and vocabulary- and two methods-multiple choice and contextualization- were used. As they state, this test is a high-stakes and the results of this test have a kind of life-changing implications for the test takers. It was found that the test possessed both convergent and discriminant validity. As they argue, MTMM designs have two advantages. Firstly, by using this design it is possible to examine both convergent and discriminant validity, and secondly, by making use of this design the effect of measurement method can be distinguished from the effect of the trait method.

In another study done by Rezaee and Salehi (2009) factor analysis was done to determine the construct validity of a high-stakes test. The researchers used exploratory factor analysis (EFA) through principal component analysis (PCA) and the subject of their study was grammar section. Varimax rotation yielded distinct factors so that in one sub-section eight distinct factors and in the other sub-section six distinct factors were extracted.

B. Current View of Validity

McNamara and Roever (2006) point out that contemporary discussions of validity takes into account such issues as test fairness by developing procedures that supports the rationality of decisions based on tests. They refer to Cronbach as "father" of construct validity a term coined by Meehl and Challaman. As they explain, in construct validation, the validity of inferences are concerned rather than the validity of instruments. They state that Cronbach (1989) argued that such a thing as a "valid test" does not exist: "one validates not a test, but an interpretation of data arising from a specified procedure" (Cronbach, 1971, p. 447; cited in McNamara and Roever, 2006). Cronbach and Meehl (1995; cited in McNamara and Roever, 2006) make a distinction between a weak and a strong program for construct validation with weak program being concerned with any available means to verify interpretation which is mostly correlational and the strong program being based on the falsification idea advanced by Popperian philosophy.

III. TEST VALIDATION

One of the most important considerations in the process of making tests is test validation which can refer to any attempt to eliminating irrelevant factors and sources of bias from any kind in order for a test to yield valid results. According to Bachman (1995), the purpose of validation is highly in line with the specific groups of test takers-as well as test users. The members of test takers may differ in some aspects, other than language ability, such as gender, age, field of study, nationality, etc. Sometimes, each of these points of difference may cause some fluctuations in the language ability level of examinees; therefore, these points of dissimilarities may be regarded as sources of bias (Zumbo, 1999). Consequently, due to the presence of the sources of bias, which is the result of individual characteristics, systematic differences in test performance are caused, hence the validity of our judgments or interpretations may be jeopardized as well. This phenomenon which is referred to as test bias may contribute to misinterpretation of test scores; sexist or racist content unequal prediction of criterion performance; unfair content with respect to the experience of test takers; inappropriate selection procedure; inadequate criterion measures; and threatening conditions of testing (Nitco 1983: 43-7; as cited in Bachman, 1995).

In terms of Angoff (1988) neither a test nor even the scores produced by the test are validated; rather, "the interpretations and inferences that the user draws from the test scores, and the decisions and actions that flow from those inferences" are to be validated (p. 24). Zumbo (1999) also notes that it is not the measure that is being validated; rather the inferences made from a measure must be validated. Brown (2005) in the same line of argument points out that "validity is not about the test itself so much as it is about the test when the scores are interpreted for some specific purpose. In fact, it is much more accurate to refer to the validity of the scores and interpretations that result from a test than to think of the test itself as being valid" (p. 221). The distinction between validations of measure versus validation of inferences has significant contributions for assessment. Besides, all empirical measures have a need for validation of inferences.

Therefore, any inference made from a measure will be meaningless without validation. Test validation is an important consideration and it gains more importance when the test to be validated is a high-stakes one (Rezaee, and Salehi, 2008). The approaches to test validation are many. Alderson, Clapham, and Wall (1995) mention the following approaches to construct validation. The first approach is the correspondence with the theory, the second approach is internal correlations, the third approach is factor analysis, and finally the last one is test bias or assessing the impact of gender, field of study, age, background knowledge, etc.

Recently validity has been dealt with under the light of new considerations. For instance, in terms of Zumbo (1999) the current view of validity makes it so central that computing it simply by correlation with another measure would not be an appropriate method. It also highlights that explicit statistical studies examining bias and concept-focused and policy studies of value implications in decision making. For example, in Item Bias studies, validation process involves construct definition as the first step before writing the items or selecting a measure and is followed by item analysis processes. As noted earlier, the process of validation must examine the relationship between test performance and the test itself. Moreover, the process of validation is addressed to specific uses of the test, and the specific examinees group taking the test.

Brown (2005) also refers to the change in thinking of validity in the field of testing and assessment, current conceptions of validity. He makes a distinction between traditional and current view of validity. The traditional process of validation involves picking the most suitable type of validity (i.e., content, criterion-related or construct validity) and then conducting statistical analysis. Whereas, the current view of validity expands the conceptual framework of traditional view. If one aims at using the measure for decision-making purposes, research should be conducted to ensure that there is no bias in the measure. In fact, in the current view of validity, validation is a central issue which is not resolved by computing a correlation with another measure. That is, explicit statistical studies which examine test bias are needed. Such a need is due to the fact that validation process is never entirely complete.

A. *Test Fairness*

As explained above, test bias removing which contributes to test fairness is an important building block in the process of test validation. In the last two decades, the issue of test fairness and test bias has become increasingly important and it has been the subject of great deal of recent research focusing on the use of any psychological and/or educational tests. Tests and measures are mostly used for the purpose of decision-making. One of the important considerations in selection and use of any test is that test must not be biased, that is test must be fair to all candidates. If we want to use the results of tests and measures to make decisions, then, we have to conduct research to ensure that our measure is not biased. That is, we need to have organizationally and socially relevant comparison group, for instance, in terms of gender, age, minority status, race and so forth (Zumbo, 1999).

As to the definition of a fair test one can refer to Roever (2005; as cited in Perrone 2006) who points out that a fair test is one being valid for all groups and individuals providing each person with an equal opportunity of demonstrating his/her skills and knowledge relevant to the purpose of the test. In other words, test takers with similar knowledge of material on a test (based on their total scores) must logically perform similarly on individual examination items irrespective of their gender, culture, ethnicity, or race, otherwise it is biased (Subkoviak, Mack, Ironson, & Craig, 1984; as cited in Perrone, 2006). Fairness, according to Brown (2005), in addition, is defined as the degree tests' impartiality and treating every student the same which leads teachers and testers "to find test questions, administration procedures, scoring methods, and reporting policies that optimize the chances that each student will receive equal and fair treatment" (p. 26).

Bias can lead to systematic errors distorting the inferences made in selection and classification. In terms of Teresi (2004) "item bias implies that a sustentative review has been undertaken, and that the cumulative body of evidence suggests that the item performs differently, may have different meaning or may be measuring an unwanted nuisance factor for one group as contrasted with another" (p. 3). In other words, test items are biased if they contain sources of difficulty which is not relevant to the construct measured, in this particular case, the performance of examinees on proficiency test. Hence, items containing sources of difficulty beyond those of interest which results in a discrimination against particular groups are regarded as bias. Recently, a technique called DIF has been largely used in researched as new standard in psychometric bias analysis (Zumbo, 1999).

Accordingly, if an examination item is biased it functions differentially for a specific subgroups of test takers depriving testees of their equal chance of success (Zumbo, 1999); because, a biased item measuring irrelevant attributes to the tested construct which impact test takers' performance (Williams, 1997, Zumbo, 1999; as cited in Perrone, 2006).

In addition, if an item contains language or content differentially difficult for different subgroups of test-takers, it is biased and it might also demonstrate item structure and format bias in the case of involving ambiguities or inadequacies in the item stem, test instructions, or distracters (Hambleton & Rodgers, 1995; cited in Perrone, 2006).

Researchers in the field of second language assessment like users of psychological tests, policy makers, and personnel selection officers should be aware of the current thinking in test bias analysis, one of the standards or techniques of which is DIF, as systematic errors distorting the inferences made of tests may appear (Zumbo, 1999). Various aspects of fairness including fairness with respect to standardization, test consequences/score use, and item bias (Kunnan, 2000; Shohamy, 2000; as cited in Perrone, 2006) have been the center of attention in the literature; however as Roever (2005; as cited in Perrone, 2006) declares DIF developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in 1986, has been known as the standard of psychometric bias analysis. Accordingly, DIF which may reflect measurement bias has received a great deal of attention in educational measurement (Millsap & Everson, 1993; as cited in Noortgate & Boeck, 2005).

In the context of the off-hand essay test, for instance, the issue of bias gains importance especially when a prompt or topic is biased against certain group(s) of examinees resulting in distorting the meaning of the essay score for different examinees subgroups jeopardizing the validity of score interpretations (Sheppard, 1982; cited in Park, 2006). Therefore, devising essay prompts that are not biased and are fair to all examinees so that no test taker will be unfairly disadvantaged and could demonstrate their true ability. As another example, an intelligence test is biased if it contains items which assess and tap specific knowledge and abilities not intended to be measured by the test (Noortgate & Boeck, 2005).

In sum, as Hambleton and Rogers (1995; cited in Perrone, 2006) declare when a dimension on the examination is not related to the construct being measured the result of which is favoring one group of examinees and placing the other group of examinees at a disadvantage in taking the examination, then test items will be regarded as biased items. Consequently, if DIF is not evident for an item, then the item is not biased. However, DIF is required but not sufficient for declaring item bias. In other words, an item might show DIF but the difference of performance on a test and responding to the item is due to the fact that one group of test-takers is at a high level of ability and the other group in a lower level of ability the item must not be considered biased; because, this difference in the performance of groups of examinees is not indicative of test bias, but of item impact (Roever, 2005, Schumacher, 2005; cited in Perrone 2006). Therefore, after seeing evidence for the occurrence of DIF application of subsequent item bias analysis (e.g., empirical evaluation or content analysis) would be needed in order to prove the presence of item bias as DIF can be considered bias if there are construct irrelevant factors in a test resulting in differences in a group's ability to respond to a test item (Zumbo, 1999).

B. Differential Item Functioning (DIF)

This part provides a brief explanation on perspective and foundation of DIF, a review of statistical techniques to conduct DIF as well as summaries of some highly related practical research in this regard. In order to detect item bias and remove that, several methods have been proposed and used so far.

Previously, as Subkoviak et al (1984; as cited in Perrone) points out, a variety of methods such as the transformed item difficulty method, the Chi-square method, and the three-parameter item characteristic curve had been proposed to detect item bias. However, DIF procedures are considered as the new dominant psychometric methods to address fairness in standardized, achievement, aptitude, certification and license testing. That is to say, one of the most important considerations in selection and use of any test is that it must not be biased, so it should be fair to all applicants. DIF as Schumacker (2005; as cited in Perrone, 2006) explains is a collection of statistical methods used to determine the fairness and appropriateness of examination items with regard to different groups (e.g., male and female, etc) of test takers, hence aiding in the identification of biased test items.

This technique, DIF, has been mostly used in research as a rather new standard in psychometric bias analysis. DIF procedures are in fact a response to the legal and ethical need to ascertain that comparable test applicants are treated equally (Jodin and Gierl, 1999). There have been several definitions of DIF in the literature and the exact and to the point definition of DIF, according to Teresi (2004) varies across methods and the fact that whether binary or polytomous items (usually ordinal) items are to be examined adds to this diversity; however, broadly defined DIF is "conditional probabilities or conditional expected item scores that vary across groups" (p. 2).

Zumbo (1999) notes that for the measurement practitioners, DIF often means that there exists a type of systematic but construct irrelevant variance that is being tapped by the test or measure. Moreover, the source of construct irrelevant variance is related to group membership. In other words, presence of multidimensionality as well as its pervasiveness depends on group membership. In conducting DIF and detecting test and/or item bias, as Roever (2005; cited in Perrone, 2006) declares, logically is locating examination items on which one group of test-takers performs significantly better than the other group(s).

In literature, there is a clear distinction between "item impact" and "DIF" (Clause & Mazor, 1998; Penfield & Lam, 2000; as cited in Park, 2006) so that the former may be present when examinees from different groups show different probabilities of success on an item due to their difference in the ability measured. That is to say, in such cases "true" differences between the groups in the underlying ability being measured by the item results in differences in examinee performance on the item. Zumbo (1999), in addition, elucidates the matter explaining that when examinees from

different groups endorse an item differently item impact is evident since true differences exist between the groups regarding the underlying ability measured by the item ;and, item bias occurs due to the fact that some characteristics of the test item or testing situation that is not relevant to the test purpose differentiates performance of group of examinees making one group less likely to answer the item correctly and the other group more likely do so. As he further elaborates, the difference between item impact and item bias pertains to the fact that group differences are due to relevant or irrelevant characteristics (respectively) of the test. Teresi (2004) also points out that impact implies that there are group differences and that item impact is typically examined in terms of effect sizes. DIF is necessary condition for item bias, but it is not sufficient. In other words, if an item does not show DIF, then no item bias is present. Nevertheless, in cases that DIF is apparent, subsequent item bias analyses (e.g., content analysis, empirical evaluation) are needed to provide evidence to declare item bias.

According to Holland and Wainer (1993; cited in Monahan et al, 2007), in DIF analyses after adjusting groups for overall performance with regard to measured trait, they are compared on item performance. In other words, in assessing test-takers response patterns to specific test items, or doing DIF, the comparison groups (e.g., males vs. females) are initially matched on the underlying construct of interest (e.g., verbal ability or mathematics achievement). Putting it in other words, Noortgate and Boeck (2005) explain that DIF analysis are often used to substantiate the fact that in a standardized test items do not favor the reference group or a majority group (e.g., males, white people, etc) compared with one or more focal or minority groups (e.g., females, people of color, etc). This helps researchers or test developers determine whether item responses are equally valid for distinct groups of test takers (Zumbo, 1999).

As to the various types of DIF one can classify it according to different factors. For example, there are, as French and Miller (1996) state, two possible types of DIF: (A) uniform (i.e., occurring when an item uniformly is favored by one group over another across the ability continuum) and (b) nonuniform (i.e., when there is an interaction between test-takers' ability level and their performance on an item contributing to change in the direction of DIF along the ability scale). Putting it in other words, Teresi (2004) clarifies that "Uniform DIF indicates that the DIF is in the same direction across the entire spectrum of disability, while nonuniform DIF means that an item favors one group at certain disability levels, and other groups at other levels" (p. 2). Concerning group type, they explain that, there are again two distinct type of groups: focal and reference group, with the first one being of primary interest in DIF analysis and the second being taken as the standard. In item response theory terms, in addition, nonparallel item characteristic curves indicates nonuniform DIF. Moreover, nonuniform DIF is much more difficult to interpret and due to the existence of the interaction between ability level of examinees' and their group membership (Park, 2006) Also, the identification of nonuniform DIF in polytomous items may become more important than that of nonuniform DIF in dichotomous items (Spray & Miller, 1994; cited in Park, 2006). Such methods as the Generalized Mantel-Haenszel procedure and the standardization method cannot detect nonuniform DIF (Miller & Spray, 1993; as cited in Park).

C. Review of Studies Using Different DIF Techniques and Methods in Language Assessment

Differential-groups studies as Brown (2005) points out are those studies comparing the performances of two groups on a test aiming at demonstrating that the test scores differentiate between groups with one group having the construct being measured and the other group not lacking it. In addition, proficiency test, according to Brown (2004) is one which aims at testing global competence in a language. Traditionally consisting of standardized multiple-choice items on grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, aural comprehension, and sometimes writing skill and oral production performance, proficiency test is not limited o any single course, curriculum, or skill in the language. That is to say it tests overall language ability.

The investigation of DIF is crucial in language proficiency tests, where examinees with various backgrounds are involved, since DIF items pose a considerable threat to the validity of the test (Kim, 2001). It is notable that one can study measurement bias investigating external or internal relationships. DIF, however, is a matter of internal item relationships of the items to another. Studies of DIF are one of the primary methodological devices to address standardized assessment programs whether in second/foreign language assessment programs or in the field of psychology. What follows is the review and summary of the research done by different scholars and researchers in this regard.

As an instant, French and Miller (1996) conducted a computer simulation study to determine whether it is feasible to use logistic regression procedures to detect DIF in polytomous items. They found that this technique, logistic regression, is useful and powerful to detect most forms of DIF; however, large amounts of data manipulation was required and this, sometimes, makes interpretation of the results difficult. In another study, Jodoin and Gierl (1999) focus on the logistic regression procedure for DIF detection a model-based approach designed to identify both uniform and non-uniform DIF. they have developed a new classification method based on which established simultaneous item bias test. They also examined whether the effect size measure affects type I error and power rates for the logistic regression DIF procedure. The conclude that an inclusive view of the variable associated with statistical inferences is required in DIF. besides sample size, type I error, rate power and effect sizes are interrelated and must be considered with careful attention to the inferences from a statistical test.

Using tow large data sets, Monahan, McHorney, Stump, and Perkins (2007) present the equations for obtaining useful effect sizes for the logistic regression procedure, explain them and demonstrate their application for uniform DIF. They also discuss the pros and cons of effect sizes, as they declare that, previous research using binary logistic

regression (LR) for detecting DIF in dichotomously scored items did not report an effect size while these LR effect sizes are valuable to practitioners especially for avoiding flagging unimportant DIF in large samples. Concerning how to use the effect sizes the authors recommend that, firstly, when deciding if items show DIF effect size a statistical test be used; secondly, practitioners decide on the values of the effect size for the intended purpose (i.e., negligible, moderate and large magnitudes); third, one take some steps to facilitate interpretations (e.g., calculating the reciprocal of odds ratios less than one; using scatter, line, and bar graphs aiding in discerning relative distances between DIF magnitudes; and sorting items according to direction and magnitude of DIF in tables; and forth, comparisons of DIF procedures can be facilitated using effect sizes.

Other DIF studies include Geranpayeh and Kunnan (2007) who used DIF procedure to investigate whether the test items on the listening section on the Certificate in Advanced English examination function differently for test takers among three different age groups. DIF analysis in this study identified six items exhibiting DIF. However, the findings of the study did not clearly show item bias toward any of the age groups examined. Different academic backgrounds also can be regarded as one of the factors causing bias in any test, a source of bias. Tae-II Pae (2004) does a research to investigate DIF on the English subset of the 1998 Korean National Entrance Exam for examinees with different academic backgrounds (humanities Vs science) using Item Response Theory. In this study, DIF was detected using both Mental-Haenzel procedure and the IRT likelihood ratio-approach. the result of the research indicates that there were 18 DIF items with 28 DIF parameters.

Scherbaum and Gold stein (2008) studied the relationship between race-based DIF and item difficulty. They examined relationship between DIF and Item Response Theory. They, actually, replicated Freedles' findings by using alternative DIF techniques. They found a substantial correlation between item difficulty and DIF using different DIF techniques and a different source of data in comparison to Freedles' (2003) research. The results of their study indicates that there was a small correlation between item difficulty and DIF values.

D. DIF as a Validation Technique in Social and Psychological Measures

The field of psychology too, as indicated above, is concerned with issues of fairness and test bias. DIF analysis is an effective tool to explore personality constructs, too (Smith, 2002; as cited in Sheppard, 2006). Test bias reveals psychometric inequalities among different subgroups and, according to Drasgow, 1984; cited in Sheppard, 2006) is divided into two forms of relationship bias (i.e., concerning with the association between an external criterion measure and a test score) and measurement bias (i.e., concerning with properties of test items). Nevertheless, studies of test bias in employment-oriented personality inventories still remain unexplored and this is in contrast to the exhaustive research on bias in ability tests (Sackett & Willk, 1994; Jensen, 1980; Thissen, Steinberg, & Gerrard, 1986; as cited in Sheppard et al, 2006). Here also differential hiring rates would be regarded unfair and biased if test bias rather than true differences causes group differences. (Sheppard, et al 2006). Measurement bias was examined investigating differential item functioning across sex and two racial groups (Caucasian and Black) in the Hogan Personality Inventory to explore the themes of the potentially biased items by Sheppard et al (2006). They found that, 81 out of 138 items in the HPI exhibited DIF among which 38 percent of the total items were shown to be potentially biased by sex and 38 percent of them exhibited DIF by race. They conclude that, considerable degree of measurement bias exists in an employment-oriented personality test.

IV. DIFFERENT DIF DETECTION METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

A. General Classification of Various Methods and Approaches

There does not exist any single "best method" of DIF analysis which is effective and useful for all purposes (Anastas & Urbina, 1997; as cited in Lai, Teresi, & Gershon, 2005). Various methods exist to examine DIF to estimate the level of disability, disease, capability, etc., among which some methods assume the existence of a latent variable which is estimated by using marginal maximum likelihood, some other methods assume a "valid" target dimension distinct from secondary "nuisance" factors, and finally other methods assume the existence of an external "gold standard" diagnostic variable (King, Murray, Salomon, and Tandon, 2004; as cited in Teresi, 2004). However, according to McNamara and Roever (2006) the following four broad categories of methods are used for detecting DIF: (1) analysis based on item difficulty (comparing item difficulty estimates); (2) nonparametric approaches (procedures using contingency tables, chi-square, and odd ratios); (3) item-response-theory-based approaches (approaches including 1, 2, and 3-parameter analyses which frequently compare the fit of statistical models); and (4) other approaches (including logistic regression, generalizability theory, and multifaceted measurement). Teresi (2004), in addition, classifies different DIF detection methods according to whether they "(a) are parametric or non-parametric; (b) are based on latent or observed variables; (c) treat the disability dimension as continuous; (d) can model multiple traits; (e) can detect both uniform and nonuniform DIF; (f) can examine polytomous responses; (g) can include covariates in the model, and they (h) must use a categorical studied (group variable)." (p. 5).

It is also possible to classify matching approaches where testees with the same level of ability are matched versus those that do not: in this case, DIF is surely present if test takers of the same ability level but belonging to different groups have different likelihood of correctly answering an item as item are functioning differentially between test takers not because of underlying ability but because of group membership (e.g., males vs. females).

B. *Item Response Theory (IRT)*

In addition, IRT methods, are according to French and Miller (1996), theoretically preferred as to detect DIF in dichotomous items and recently research has examined these methods to investigate whether they are also useful for polytomous case as well (cf. Swaminathan and Rogers, 1990; Wainer, Sireci, and Thissen, 1991). Item Response Theory models are an interesting and useful tool to understand and model DIF, though the most popular techniques to detect DIF are not IRT based (Lord, 1980; Thissen, Steinberg, & Wainer, 1993; cited in Noortgate & Boeck, 2005). However, IRT methods are generally constrained by sample size requirements model fit assumptions, and software to calibrate the items and all of these problems are aggravated in the polytomous case. Item response theory procedures (Shepard et al, 1981; Hambleton & Swaminathan, 1985; cited in Swaminathan and Rogers, 1990) in comparing the performance of groups of examinees takes it into account the continuous nature of ability. However, IRT-based procedures' shortcomings are that they are sensitive to sample size and model-data fit and are time consuming and that indexes as the area between item characteristic curves have no associated tests of significance.

As Noortgate and Boeck (2005) explain "In IRT models, the probability of a correct response is related to person and item covariates. These covariates often are person and item indicators (dummy covariates), weighted with parameters that are called ability and difficulty, respectively" (p. 443). In Item Response Theory (IRT), DIF occurs "when a test item does not have the same relationship to a latent variable across two or more examinee groups" (Embreston & Reise, 2000, p. 251; cited in Lai, Teresi, & Gershon, 2005). IRT-related approaches, according to Lai et al (2005), involves comparison of the Item Characteristic Curves (ICCs), or comparison of the item parameters and unlike the MH and LR methods do not rely on observed scores. As they explain, an ICC describes the relationship between a respondent's location on a latent trait continuum and the probability of respondent's giving specific response to a particular item on that trait continuum.

C. *Mantel-Haenszel (MH)*

Another widely accepted and probably once the most popular statistic in use for dichotomous DIF detection is the Mantel-Haenszel (MH) technique (Mantel & Haenszel, 1995) especially when our sample size is small (Holland and Thayer, 1986; cited in French and Miller, 1996). Swaminatha and Rogers (1990) state that, the Mantel-Haenszel procedure is particularly attractive concerning its implementation and having an associated test of significance. Nevertheless, MH statistic is sensitive to the direction of DIF, meaning that if in the middle of the matching score distribution the direction of DIF changes, nonuniform DIF may not be detected (Swaminathan and Rogers, 1990; cited in French and Miller, 1996). MH technique can be adapted to be used to analyze polytomous data as well. In MH procedure, the subjects are divided into two groups (i.e., focal and reference group) which are matched on a conditional variable which is directly pertinent to the construct being measured. MH procedure, then, assumes that the ratio of answering a particular item correctly is equal between reference and focal groups across all ability levels (Lai, Teresi, Gershon, 2005). They indicate that the major feature of this procedure that distinguishes it from the other methods and procedures is that "instead of testing against a general alternative hypothesis of any difference in correct response rates between groups, this statistic tests against a particular alternative of a common odds-ratio across all blocking, or matching, categories." (p. 284).

D. *Logistic Regression (LR)*

This part presents a brief explanation of logistic regression as a statistical method for computing DIF. Logistic regression, one of the DIF detection techniques, according to Zumbo (1999), is based on statistical modeling of the probability of responding correctly to an item by group membership and a conditioning variable which is usually the scale or sub-scale total score. As Monahan et al (2007) state that binary Logistic regression (LR) procedure has become increasingly popular for detecting DIF in dichotomous test items ever since Swaminathan and Rogers (1990) used it for this purpose (i.e., the detection of DIF in dichotomous test items). In addition, Logistic regression is useful technique for detecting both kinds of DIF, uniform and nonuniform DIF, in dichotomously scored items (Swaminathan and Rogers, 1990). Logistic Regression approaches (LR), in a predictive context, use regression of the external criterion on test score (Lai et al, 2005).

According to Noortgate and Boeck (2005) there exist another variety of logistic models called logistic mixed model in which "the main effect of group membership is modeled by means of one or more additional dummy covariates for the groups" (p. 445). As they explain the mixed model perspective it is suggested that random group effects in item response models be used if people belong to groups regarded as a random sample of groups. In such a case, the specific group effects does not concern researcher primarily, but rather the distribution of these effects is important. Noortgate and Boeck (2005) point out that there are three major strengths of the logistic mixed models approach for modeling DIF: "First, logistic mixed models are easy to understand and very flexible.....Second, the logistic mixed model framework allows considering items and/or groups to be random, resulting in more economical models.....Third, using random DIF effects, a hypothesized explanation for DIF can be included in the model through the effects of covariates, without requiring that the explanation is perfect. The covariates can relate to items, persons, or (higher-level) groups of items or persons" (p. 461).

There are a number of advantages attributable to this technique, logistic regression. For example, French and Miller (1996) point out that, "The logistic regression technique is attractive because it can model both uniform and nonuniform

DIF within the same equation and can test coefficients for significant uniform and nonuniform DIF separately. Specifically, this procedure models the probability of observing each dichotomous item response as a function of two explanatory variables: observed test score and a group indicator variable." (p. 317).

In addition, McNamara and Roever (2006) point out that: "Logistic regression is useful because it allows modeling of uniform and nonuniform DIF is nonparametric, can be applied to dichotomous and rate items, and requires less complicated computing than IRT-based analyses. In fact, Zumbo gives several examples that only require SPSS" (p.116). Referring to some researchers such as Lee, Breland, and Muraki (2004) who used logistic regression for a study of DIF in writing prompts for the computer-based TOEFL, they state that logistic regression is similar to the other DIF detection techniques in that it is mostly applied to dichotomous items and it focuses on DIF at the item level. Lee, Breland, Muraki (2002; Park, 2006) point out that two advantages of logistic regression over linear regression are that, firstly, the dependant variable does not have to be continuous, unbounded, and measured on an interval or ratio scale; and secondly, it does not require a linear relationship between the dependant and independent variables. Mellenbergh (1982) used log-linear model of LR approaches to predict item responses from group membership, disability level, and the interaction of these factors where strong interaction term proves the presence of nonuniform DIF.

Logistic regression procedures are, according to Swaminathan and Rogers (1990) as powerful as the MH technique to detect uniform DIF and it is more powerful than the MH technique concerning detecting nonuniform DIF in dichotomous items. However, they also discovered that logistic regression procedures are much more expensive than MH procedures regarding both time and computer running costs. They argue that, such factors as sample size, test length, and the nature of the DIF are likely to highly affect the power of these two procedures (i.e., logistic regression and Mantel-Haenszel) in that the power of logistic regression procedure can be affected by sample size through its effect on estimation, subsequently, in small samples the asymptotic results may not hold rendering the test statistic unlikely to be valid indicator of the presence of DIF; and in Mantel-Haenszel procedure, the stability of the estimates of odds ratio in each score group may be affected by small samples.

E. Other Methods

Several methods are also based on examination of likelihood ratios connected to nested models which examine the group differences in log-likelihoods associated with compact and augmented models where the augmented models contain additional terms or parameters, and the impact model is more economical. In order to test the difference between models a likelihood ratio test, distributed as a chi-square, is examined to provide evidence for indicating DIF (Teresi, 2004).

The DFIT framework is also used in addition to IRT and LR to examine the effect of item-level DIF on the scale (Lai et al, 2005). In this framework, items that show DIF using a single approach might be further analyzed and items that do not exhibit significant DIF or ignorable impact at the scale level may be retained.

V. CONCLUSION

To summarize what was presented in the present paper, it can be said that validity is an important and essential property of any test, whether tests of second and/or foreign language (e.g., English proficiency test) or tests of social and psychological measures in order for their results to be dependable, generalizable and trustworthy. In order to achieve validity a test must undergo the process of validation to produce results and inferences which exactly mirrors the actual knowledge and ability of the test takers in question. Test bias and item impact were also explained and it was stated that these must be removed from a test so that a test can be regarded as a fair test. To achieve fairness, DIF is used which is a powerful technique in the analysis of bias not only for tests of language but also for tests of social and psychological and health-related measures. In addition, it was mentioned that, there are different methods and approaches to detect DIF, among Item Response Theory (IRT) methods, Mantel-Haenszel (MH) technique and logistic regression are good examples. Finally, with regard to the advantages and disadvantages attributed to any of these methods and techniques it can be concluded that logistic regression (LR) technique is the one of the best methods developed and used from the early emergence of DIF detection methods up till now.

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Teachers Identity in the Modern World, and the Factors which Shape them up Professionally and Psychologically

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Abstract—This mini field-based study has explored the issue of teacher identity in the field of SLE. It highlights the significance of the issue and gives a comprehensive review of the body of literature available in this comparatively newer focus of study in the field. This study reports that second language teachers are primarily concerned about student achievement and institutional evaluation beside numerous other factors such as job satisfaction, socio-economic concerns, choices of teaching strategies and tools and native and non-native speaking issues which directly and indirectly influence the second language teacher identity. This study also reports a few very personal teacher narratives and finally concludes that today's second language teaching scenario is pleasant; teachers are enthusiastic, motivated and focused on student achievement which they believe is the end of all their endeavours.

Index Terms—teacher identity, second language, indirectly influence

I. INTRODUCTION

Most of the professions today have a symbolic as well as thematic image. It is not difficult to know what connotations, images and expectations are associated with doctors, lawyers and, or media men; so is almost the case with teachers. We are particularly concerned here with the English language teachers who teach English as second language in today's widely diverse educational scenario. We want to focus on their self-image beside their various socio-economic and professional images which keep on shaping up as they progress in their teaching career. These images together, define teacher identity on which there is a general agreement of scholars that it is a socially constructed and on-going reality.

On one level, one can say, teaching is an isolated profession and less empowered in political sense. Apparently, teachers do their job in a vacuum; in the classroom where they work with their students and, sometimes, they are not even influenced by the management and their colleagues but in reality, there are many factors that affect the teachers of a second language to define themselves especially with respect to the context of their teaching. These factors include why they are in the profession, what influenced them to take up teaching as a career, how they negotiate their identity with their learners, how they perceive themselves as a social beings, to what an extent they are satisfied in their present job and so on.

We have tried to explore some aspects of teacher identity through a mini-quantitative survey, and through a qualitative analysis of some brief written narratives collected from international teachers currently engaged in teaching English as second language. It may not give a very comprehensive picture but certainly touches some vital aspects that determine teacher identity to a certain extent and broadens our understanding how teachers of English perceive their success or otherwise and how they strive to match themselves with the context they work in.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

'One of the simple facts of life in the present time is that the English language skills of a good proportion of its citizenry are seen as vital if a country is to participate actively in the global economy and to have access to information and knowledge that provide the basis for both social and economic development central to this enterprise or English

teaching and English language teachers.’ (Anne Burns & Richards, 2009). Teaching of English is now taking the shape of a huge corporate sector which facilitates the larger rather global industrial growth. As English language is being used as means of communication in the post-colonial states in particular and the rest of the world in general, learning and teaching of English is becoming integral part of almost every economy. An effective communication, it is said, ‘is the life blood of an organization’ (Herta & Murphy, 2007). English language teachers all over the world are not heading any industry apparently but they are providing the ‘life blood’ to the corporate sector by providing the matching communication skill training to millions of employees, planners and decision makers in today’s global economy.

In this diverse scenario of today’s global economy, both the teachers and the learners are faced with the crisis of identity. Hundreds and thousands of teachers are busy in teaching English language to millions and millions of students. This teaching and learning community consists of different nationalities, ethnic groups, a huge variety of languages and extremely diverse cultural norms, values, motives and aspirations.

Diversity is at the heart of English language teaching and learning. Whether it is an EFL context or ESL scenario, both teachers and learners have to establish their identity. When a teacher comes into contact with his or her learners, the process of identity negotiation becomes imperative.

There are many factors which may shape up the identity. These factors include ‘personal biography, gender, culture, working conditions, age, and the school and classroom culture. The concept of identity thus reflects how individuals see themselves and how they enact their roles within different settings.’ (Anne Burns & Richards- 2009). A teacher is a man of flesh and blood otherwise; it is the classroom where he identifies himself through negotiation with his students. “In a course room, teacher/ learners negotiate their identity through the unfolding social interaction of a particular situated community, in relation to its specific activities and relationships.” (Singh and Richards, 2006). the significance of context in which this identity negotiation process happens: “Knowing the school, the possibilities of the classroom space, the students, their neighbourhoods, the resources, the curriculum and policy, the supervising teacher – these are all crucial elements that affect what teachers can do, and how they negotiate and construct identity moment to moment.” (Miller, 2004). Therefore, identity construction is a complex, dynamic, evolutionary and multi-faceted process.

Teacher is faced with many challenges. In the SLE literature, academics express these challenges in various terms; one of the discourses is what they call ‘vision’ and ‘voice’. ‘Vision’ is the curriculum intent or policy input given to the teacher to implement whereas ‘voice’ is the name given to the emerging realities in the classroom and/or from the teaching context. (Tudor 2001) contends that ‘vision’ is epic whereas ‘voice’ is emic. The former is easily observable, generalizable, linear and positivistic whereas the later is dynamic, unpredictable and highly context embedded; to use (Freeman, 1996). Therefore, a teacher determines his identity amid the centrifugal forces (Tudor, 2001) as ‘student rationalities’, ‘methodological rationalities’, ‘socio cultural rationalities’, ‘institutional and corporate rationalities’ and above all ‘teacher’s own rationalities’.

In this complex and ‘messy’ scenario of teaching and learning, a teacher has to establish his identity. “It isn’t just what you say or even how you say it, it is who you are and what you are doing while you say it”, (Gee, 1996). In my opinion every single word that a teacher utters, every single gesture and every single remark counts in determining his identity. All teachers have their own “ways of being” in the classroom yet most will attest to the power of their students to grant or refuse a hearing.’ (Miller, 2009). It certainly means that teacher has to see himself or herself with the lens of his/her students. In today’s corporate sector, teachers are evaluated, by and large, by their students. It is the student community that is considered the most important to comment on a teacher’s performance for obvious corporate demands.

What then is the teacher identity exactly and how does it take shape? It is really hard to reach an agreement on definition of identity. It has been seen in the context of time and space. “Identity is how a person understands his or her relationships to the world, how the relationship is constructed across time and space and how that person understands possibilities for future” (Norton 2000). In this sense identity construction is rooted in the past and present and also strongly connected with the future. “Identity is a constant ongoing negotiation of how we relate to the world” (PennyCook, 2001). It means teacher is directly influenced by the social context in which he/she works and continuously engages in the process of negotiation.

As argued earlier, identity is a socially constructed reality. ‘it is relational, constructed and altered by how I see others and how they see me in our shared experiences and negotiated interactions’ (Johnson, 2003). Like a good performer, one has to see time again how one is performing one’s task. One has to revisit one’s role again and again to see where one is, and how one is going on. Similarly, teacher identity requires the same practice. “Identity is defined (here) in the terms of the influences on teachers, how individuals see themselves, and how they enact their profession in their setting” (Varghese, 2006). Teaching, like law and medicine, is a practicing profession; every new day, every new teaching context brings a new experience. As the context changes, teacher has to redefine his identity.

On a broader canvas, “Identity is instantiations of discourses, systems of power/ knowledge that regulate and ascribe social values to all forms of human activity” (Morgan, 2004). Therefore, identity issue involves teachers own personal being, her/his natural likes and dislikes on the one hand and many external aspects such as the organization s/he works for, the student population, the cultural norms and values they own, the teaching material and tools and so on.

In a nut shell, therefore, it is evident that teacher identity is relational, negotiated, constructed, enacted, transforming, and transitional. To avoid digression, it is but pertinent and unavoidable to mention at least one more factor that

determines, and or seriously affects teacher's identity. This vital issue is growing struggle of non- native English speaking teachers (NNEST) for their legitimacy, acceptance and recognition as equally competent, reliable and professional beings. There are many myths associated with native teachers about their originality, competence and quality of teaching. Colonialism is over, but its implications are not. The popular websites of recruiters across the world (see www.tefl.com etc.), clearly show the preference for native speakers in the job market. There is a constant struggle on rise among the NNEST to survive in the market and establish their identity amid this competition. This study has also touched this vital aspect, to a considerable extent.

Though teacher identity is comparatively newer issue in teaching learning literature yet this discourse is attracting a great deal of attention. "Identity is being recognized as a certain kind of person; identity is connected not to internal states but to performances in society. It is also an important analytical tool for understanding schools and society" (Gee, 2000-2001). Finding it a significant area of research, we have tried to throw light on a few of its dimensions in this short study.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in Ontario, Canada. The sample population participating in the study consisted of 20 English Language teachers, 3 male and 17 female (16 NNEST and 6 native English speakers or near native, being born and brought up in Canada). These participants were all international teachers pursuing their Graduate studies at a Canadian University. They spoke 10 different languages as their L1 including, Urdu, Persian, Mandarin (Chinese), Croatian, Russian, Tamil, Spanish, Polish, Cantonese, and Punjabi. A questionnaire was distributed carrying structured questions reflecting upon various aspects that determine or directly/indirectly affect teacher identity.

All the participants were also invited to write a brief personal narrative, consisting of 3-5 lines, telling about a particular moment of pride in their teaching career. An effort was made to avoid unnecessary digression and length. The quantitative part of the survey provided empirical data for seeing the factual scenario of teaching the participants were faced with while the brief personal narratives allowed this researcher to peep into the lives of practicing second language teachers.

A. *Quantitative Analysis*

Humans have no choice as to their origin, color of skin, height and the place of birth etc. but they have been endowed enough intelligence to make careful choices regarding their career and apparent future plans. We may say that poets are born, not produced but about teachers it is very hard to pass such a judgement. Teachers, when asked about their initial entry into teaching, give absolutely diverse reflections. In the first part of the structured survey, the participants were asked to reflect upon the circumstances, reasons and major influences that led them to become ESL/EFL teachers. About 35% of the teachers expressed that they were destined to be teachers. About 35% reported that they made a careful choice to become ESL/EFL teachers. Socio-economic reasons pushed 10% of them to join teaching. About 15% were inspired by someone (by their teachers primarily) to become teachers. There were about 5% who had various personal reasons for their choice, for example, one of the participants explained: "I wanted to be a life-long learner not just from books but also from others." It, therefore, can be concluded that more than one third of them were teachers by choice; overall, if we include personal, inspirational and careful choices, we can say three fourth of them were in the career for good reasons. So, we should expect positive and productive output from them keeping the other variables of success in mind. The broader scenario of teaching does not, in any case, seem bleak.

About the timing when they finally decided to become a teacher emerged varied responses. For 40% of the participants, university was the place that made up their mind to become teachers while 15% decided it after they had left the university. About 25% could decide to join teaching in their first or second career elsewhere, while 20% had already decided to become teachers right away from their secondary school. Again, it means a huge majority of teachers is coming up with a very careful plan and we must presume they are enthusiastic to deliver.

In their response to what was the greatest influence that led them to teaching, 45% spoke of personal preferences, 25% recalled their teachers who influence their personalities, 15% were motivated by their parents and about 10% were attracted by the social image of a teacher. Again, it seems fairly rosy picture. Just 5% of them had their personal expressions. One participant, for example, added: "My experiences with children e.g. as camp counsellor, gymnastic instructor were the greatest influences."

To conclude, almost none of the participants in the study had any painful compulsion to report. On their back, there were inspiration, motivation and good reasons to be in the profession.

Job satisfaction is the eventual factor that shapes up our personal, social and professional image. This variable can affect every single aspect of one's personal, social and professional life. The level of satisfaction of the teachers in the field was assessed on the following scale: (Fig.1.1)

Level of challenge, importance and satisfaction with respect to various factors:
Diversity in the classroom:

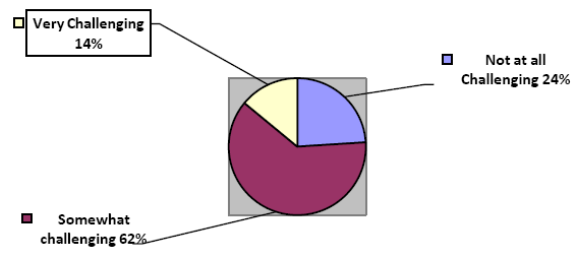


Figure 1.1.1

Skillful use of varied teaching strategies:

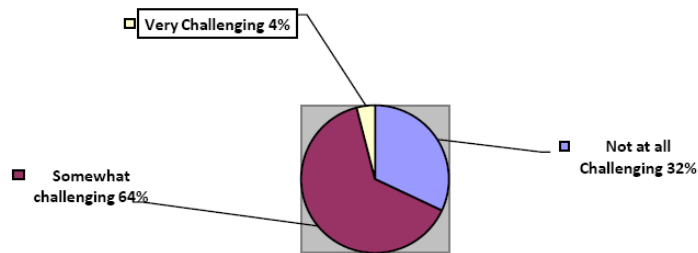


Figure 1.1.2

Dealing with institutional pressure:

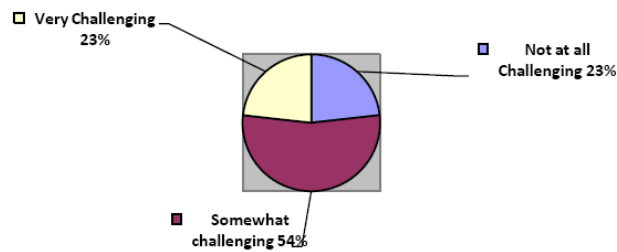


Figure 1.1.3

To what degree are the following important to you when you measure your own success as a teacher?

Parents' feed back:

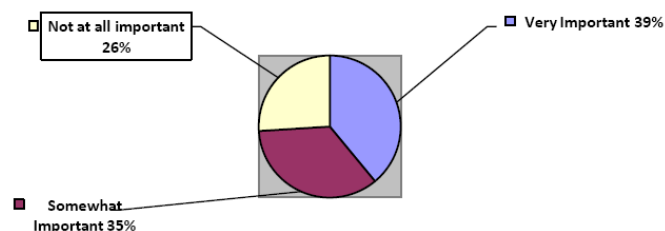


Figure 1.1.4

Colleagues' appraisal:

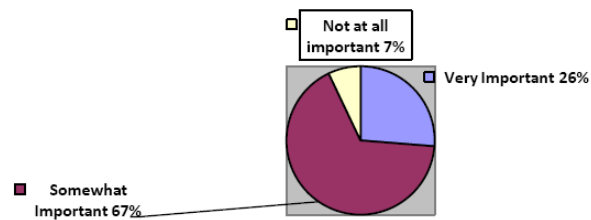


Figure 1.1.5

Students' achievement:

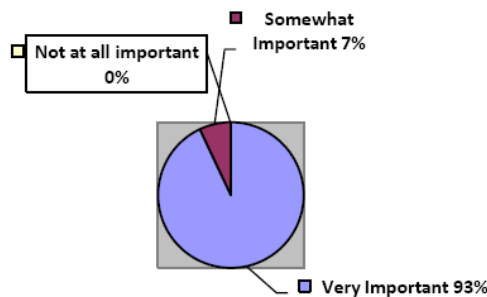


Figure 1.1.6

Institutional Evaluation:

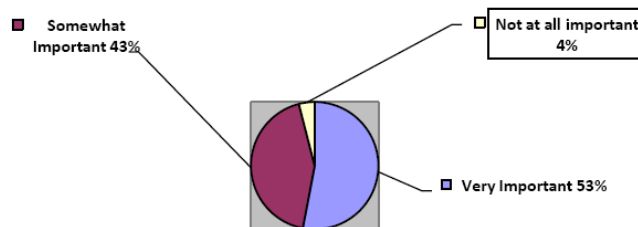


Figure 1.1.7

Job Satisfaction

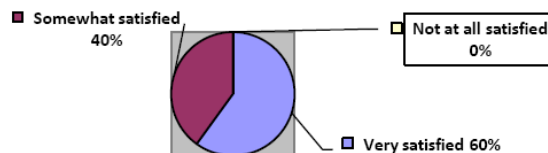


Figure 1.1.8

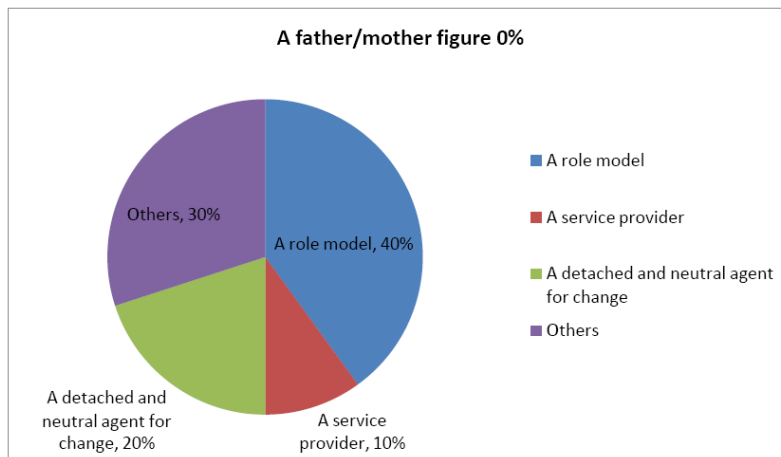
Giving the sagacity, intelligence and power of analysis of the readers, a due credit, we assume that it is not much difficult to assess how much weight-age the sample population of teachers is giving to various factors which help or their identity construction or make it problematic. We would like to refer to two core issues: student achievement and institutional evaluation. On the internal front, security within the classroom is the greatest concern of teachers. A

language class is like a horse and teacher, a rider. The beauty of the horse lies in its ability to display its swiftness, charming gait and pride in performing its natural art, but if the rider does not strike a good balance in grant of liberty and control, his own survival is jeopardized. A horse never allows an ineligible rider to ride.

Thus apart from many rationalities, (Tudor, 2001) we have referred to in the previous pages, which influence teacher, the most predominant is the student’s rationality and second most important one, of course, can be institutional evaluation. Both of them are pre-requisites, in a sense; no teacher can survive in the absence of either. It is perhaps, why no (0%) teacher, in this study, could dare ignore the student achievement; all were (100%) concerned about institutional evaluation at the same time, though with varying degrees.

What then is the role of a teacher? Fig 1.2 throws light on the role of teacher as is seen by teachers themselves in this mini-study.

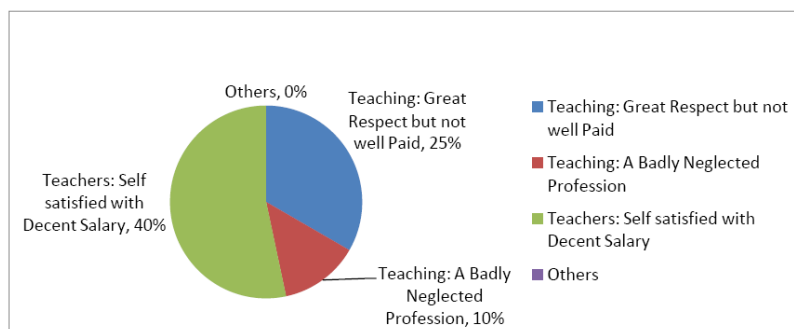
Role of a teacher (Fig.1.2)



It is point to note that teachers of second language in today’s teaching scenario are no more identifying themselves in the traditional motherly or fatherly role. A visible majority, however, identifies itself as role model for their students. The concept of teacher as service provider and neutral agent is also gaining weight. About one third (30%) of teachers have their idiosyncratic versions of their roles as teachers such as: ‘friend’, ‘facilitator’, ‘leader’, ‘motivator’, ‘mentor’, ‘educator’, ‘colleague’ etc. one of the participants did not agree to any role proposed in this researcher, rather she liked to see the combination of all the above (Fig.1.2).

An effort was made to ascertain the nature of work environment in their home countries to understand the impact of socio-economic conditions on the teacher identity. Fig. 1.3 presents a glimpse of these conditions in the country of each participant.

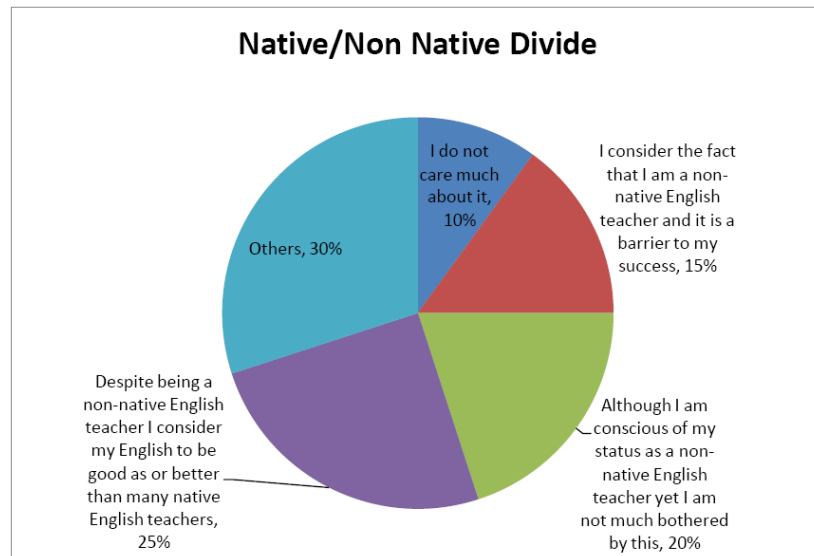
Socio-economic realities and the image of teaching (Fig 1.3)



It is evident from this data that teaching is no more isolated; it is very much influenced by the socio-economic and other factors which are obviously different in every country.

The last, but not the least, is the growing realization among the ESL/EFL teachers about the Native and Non-native divide which, as pointed out earlier, has very strong root in the history of imperialism. There is a substantial body of literature available on this issue. To avoid digression, one can see the existing reality in the Fig. 1.4 below:

Feelings towards the native-non native divide: (Fig 1.4)



It is evident that this population of teachers has their concerns on the issue. A total of 30% teachers in this study were native speakers or born and brought up in the English speaking country and they also had white skin and blue or green eyes. It is heartening to note that about 80% are not totally bothered or much troubled about this divide but more than 20% of NNEST have clearly expressed their frustration on this divide.

B. Qualitative Analysis

Someone has rightly said: “people see us what we are but we see ourselves, what we are capable of doing.” This study has shown that there is a visible assertion among the teachers about their roles of the ones who can bring positive change in the lives of their learners. Student achievement turned out to be the greatest moment of pride in the personal narratives this mini-research stove to elicit. About three fourth of the teachers ascribed their moment of pride to student achievement. About one fifth shared their pride about the award they were given or privilege they were offered, of course, in that case, the student achievement was the basic reason behind.

We would like to mention a few narratives to highlight how teachers identify themselves with respect to their learners’ achievement.

A participant in the study expressed: “.....I was delighted when one student in fact expressed that he wanted to be an English teacher in future because of my teaching.....”

Tania, a comparatively less experienced teacher reported: “While teaching in Peru, we had evaluation forms which the students used to fill out and I got to read them at the end of the term. My students comments were very personal and detailed and at the same time very encouraging. It really helped me to see my efforts were being noticed and paid off. It was my best reward”

Another EFL teacher, Dan, from a thickly populated country gave vent to her feelings: “The greatest moment of pride in my career as EFL teacher was when I taught a class of about 160 college students. To make sure that everybody could hear me I took a recorder and a microphone every time. Beside careful preparation of teaching material, I corrected their compositions every other week to provide feedback for them. At the end of the class in the semester, students gave me a big warm applause. I took it as the reward for my sincere efforts.”

As pointed out earlier, the process of negotiation starts forthwith a teacher comes into contact with his or her learner in a particular context.

Nina expressed her experience: “I taught in a private school. There was a group of teen age girls who belonged to high strata of society; they were very picky about instructors. I was sent to the class as replacement of a teacher who was knocked out by those girls. It was a test case from either side. The group was very critical at first, but in the second half of the class, they opened up and asked me to be their future teacher.”

A similar narrative came up from another teacher, Ann, who handled a challenging class that only relieved her but also added to her confidence and even gave her a sense of pride: “There are abundant moments that brought pride and some unspeakable feelings. I will quote here a recent experience where I came across a class that was considered resistant to learning process. The previous teacher had tried every mode to bring forward their performance. In fact, it was later on I learnt that the material she had provided had the excellent and most beneficial content. I also sensed an attitude in the girls that kept them away from grasping the real essence of the subject. Nevertheless, and to my advantage, the number of students in that class was twenty-three and this gave me an encouragement to attend each girl individually and bring out her best performance while fighting against respective weaknesses. In their second terminals with me their performance showed a marked change. We became hopeful. It was their individual comments, that till now I receive from them, where they say, ‘Madam, we started understanding language because of you...’ Their

feedback and their performance at exams and their comments both become truly encouraging for me to work and prove my humble mettle...”

The overall scenario through these perspectives reflects that teachers are more focussed on delivering the best of what they can to gear up students to learning. Student achievement is at the heart of what the teaching is all about. ‘... it is the learner who must remain at the centre of the process, for no matter how much energy and effort we expend, it is the learner who has to do the learning.’ (Nunan, 1995). The student achievement and the institutional evaluation or pressures are the two greatest concerns of teachers in today’s ESL/EFL scenario; of the two, student achievement is far more important than the other.

IV. CONCLUSION

It is rightly said that self knowledge is the best knowledge. It is high time English Language Teachers in particular and all other teachers in general assess, evaluate and value themselves and improve their self image to survive in a dignified way in the present day world. Such continuous self studies will give them their due status in the society on one hand and on the other hand polish, grow and develop their professional skills. A teacher should know something about everything and everything about something. So his/hers is a never ending voyage into the ocean of knowledge. The best and most vital part of this voyage should be self exploration and self knowledge thereby putting his/her identity in the right perspective.

Putting aside our personal perception what invaluable services English teachers render, this study has shown that English teacher are struggling for bringing changes in lives of their students. Empowering students, it appears, is at the top of their agenda. English language learning is an instrument of empowerment in many post-colonial states beside the flourishing states such as China, Russian states and countless other countries. “... language teachers are not simply teaching language as neutral vehicle for expression of meanings and ideas, but should be engaged both in reflecting upon ideological forces that are present in their classrooms, schools and communities and in empowering their learners with the language knowledge and skills they need to be able to function as moral agents in society” (Richards, 2009). Who can do better service than English teachers who bring change in the lives of refugees and immigrants, aspirants of knowledge who have greater designs to study in the centres of Imperialism? A society that produces better speakers is never at the risk of dictatorship, autocracy and inequality. Language teachers give the students the tongue to speak; hence, they do a far greater job than teaching language which, in its narrowest sense, is an instrument of communication.

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An Investigation into the Problems of Teaching and Learning English in the Isfahan Province High Schools, Iran

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Abstract—This study basically aimed at identifying the problems of teaching and learning English in the high schools of Isfahan, Iran. The data needed for the study were extracted from the standardized questionnaires given to 200 randomly selected students from the high schools of Isfahan and their English teachers constituting the two groups of participants in this study. The instruments used to gather the data were two closed questionnaires, one for the students and the other one for the teachers. The questions included in the questionnaires covered some major problems on the part of the students, teachers, textbooks, teaching methods, and the tests. To analyze the data and specify the problems, the chi-square test was applied. The test was performed to see if the differences among the proportions of the participants who chose different responses to the same questions were significant. Through the statistical analysis of the results, numerous problems regarding the teachers, the learners, the textbooks and the methods were revealed, such as: teachers do not use teaching aids during teaching, school libraries are not well equipped to be of service for the learners of English, classrooms are poor in terms of facilities and physical conditions, the teachers do not teach in English, the English textbooks are not suitable for the students' level of proficiency, and the Ministry of Education does not honor the hard-working teachers, and many more. To remove the problems to the extent possible, some suggestions were provided.

Index Terms—City of Isfahan, high schools, Iran, problems of teaching and learning English

I. INTRODUCTION

Language teaching has a long history in Iran. It dates back to 1851 when the first government-sponsored institution of learning under the name of Dar-ol-Fonun (poly-technique) was established in Tehran (the capital). The foreign language taught at that time was French. Since then, foreign languages have been among the main components of curriculum in Iranian schools. However, the objectives of teaching and learning English have not been satisfactorily met. As a result, almost none of the high school graduates are able to use the English language for the purpose of communication, except for those who learn English in language institutes outside schools. Such a failure in the educational system of the country warrants investigation.

What motivated this research on language learning and teaching is the great value of the English language in Iran. Of course, regarding the vast range of efforts made in relation to the trend of teaching and learning English in Iran, one may think that its objectives have been completely achieved, but it is not true. The experiences of students and teachers and the results of various studies—some to be mentioned later, in this regard have proved that there are many problems in the area of learning and teaching English in Iran.

The abstract nature of learning necessitates constant research in the field to find solutions to questions and difficulties language educators and program developers face. Thus, the constant change and development in language teaching methods is meant to accommodate new findings in the field.

In the last fifteen to twenty years, language teaching in Iran has seen a slow and gradual change from traditional methods, in which deductive learning was stressed and learning of a language was done mainly through teaching and studying of grammar and translation, to more modern methods based on communicative approaches. This move towards the latter methods reflects two points. First, the change in language teaching from traditional methods to communicative ones, and second, the recognition of changes in the kind of proficiency Iranian learners of foreign languages, specifically English, expect to gain, such as a more efficient oral and listening proficiency besides reading comprehension.

Despite the turn from traditional approaches of language learning and teaching, some applied linguists point out research results indicating the efficacy of some practices and techniques of these approaches which boost adolescent and adult learning in SL classroom.

Students' attitudes to procedures and in general to language learning are also crucial. Research in this field of language learning has shown that learners' negative perceptions can be detrimental to the whole learning program (Green, 1993 & Wenden, 1987).

Teachers' perception toward the efficacy of methods and practices employed in teaching a foreign language is yet another significant factor to consider in developing a program. Willingness or unwillingness to experiment with a new method or to use innovations in language teaching is very decisive. Incongruities among teachers' beliefs based on their actual experience with learners and theoretical framework of their teaching can lead to difficulties in teaching which in turn negatively affect learners. (Salomon 1998). Therefore, this study was an attempt to find the reasons for the problems and then to present probable solutions to eradicate them to the extent possible.

II. BACKGROUND

A. *The Studies Related to the Teachers' Problems*

The conception of a teacher is someone with a great number of decisions to make at every moment of classroom instruction. In some cases, research findings can guide those decisions. In others, research can inform professional judgment, but decisions must be based on experience and intuition rather than knowledge. However, decisions will be aided by the

Gharabaghi (1991) tried to evaluate the plan of the Ministry of Education designed to alleviate the problem of the shortage of teachers in Iran. In this plan, the Ministry of Education tried to solve the problem by lowering the recruitment standards. Gharabaghi presented a historical analysis of the educational system of Iran, with specific references to the number of teachers of English and the preparation of such teachers in Iran. Gharabaghi's study might contribute to a better understanding of the issues related to teacher training and provide clues that may aid in recruiting and training better teachers for the future.

Bahari (1989) attempted to examine the extent to which guidance- and high school teachers in the urban schools of Shiraz in the province of Fars, Iran, were involved in the practice of moonlighting. His study particularly intended to identify the number of teachers who had additional jobs for any reason. It was also intended to find a relationship between the teachers' moonlighting and their needs. Some of the important results were as follows:

1. Iranian teachers were underpaid
2. What made the teachers have a second job was to satisfy their needs.
3. Financial problems and low social status were other reasons that made the teachers get involved in a second job.

Since the end of the Second World War, due to the educational developments, the desire for education and especially higher education has been increasing rapidly in Iran. However, the government has not been able to cope with it due to the shortage of facilities, the most important of which is the shortage of qualified teachers. Teachers of English have not been an exception in this regard.

In 1974-1975 three teacher training centers were established in Zaahedaan, Sanandaj, and Tabriz. In 1975, 25 students were attending day-time English classes and 35 evening classes in Tabriz Teacher-Training Center. All these teacher training centers followed the same curriculum carried out in the teacher training University in Tehran. In all teacher training centers, the students were required to take 140-semester credits in order to finish their studies. Later on, the number of credits and the courses underwent some revisions. At present, the students are required to take 135-semester credits.

At present, in spite of the large number of universities, colleges, teacher-training centers, and all training English teachers, the problem of teacher shortage still remains.

B. *The Studies Related To Textbooks Problems*

The textbooks used over the years in Iran have passed through various changes in the light of the methods employed. To the best of our knowledge, the first structured textbook taught at the schools of Iran was A Course in English series (the Ministry of Education, 1937). These books were designed on the basis of the Grammar-Translation Method. They were the first government sponsored textbooks published by the Ministry of Education which were taught in high schools before World War I.

To cope with the problem of textbook the Ministry of Education decided upon a six-year plan for designing a new series of English textbooks and a number of experts were commissioned to do the job. The end product of the six-year plan was the *Graded English* series (The Ministry of Education, 1971) which were taught at schools for about 14 years. The *Graded English* series (The Ministry of Education, 1971) was replaced by the *Right Path to English* series (The Ministry of Education, 1985) in 1985. This series was mainly designed on the basis of the principles of the Communicative Teaching Method. The *Right Path to English* series (The Ministry of Education, 1985) is still being used for teaching English in the high schools of Iran.

Amerian (1987) compared the first two books of the *Right Path To English (RPE)* and *Book One* and *Book two* of the *Graded English (GE)*. On the basis of a detailed analysis he concluded that *GE* suffered from the following shortcomings:

- The content was quantitatively inefficient.
- The structural drills were quantitatively insufficient.

In spite of the above shortcomings, GE presented the pronunciations of the words in an effective way.

Eftekhary (1990) examined the effectiveness of the Graded English textbooks taught in Iran after the Islamic Revolution. These textbooks were revised to replace western-oriented contents with Islamic materials. The researcher had attempted to examine various factors such as the English curriculum guidelines, teachers' proficiency in English, teachers' and textbook writers' perception of the goals of the English curriculum and the test items given to the students. He concluded that the revised textbooks did not develop in the learners the ability to use the language in a real situation. In his view, these textbooks were not in conformity with the normal English patterns and language use.

C. *The Studies Related To Methods and Evaluation*

Mahmoodi (1990), an official in the "Curriculum and English Textbook Designing Department" of the Ministry of Education trying to present a brief account of English language teaching and learning in Iran, mentioned the following points:

1. In spite the failure of the Grammar-Translation Method, it is still used at the schools.
2. Grammar rules are explained to the students in details, but they are not expected to use them in real situations i.e., the usage is the focus of the attention, but the use of the rules is not emphasized.
3. Since grammar constituted the bulk of the tests, teachers had to emphasize grammar.

Asai (1959), briefly reviewed some of the problems of teaching and learning English in the schools of Iran. The problems that he mentioned were mostly attributed to the inappropriate methodology employed by the teachers of English. Among the problems that he mentioned was the fact that most of the students had special notebooks for writing down the Persian meanings of the English words in. this wrong habit was encouraged by the teachers. In addition, the students transcribed the English words using Persian orthography. As a result, they could not learn the correct pronunciation of the words.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is now almost common knowledge that formal education of English in public schools in Iran has failed to achieve most of its objectives. The English programs at high schools do not create motivation in students and seldom arouse their interest. Therefore, one can claim that the objectives of teaching and learning English have not even been approximated, and there are many problems in this area in Iran.

This study is an attempt to offer some guidelines in solving some of the existing problems in this respect, and also seeks answers to the following questions:

IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Do the economic, social, and individual status of the English teachers influence their teaching (from the perspectives of Iranian high school L2 learners and teachers)?
2. Do the economic, familial, and mental status of the L2 learners affect their learning English (from the perspectives of Iranian high school L2 learners and teachers)?
3. Is there a lack of suitable, consistent, and efficient method used by the Iranian high school English teachers?
4. Are inconsistency with the students' level of proficiency in English, and inappropriate presentation of the materials the main deficiencies of the Iranian high school English textbooks?

V. METHOD

A. *Participants*

This study was conducted with two groups of participants. The first group of participants consisted of 200 male and female high school students. All the participants were randomly selected out of twenty high schools from all five regions in the city of Isfahan. Out of twenty high schools selected, ten were female and the other ten were male high schools. These students were first, second, and third grades in high school with different English proficiency level.

The second group of participants consisted of 30 male and female English teachers from the same high schools. Their ages ranged from 30 to 45, and they all spoke Farsi.

B. *Materials*

In this study, the instrumentation of data collection consisted of two different questionnaires. The first one was the students' questionnaire containing 43 items, each representing a variable. The second one was the teachers' questionnaire with 51 items. To obtain the questionnaires, the researcher originally used the instruments which were used in similar research over 15 years ago with the exceptions of making noticeable amount of changes and modifications by the researcher. With the help and expertise of an experienced panel of experts first the items of the questionnaires changed from yes/no to a Lickert scale in which there are five answers to an item. Then the numbers of the items of each questionnaire increased from 15 to 51 and 15 to 43 for the teachers and the students respectively. These changes and modifications made the new questionnaires to have more than twenty new categories which resulted in new variables and consequently new areas of concerns that have not been utilized before.

As mentioned above, after several modifications and changes of the items and format of the questionnaires, two questionnaires, one for the teachers and one for the students, based on Lickert scale were approved by the panel of experts to be utilized. In this study, the validity of the questionnaires was also determined by the panel of experts.

The reliability of the questionnaires was specified to be 0.75, using Cronbach Alpha through a pilot study with twenty randomly selected high school students and five English teachers at the high schools from which the students were selected.

C. Procedures

The pilot study was carried out on twenty high school boys and girls (ten boys and ten girls) who were randomly selected from four schools (regions 1 and 3), and then the study was performed on five English teachers from the same high schools.

After the pilot study was completed, it was reviewed and two modifications were made on the questionnaires: first, the items which had more than one variable were re-written separately on the questionnaires with only one variable-this resulted for the numbers of items to be increased, second, all the items of both questionnaires were modified and inserted in a Table-like questionnaire instead of a regular sheet of paper with items written on them. After that, the questionnaires based on Lickert scale were approved to be utilized on the actual study with 200 students (100 boys and 100 girls) from all five regions in the city of Isfahan, and 30 teachers (15 males and 15 females) from the same schools.

The actual study was performed using the new and approved questionnaires based on the Lickert scale. Due to the restrictions and limitations it took three days to complete all the questionnaires. At the time of answering the questions, the researcher or his assistant for the girls' high schools, the school principal, and the English teacher were present. All ambiguities by the students were responded by the researcher at the time of answering the questionnaires.

After completing all the questionnaires by the students and the teachers, the raw data were ready to be statistically analyzed.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS

Once the research data have been collected with the aid of different types of data collection procedures, the next phase of the research was to analyze those data. The goal of this part is three fold: first reporting the percentages of the students' and the teachers' responses given to the items of the questions; second, determining if the percentages obtained are significant or not; and third, determining if the responses given to the items of the questions indicate any problems concerning teaching and learning English as a foreign language.

The students' questionnaire contained 43 questions each representing a variable. It is worth mentioning that among the 43 variables just 17 appeared to be problematic. The problems are as follows:

TABLE 1:
RESULTS OF THE PROBLEMS

The Education of the Student's Father 24.6% of the students' fathers have below secondary level education, 4.5% illiterate, and 49.7% of the students' fathers have secondary education, 15.6% have associate degrees and Just 5.5% of the fathers have B.A and above degrees. P=0< 0.05 Critical value = 9.49 O.V.=136.8% D.F.= 4
The Education of the Students' Mothers 33.2% of the students mothers' have below secondary education, 46.2% have completed the secondary education, and 13.6% have a sociate degrees. Only 2.5% of them have accomplished B.A and above degrees. In other words, most of the students' mothers do not have higher education. P=0< 0.05 C.V = 9.49 O.V.=144.09% D.F.= 4
Sources for Learning English Table 4.4: Results of Sources for Learning English 46.2% of the students use the high school classes as the only source for learning English, and 48.5% of the students do not use the English institutes as well as the high school classes for learning English. P=0< 0.05 Critical value =7.81 O.V.= 57.16 (T4.3), 71.55(T4.4) D.F.= 3
whether a pre-test has been given or not 77% of the students stated that their teachers had not given them pre-tests at the beginning of the school year. P=0< 0.05 critical value = 9.49 O.V.=156.9 D.F.= 4
Teachers' Creativity P=0< 0.05 Critical value = 9.49 O.V.=29.9 D.F.= 4 33.5% of the teachers show some creativity in their teaching procedure.
A friendly relationship among the Students and their English Teachers 35.4% of the teachers have satisfying friendly relation with their students. P=0< 0.05 C.V=9.49 O.V=58.6 D.F=4
Using Educational aids by the English Teachers 64.3% of the students claimed that their English teachers do not use any educational aids. P=0< 0.05 Critical value = 9.49 O.V.=254.79 D.F.= 4
Problems of the English Textbooks P=0< 0.05 Critical value = 9.49 89.5% of the students claim that their English text books are being bulky. O.V.= 604.6 D.F.= 4
Short comings of the English Textbooks P=0< 0.05 Critical value = 9.49 O.V.=316.12 93% of the students believe that their English textbooks explain a limited number of the new words. D.F.= 4
Short comings of the English Textbooks P=0< 0.05 Critical value = 9.49 O.V.=316.12 84.5% of them believe that their English textbooks do not have enough drill exercises. D.F.= 4
Short comings of the English Textbooks 83.4% of the students indicated that their English textbooks do not contain a clear understanding of grammatical points. P=0< 0.05 Critical value = 9.49 O.V.= 316.12 D.F.= 4
Short comings of the English Textbooks P=0< 0.05 Critical value = 9.49 D.F.= 4 77% believe that in their English textbooks there is not any mention of poems and/or comics. O.V.= 316.12
Short comings of the English Textbooks P=0< 0.05 C.V = 9.49 O.V.=316.12 D.F= 4 80% of the students pointed out that in their English textbooks the exercises are not in appropriate places.
The Number of Students in a class P=0< 0.05 Critical value = 7.81 42% of the students indicated that their classes contain more than 40 students. O.V.=174.73 D.F.= 3
Whether a library is available as school P=0< 0.05, C.V= 9.49, O.V.=567.25, D.F.= 4 87% of the students indicated that they are unable to use the sources at their school library to learn English.
The students' parents' monthly income P=0< 0.05 Critical value = 9.49 42.3% of the students' family income is between 200,000 and 500,000. Tomans. O.V.=110.68 D.F.= 4 33% of their income is between 500,000 and 1,000,000. Tomans.

The teachers' questionnaire consists of 51 questions each representing a variable. Like the students' responses, a Chi-square (χ^2) test was run for each variable as well as an ANOVA (analysis of variance). The variables whose obtained χ^2 values (P values above), are not significant or despite being significant do not indicate any problems are not discussed here.

The procedure in this section is the same as that of the previous one; that is, in order to specify the problems of teaching and learning English from the teachers' points of view, each of the above variables are put into the form of a null hypothesis (H_0). Then the results of the Chi-square test run for each variable are presented in a table and according to the results, problems are identified. It is worth mentioning here that among these 51 variables just 33 were proved as problems which are as follows:

TABLE 2:
RESULTS OF THE PROBLEMS

Results of Teachers Satisfaction with their job 60% of the teachers are not content with their jobs at the Ministry of Education.
Results of Improving the listening skill through various channels 100% of the teachers try to improve their listening skill through some of the mentioned channels.
Results of Friendly relationship among teachers and their students 70% of the teachers have friendly relationship with their students.
Results of the skills mostly emphasized by the English teachers The skills mostly emphasized by the English teachers are: Speaking, 80%, and Reading 60%. 80% of the English teachers indicated their disagreements to put emphasis on listening and writing.
Results of the effect of using different teaching methods by different teachers on the students' learning 60% of teachers stated that using different teaching methods has a negative influence on the students' learning.

Results of whether the inconsistency in using British and American English by different teachers is problematic	75% of the English teachers believe that the inconsistency in using British and American English by different teachers is problematic.
Results of whether only the English textbooks are taught	60% of the English teachers tend to use other sources in teaching where as only 40% of the English teachers only use the English textbooks in classes.
Results of whether a pre-test is given to the students	60% of the English teachers do not give a pre-test to their students.
Results of the allocation of some time to solve the students' problems in learning English	45% of the teachers allocate no time to solve the students' problems related to their learning English.
Results of whether the teachers' manual is available or not	70% of the teachers claimed that the teachers' manual is not available.
Results of whether the teachers' manual will be useful	70% of the English teachers agree that the teachers' manual will be useful.
Results of whether the lack of existence of teachers' manual will have a negative effect on teaching procedure.	70% of the English teachers indicated that the lack of existence of teachers' manual will have negative effect on teaching procedure.
Results of Lesson plans	70% of the English teachers use lesson plans.
Results of using the students' mother tongue in class	90% of the English teachers use Farsi to a great extent (more than two thirds).
Results of the necessity of having a second job	95% of the teachers stated that the salary of the teachers is not sufficient and that they need a second job.
Results of the need for a group of English professors to solve the teachers' problems in teaching	85% of the English teachers stated that they feel a need for a group of experts on English to solve their problems in teaching.
Results of the Effect of the Students' family help to solve their problems with English	90% of the English teachers stated that the students' family help has a positive influence on the learning of the students.
Results of the appropriateness of 1st grade of guidance school for starting the learning of English	95% of the teachers believe that first grade of guidance school is not appropriate for starting the learning of English.
Results of Elementary school or before will be the appropriate time to start learning of English	100% of the English teachers indicated that the appropriate time to start learning English will be the elementary school or before.
Results of the effects of students' economic status on their learning of English	50% of teachers believe that there is a direct relationship between the students' economic status and their learning of English. In other words, those who have a better financial status may learn the English language better than those who have a poor economic status.
Results of Grading of the English textbooks' materials from easy to difficult	40% of the teachers indicated that the materials in the English textbooks do not proceed from easy to difficult. That is, the students may come across more difficult materials before the easier ones.
Results of whether the drills of English textbooks are presented in a mechanical, meaningful, and communicative order	90% of the English teachers believe that the drills of English textbooks are not presented in a mechanical, meaningful, and communicative order
Results of Deficiency in obtaining the translations of the new words	40% of the English teachers indicated that there is a deficiency in obtaining the translations of the new words in English textbooks.
Results of whether the English textbooks are of good quality in terms of illustrations, pictures, colors, etc.	85% of the teachers of English believe that the English textbooks do not enjoy good quality in terms of illustrations, pictures, and colors.
Results of the availability of educational aids at schools	75% of the English teachers stated that the educational aids are not available at the high schools they are teaching.
Results of Administering oral examinations in high schools	90% of the English teachers claim that it is not possible to administer oral examinations with regard to high-school facilities and circumstance (such as space, audio-visual aids, etc.), despite the fact that the students are required to pass an oral examination as one of their school subjects.
Results of Factors causing problems in doing oral drills and administering oral examinations	A great majority of the teachers believe that all the four types of factors-shortage of time (90%), lack of facilities (100%), over sized classes (75%), and not enough students or teachers' interests (85%), cause problems in doing oral drills and administering oral examinations.
Results of the quality of classrooms in terms of size ,light ,color, ...	65% of the teachers declared that the classrooms in which they are teaching are not of a good quality in terms of size, light, color, etc.
Results of the average number of students in classes	90% of the teachers indicated that their English classes comprise of more than 30 students, which is a very high number for a language class.
Results of consideration of the students' individual differences by the educational system	All the English teachers agreed on the fact that "the educational system does not consider the individual differences among the students in terms of their levels of language proficiency". In other words, the students with different levels of language proficiency are studying in same class and are taught the same materials.
Results of the possibility of doing oral drills	Most of the English teachers have confessed that they do not pay any attention to oral drills.
Results of Sufficiency of the teachers' salary	None of the English teachers believe in the sufficiency of their salary.
Results of whether the educational systems gives different values to different teaching qualities	None of the English teachers believe that educational system pays attention to different teaching qualities.
Results of whether the English textbooks are appropriate for the students' mental abilities	95% of the teachers believe that the English textbooks have not been designed in conformity with the students' level of mental abilities.
Results of the authenticity of the English textbooks	95% of the English teachers believe that materials in the English textbooks are not authentic.
Results of the sufficiency of the English class time	All English teachers expressed that the English class time is not sufficient at all.
Results of whether the English tests are in conformity with the goals of teaching English set by the ministry of education	Majority of the teachers agreed that the English tests are not in conformity with the goals of teaching English set by the ministry of educations.

TABLE 3:

THE PROBABLE EFFECTS OF SOME OF THE PROBLEMS SPECIFIED FROM THE STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' RESPONSES ON EACH OTHER

The effect of “the students’ fathers’ education” on “the importance given by the family to the learning of English”	The results indicate that an increase in the students’ fathers’ education results in an increase in the importance given to the learning of English by the students’ family.
The effect of “the students’ fathers’ education” on “the students’ family help to solve the students’ problems in learning English”	The findings reported imply that the students’ fathers’ level of education has a strong effect on the amount of help the students enjoy for solving their problems in learning English.
The effect of “the students’ fathers’ education” on “the students’ intention to continue their education at university”	The statistical results indicate that the fathers’ education has a major effect on their studies at university.
The effect of “the students’ mothers’ education” on “the importance given to learning English by the students’ family”	According to the results the more educated the mothers, the more importance they give to the learning of English by their children.
The effect of “the students’ mothers’ education” on “the students’ intention to continue their studies at university”	According to the results, a very high percentage of the students (70.7%, 65.4%, and 100% respectively) whose mothers have high school education, associate, BA or higher education, are eager to continue their studies at university.
The effect of the “teachers’ creativity” on “using educational aids”	As the data indicates, most of the teachers who are more creative in their teaching process use more educational aids.
The relationship between “the students’ family Monthly income” and “the students’ access to the sources for learning English”	The results seem to support this claim that an increase in the students’ family monthly income results in an increase in the number of sources they use. The results indicates that a large percentage of the students whose family monthly income is less than 200,000 tomans, use the high school classes as the only source for learning English, and a very slight percentage of them use other sources in addition to their high school classes.
The effect of “the teachers’ satisfaction with their job” on “the friendly relationship between teachers and students”	As the results indicate, there is a strong interaction between these two variables. In other words, table 4.62 leads us to this fact that the teachers who are more content with their jobs create more friendly relations with their students.
The effect of “the teachers’ satisfaction with their job” and “allocating some time for solving the students’ problems”	Most of the teachers who are content with their job allocate some time for solving their students’ problems in learning English.
The effect of “the friendly relationship between teachers and students” on “allocating some time for solving the students’ problems”	All the teachers who have friendly relations with their students surly allocate some time for solving their students’ problems. In other words, all the teachers who allocate some time for solving their students’ problems surly have friendly relations with their students.
The effect of “the average number of students in a class” on “using only the English textbooks by teachers”	As the results indicates, in the classes with more than 40 students, no teacher uses English books other than the school textbooks. However, 62% of the teachers who say that their classes have less than 30 students use other sources in addition to the school textbooks.
The interaction between “administering pre-tests” and “the average number of students in a class”	According to the results it can be seen that no pre-test is administered in the classes with more than 40 students. On the other hand, in 78% of the classes with fewer than 30 students pre-tests are given to the students. Thus, there is a major interaction between these two variables.
The effect of “the average number of students in a class” on “doing oral drills”	“The average number of students in a class” has a great effect on “doing oral drills”.
The effect of “doing oral drills” and “using educational aids” on each other	The results clearly show that all the teachers who are interested in doing oral drills, use educational aids for the betterment of the students’ learning English

ANOVA TABLES

The effect of “teacher’s economic status” on the “quality of their teaching”	P=0.09>0.05, which means that the economic status of the teachers has no effect on the quality of their teaching. Of course, this may be due to the fact that all the teachers who participated in this study were dissatisfied with their salary. In other words, they have similar economic status.
The effect of “teacher’s individual status” on the “quality of their teaching”	P = 0.032 < 0.05. Therefore, the individual status of the teachers will have an effect on the quality of their teaching.
The effect of “teacher’s social status” on the “quality of their teaching”	P = 0.220 > 0.05. Therefore, the individual status of the teachers has no effect on the quality of their teaching.
The effect of “L2 learner’s economic status” on the “amount of their learning”	P = 0 < 0.05. Therefore, the economic status of the L2 learners will have an effect on their learning. Using Tukey’s approach, the sources of differences were studied and the following results were obtained: The amount and level of learning of those L2 learners with a family income between 1,000,000 and 2,000,000 Tomans were higher than the L2 learners with a family income of less than 200,000, between 200,000 and 500,000, and between 500,000 and 1,000,000
The effect of “the fathers’ education of the L2 learners on their learning”	P = 0 < 0.05. Therefore, the fathers’ education of the L2 learners will have an effect on their learning. Using Tukey’s approach, the sources of differences were studied and the following results were obtained: The amount and level of learning of the L2 learners whose fathers’ education was Associate, Bachelor, or Higher Degrees were higher than those L2 learners whose fathers had elementary education or, they were even literate.
The effect of “the mothers’ education of the L2 learners on their learning”	P = 0 < 0.05. Therefore, the mothers’ education of the L2 learners will have an effect on their learning. Using Tukey’s approach, the sources of differences were studied and the following results were obtained: The amount and level of learning of the L2 learners whose mothers’ education was High School Diploma, Bachelor, or Higher Degrees were higher than those L2 learners whose mothers had elementary education or, they were literate.
The effect of “L2 learner’s mental status” on their learning”	P = 0.001 < 0.05. Therefore, the mental status of the L2 learners will have an effect on their learning. In other words, the students who had motivations for learning English, continuing education, and going abroad had higher amount and level of learning.

VII. DISCUSSION

A. *Some of Problems Specified from the Students’ Responses and the Effects of them on Each Other*

One may claim that there is no obvious relation between the parents’ education and the students’ English learning because there are many students with good command of English whose fathers or mothers do not have university degrees. But, if one considers the great effect of the students’ fathers’ and mothers’ education on some other variables as “the importance given by the family to the students’ learning of English”, “the family’s help in solving the students’ problems” and the students’ intention to continue their studies at university”, one can come to this result that the students’ parents’ education plays a great role in the educational status of the students. Fathers and mothers with university degrees provide their children with suitable economic, cultural, and mental background which is of great importance in the educational progress of the students from childhood to adulthood.

Regarding the insufficient income of the students’ parents, There is no need to explain the reasons why one’s economic status may influence his/her learning of every branch of sciences especially a foreign language. Generally speaking, the desirable economic status may provide the students with better and more effective access to the high-quality schools, better teachers, better and more sources for learning. But, in this study attention is paid to the relationship between the economic status of the students and their access to the different sources for learning English. As the results indicate, the insufficient income of the students’ parents can influence the students’ access to different sources for learning English. In other words, the students with better economic status enjoy more sources for learning English. For example, according to the data given by the students, for about three fourth of the students whose parents’ income is less than 200,000 Tomans a month, high school classes serve as the only source for learning English, but a great majority of the students with desirable economic status enjoy additional sources as language institutes, tapes, films and books.

The teachers’ lack of creativity is another problem which was specified from the students’ responses. This problem may affect other aspects of the teaching methodology. For instance, as the data analysis indicates, using educational aids is under the effect of the teachers’ creativity. In other words, the more creative teachers use more educational aids. Of course, this fact cannot be considered independently of other problems. Perhaps insufficient facilities at schools, insufficient class time and the teachers’ dissatisfaction with their jobs in the Ministry of Education lead to the teachers’ lack of creativity, and little use of educational aids as well.

Large number of students in each class certainly is another problem. over-crowding hinders effective learning and effective teaching because the existing limited opportunities including educational aids, classroom size and teachers’ attention have to be divided among a large number of students. In other words, students do not have adequate exposure to English. The effect of this problem - - the large number of students in a class - - on two other problems supports the above-mentioned statements. One of the mentioned problems is that no pre-test is given to the students at the beginning of the school year, as discussed earlier. The second problem whose relationship with the large number of the students in a class was found as significant is “doing oral drills”. Obviously a second/foreign language demands a great deal of oral

drills on the part of teachers and the learners. Students of a new language will not learn to use the language fluently merely by reading and writing. Teachers need to give their students adequate opportunities to practice listening and speaking. One effective means for practicing can be oral drills. However, the large number of students in each class limits the students' opportunities to do oral drills because practice demands sufficient time and energy, which stands against the over-crowded classes and so on.

B. Some Problems Specified from the Teachers' Responses and the Effects of them on Each Other

Teachers' dissatisfaction with their jobs may be mainly due to the insufficient salary, and / or due to this fact that the educational system does not give different values to the different teaching qualities. In other words, as the data shows teachers believe that for the existing educational system an experienced and well-skilled teacher is equal with a poor teacher. The reason whatever is, this problem - - the teachers' dissatisfaction with their job - - may deeply affect the methodology of teaching on the part of teachers and consequently language learning on the part of learners, as well. The effect of this problem on the lack of friendly relationship between teachers and their students, and allocating some time for solving the students' problems with learning English are the examples which lend themselves well to support the importance of teachers' dissatisfaction with their job.

The deficiencies of English textbooks such as English textbooks drills are not presented in a mechanical, meaningful and then communicative order; their materials are not graded from easy to difficult; the textbooks are not of good quality in terms of illustrations, pictures, and colors; they are not properly designed for the mental abilities of students; and finally, English textbooks are not authentic.

VIII. SOLUTIONS

It is logical that there is a solution for every problem, and the mentioned problems are not exceptions. In this part, the researcher tries to put forward some solutions hopefully to eradicate the problems of teaching and learning English in the Isfahan high schools. Some of these solutions are proposed to the Ministry of Education, some to the teachers, and the others to textbook writers.

A. Some Proposals to the Ministry of Education

- The schools should be well equipped with proper educational aids.
- The schools should be provided with libraries containing useful and interesting English books.
- The physical conditions of the classrooms should be improved in terms of light, color, size.
- The average number of students in a class should be lowered so that the students can enjoy the existing opportunities to a desirable extent.
- The time allocated to teaching English should be increased.
- The schools should be provided with some facilities which can simplify the administration of oral examinations.
- A group of experts is needed in the Ministry of Education for solving the problems teachers face in teaching and evaluation.
- The teachers should be supplied with Teachers' Manuals.
- The teachers' salary should be increased to solve their financial problems and to satisfy their needs.
- And finally, the Ministry of Education should give different values to different teaching qualities to encourage the teachers to increase the quality of their teaching.

B. Some Proposals to the Teachers

- Teachers should know that using educational aids can facilitate the process of teaching and learning English.
- It has been proved that giving pre-tests makes the teachers to be familiar with the levels of the students' proficiency at the beginning of the school year.
- Obviously, it is better for the teachers to use the Teachers' Manuals and lesson plans.
- Teaching books other than the textbooks can motivate the students to learn English better and more effectively.
- Teachers should be consistent in using British or American English pronunciation.
- It is better for the teachers to develop friendly relationships with the students so that the students feel at ease in the class and consequently learn the lessons more effectively.
- Teachers should emphasize all the four skills - - listening, speaking, reading and writing - - to arrive at a desirable status.
- The teachers should develop their listening skill through various channels such as the English speaking radios, television, etc

C. Some Proposals to the Textbook-Writers

- Textbook-writers should pay more attention to the quality of the books in terms of illustrations, pictures, colors,
- The English textbooks should be appropriate for the mental abilities of the students. etc.
- The materials included in the English textbooks should be graded from easy to difficult.
- The textbooks drills should be graded from mechanical to meaningful to communicative.

■ The English text books suffer from some major problems and shortcomings, as the lack of relationship among the different materials, lack of explanation of new words, lack of interesting materials as short stories, poems, songs, and jokes, and lack of authenticity. The textbook writers should take all the above-mentioned points into consideration and remove the problems to the extent possible.

IX. CONCLUSION

This research was basically carried out to discover the existing problems in teaching and learning English as a foreign language in the high schools of Isfahan, Iran. The study showed that the English teachers referred to 33 problems and the students to 17. All the problems and their effects on each other were discussed and illustrated in details in the preceding sections.

Among the above students' problems, there are some which can affect some other ones; they are as follows:

■ The students' fathers' education affects the importance given to the learning of English by the family, the students' family help solving the students' problems in learning English, and the students' intention to continue their studies at university.

■ The students' mothers' education affects the importance given to the learning of English by the family, and the students' intention to continue their studies at university.

■ The teachers' creativity affects the use of educational aids by the teachers.

■ The students' family income affects the students' access to different source of learning English.

The problems discovered from the teachers' responses are 33, among the problems there are some which can affect other ones, they are as follows:

■ Teachers' satisfaction with their jobs in the Ministry of Education affects the teachers' friendly relationship with their students, and their intention to allocate some time for solving the students' problems in learning English.

■ Teachers' friendly relationship with their students affects their intention to allocate time for solving the students' problems in learning English.

■ The average number of students in a class affects firstly the teaching of only the English textbooks and not any other English books, secondly, administering a pre-test and thirdly doing oral drills. Doing oral drills is also relevant to using educational aids by the teachers

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The Research on Willingness to Communicate in Chinese Students' EFL Study

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Abstract—Willingness to communicate (WTC) has been a hot topic and focus all through these recent years in linguistics and EFL education in China. This paper makes a research on various factors that influence Chinese students' willingness to communicate in their EFL study. It also carries on an investigation on how WTC factors affect learners' class participation. The characteristics of Chinese students' WTC are also discussed. Lastly, the authors point out that EFL teachers should provide more opportunities for their students to experience success, create a good and safe learning environment and help learners to improve their WTC ability.

Index Terms—willingness to communicate, class participation, communication task, communication object, communication form

I. INTRODUCTION

Since 1950s, foreign language educators have gradually come to realize that the process of foreign language learning is not a simple learning process of language skills. Many WTC factors such as learning motivation, learning attitude, social support, and language environment affect this process. These views are held by many scholars like Wen & Clement (2003), Yashima T. (2002) and Young, (1991). WTC, the new member in the family of the emotional factors, has gained a widespread attention in EFL field. Many people believe students' communicative ability is closely related to their willingness to communicate, and factors like conversational objects, communication tasks and communication forms also influence the intensity of willingness to communicate. The study of how WTC affect EFL learning has become a popular research in modern language teaching practices.

II. WTC AND COMMUNICATION

A. *Communicative Object*

Familiar communication object can enhance the students' WTC. Teachers should try to create a relaxing learning atmosphere for students. In EFL classes, students' self-introduction, or a wide range of questions may get students acquainted with each other and help demonstrate their language standard. As Hinkel found out that the WTC will be significantly higher when talking with friends and acquaintances than talking with teachers or strangers (1989). Conversational objects and the degree of familiarity, as McCroskey & Richmond pointed out, also have a very profound impact on students' WTC (1990). Tomoko Yashima showed in his research that in terms of the number of people in a conversation, WTC is significantly higher when two persons are talking than that when several persons are talking (2002). Therefore, students should be allowed to select fixed communication objects in their classroom activities. In this way, students have higher initiative for classroom activities. Being familiar with the communicative objects, students may find they are willing to communicate with their fellow students in English, thus their practice opportunities increases. Meanwhile, Jiang Xin emphasized the support from teachers and other students also contribute to students' familiarity with their communication objects and help create a safe learning environment (2007).

B. *Communicative Task*

The authenticity and practicality of communication tasks are the successful keys to WTC. In other words, the selection of reading materials should be related to students' life. As Clement & Mac Intyre point out, without the willingness to speak out, communication loses its foundation (2003). The appropriate selection of communicative topics is a prerequisite and guarantee for an effective communication. If students understand and have some relevant knowledge on a communicative task, their desire to express themselves will be inspired. Designs of some useful and

interesting topics for students will stimulate students' talks. For students who have an intention to go abroad, the communicative tasks like exoticism, cultural conventions and application for admission are more welcome and more likely to motivate the students' class participation. Therefore, we get a conclusion that the familiarity with the discussion topics will promote the smooth progress in communication activities and increase students' WTC abilities.

C. *Communicative Form*

Foreign language learning should be carried out in authentic situations. MacIntyre & Clement claim that students should learn in the real communication, make use of class activities, such as scenario simulations, games, role plays, to help them express creatively and freely (1999). In EFL teaching practices, teachers should design a variety activities centered on students' life and create a relaxing learning atmosphere to help students to express themselves. By pointing out the students' language mistakes, teachers can make students to express themselves in a comparatively coherent language.

Teaching software and a variety of audio and video equipments provide extra means in foreign language teaching. Vivid courseware can stimulate students' learning interest and enable teachers to grasp students' attention and get the timely feedback from them. McCroskey & Baer suggested that the variety of communication forms and teaching modes can enable students' initiative and exploit their enthusiasm, increase their sense of class participation and enhance their willingness to communicate. As a consequence, the effect of learning will be improved (1985).

III. WTC AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class participation constitutes the most important part in EFL study. Many researchers and teachers have noticed that the most direct manifestation of students' WTC lies in the students' active participation in classroom. There are many factors that affect the degree of students' classroom participation. In this paper, the authors also make their empirical investigation on how WTC affects students' class participation in their EFL classes.

A. *Problem Settings*

This research is to answer: 1) the relationship between WTC and communication 2) How WTC factors affect class participation.

B. *Research Methodology and Procedure*

1. *Subjects*

The subjects participated in this study are students of non-English major in Harbin Institute of Technology, a total of 100. Among them, 80 boys, 20 girls, all aged between 20 to 22. Until now, they have learnt College English for one year in different majors, and all have 6 to 8 years of experience in English language study before entering university.

2. *Survey tools*

This research adopted Oxford Language Learning Strategies Inventory (1990) as a research tool. Due to the specific situation of Chinese students, some changes are made in this survey. This inventory is composed of 30 items. All responses to the items were made on a five-point Likert scale (1= totally inconsistent, 2=partly inconsistent; 3=totally consistent, 4=partly consistent and 5= always consistent). The authors conducted a questionnaire survey among 100 students in Harbin Institute of Technology, and the investigation covers five main factors in WTC: motivation, character, confidence, interest and culture. The results have been analyzed and studied through SPSS statistical analysis software.

3. *Data Collection*

Data collection was undertaken by questionnaire. A questionnaire survey was conducted among the subjects with the permission. Several steps were taken to ensure that the data collected from the questionnaire are valid and reliable. First, the participants were informed that any information they gave would be recorded anonymously and be kept confidential. Second, the students were told that they could ask any questions if they had troubles in understanding the questionnaire items. The number of valid questionnaires collected is 100.

4. *Data and Empirical Analysis*

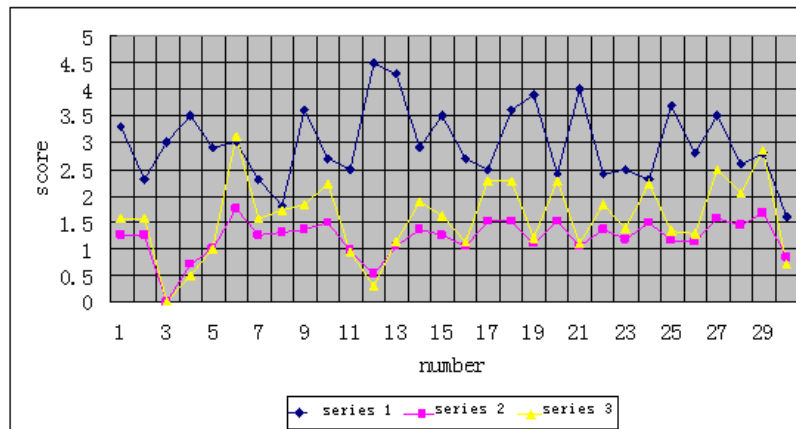
After the questionnaires had been withdrawn, the received data have been analyzed to conduct a reliable testing. We have figured out an average of all items. All the variables covered to conduct descriptive statistics, Mean and Std. Deviation and variables have been calculated and analyzed. The results are shown in Table 1:

TABLE 1

Number	MEAN	Std. Deviation	Variables
1	3.3	1.252	1.568
2	2.3	1.252	1.568
3	3	0	0
4	3.5	0.707	0.5
5	2.9	0.994	0.988
6	3	1.764	3.112
7	2.3	1.252	1.568
8	1.8	1.317	1.734
9	3.6	1.35	1.823
10	2.7	1.494	2.232
11	2.5	0.972	0.945
12	4.5	0.527	0.278
13	4.3	1.059	1.121
14	2.9	1.37	1.877
15	3.5	1.269	1.61
16	2.7	1.059	1.121
17	2.5	1.509	2.277
18	3.6	1.506	2.268
19	3.9	1.101	1.212
20	2.4	1.506	2.268
21	4	1.054	1.111
22	2.4	1.35	1.823
23	2.5	1.179	1.39
24	2.3	1.494	2.232
25	3.7	1.16	1.346
26	2.8	1.135	1.288
27	3.5	1.581	2.5
28	2.6	1.43	2.045
29	2.8	1.687	2.846
30	1.6	0.843	0.711

TABLE 2

TABLE 2 GIVES A VISUAL IMPRESSION OF WTC FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE CLASS PARTICIPATION.



Series 1: MEAN Series 2: Std. Deviation Series 3: Variable

C. Descriptive Statistics

The means, standard deviations and variables for the scales of motivation, personality factors, self-confidence, interest and traditional culture are presented in Table1.

It is clear from the table that intensity in motivation (M=3.3, 3.5 and 3) affects the students’ participation level in classroom. The students with strong internal motivation have stronger sense of participation and more positive attitude. They are more eager to use the opportunities to communicate in class and can take the initiative to communicate. have better cooperation with their teachers and their English is better. Not much difference was found in Std. Deviations and variables.

Personality factors (M=3, 2.3, 1.8, 3.6). As is displayed, the participants with extroverted character hold positive attitude in their study. They demonstrate strong self-confidence, and their performance in class is active and sociable;

while introverts indicate lack confidence in their study, they take less initiative in class participation.

Confidence (M= 4.5, 4.3, 2.9, 3.5). We can see from Table 1 that the students with strong self-confidence perform actively in class discussions. They have good control over their learning.

Interest (M=3.6, 3, 9 and 4) indicates that when the students' needs are satisfied, their desire to participate in class activities are more intense.

Last, traditional culture (M=2.7, 2.4, 2.3). Statistics suggests that the traditional Chinese culture has inhibited unconsciously the Chinese students' WTC in class participation.

D. Analysis and Discussion

1. Motivation

Motivation consists of two factors: need and stimulation. Some motivation is caused by the body's own needs. The other motivation is the stimulation by external things. Based on our survey, we divide our subjects into three categories:

The first type is students with external motivation; the second is students with mixed motives, that is, students not only have internal motivation, but also have external motivation. The third type is students with no motivation. The investigation find out that students with internal motivation have stronger sense of participation than those without. Their attitude is more positive and they are more eager for the communicative opportunities in class. Students with strong internal motivation are more willing to take the initiative to communicate and their English is better. A well-organized class setting is likely to help promote students' motivation. Students with mixed motives have more enthusiasm in class participation than those with external motivation, and they focus their attention on class participation better. When coming to cooperate with teachers, students with mixed motives have a better performance than those only with external motivation. Therefore, teachers should try to create an favorable learning environment to help and promote motivations of various learners' and increase learners' class participation.

The study also found that female students have stronger motivation to speak English than their male peers in class. Female learners have higher self-evaluation and hold more positive attitudes towards speaking English both in and after class. We also find out that freshmen have better motivation to speak English in class compared with the sophomores. Freshman' anxiety is lower. They hold an positive attitude towards speaking English.

2. Character

Different cultures pass different judgments on introversion and extroversion. In western countries, extroverted personality is more popular. While in the eastern countries, especially in China, less talk and more thought is considered a good character. In class participation, the extroverted students have stronger sense of participation, and are willing to talk, so they get more opportunities to practice what they learn. During the learning process, students with extroverted character will hold positive attitude, strong self-confidence. They get more language input and communication opportunities in class owing to their characteristic traits. They perform positively in class, like they love to ask questions, speak out without too much concern about "losing their faces" in public. They can absorb what they've learned through extensive try and practice. Extroverted learners are good at communication. The more they feel relaxed, the better they learn. Introverted learners, on the other hand, are quiet and shy and lack of confidence in their study and class participation. In class participation, introverted students are more often silent and stiff, and sometimes are nervous with blush. They are easier to get anxious when coming to answering questions. They will concern more about the impact they make on others in class participation. They are rarely speak even if they have some questions. They are not willing to raise their questions for fear of kidding. The fear of making mistakes and feeling awkward in class participation lead to their anxieties. As a result they have less chances to try and practise what they learn in classes and their language skills are relatively weak. "Silence is golden" and "Least said" and "the fear of losing face",--these traditional Chinese mode of thinking which are deeply rooted in many Chinese people hinder students' class participation, especially students with introverted characteristics.

As EFL teachers, we should understand the difference in students' character traits and adjust our teaching to satisfy different learners. We should motivate our students to their extremes.

3. Self-confidence

As we know, people with strong sense of self-confidence can face difficulties and have the courage and determination to overcome difficulties. In EFL classes, students with self-confidence are willing to pick up challenging objectives and believe that through their unremitting efforts they can successfully get these tasks done. While students with weak self-confidence tend to underestimate their abilities, take to tasks imperisistently, and even think of giving up if these tasks are complicated.

As we find out in our research, students with strong self-confidence often grasp the nettle, and show initiative in class discussions; and students with less self-confidence tend to perform a fear of hardship and hold a passive attitude. Confident students also have good control in their own studies, have a sense of competence and easily achieve accomplishment in class; students with less self-confidence fear to speak English in front of the whole class. As they explain, facing so many classmates, they fear they can not find the appropriate words to express their ideas and worry about other students' ridicule. Rather than to face the "possible" embarrassment, these students would choose to keep silent during most of class time. These students' self-confidence to a large extent has influenced the degree of their class participation. Therefore, in EFL classes, teachers should strive to create a harmonious environment of "psychological security" and "psychological freedom", so as to reduce the anxieties among students and help to enhance their

confidence to integrate into communicative activities in classes.

4. *Interests:*

Interest constitutes another important factor that affects class participation. When people are interested in something, the chances to get this thing done is comparatively greater. Abilities and interest will have mutual influence, and people with great interest in one area will often show strong ability in that field. This is also demonstrated in students' learning process. Students are interested in a particular subject, in all likelihood they will achieve better performance there. Due to their strong interest, students might take the initiative to read books on this subject and participate actively in class activities to get more information. When their needs are satisfied, their desire to participate in other class activities will become more intense and thus form a good cycling. In the end they make their success.

5. *Traditional culture:*

Chinese culture emphasizes collectivism and groups, underrates individualistic heroism. Chinese culture forms a set of philosophy of life as modesty, moderation, being worldly-wise and playing safe. Chinese collective view plays a vital role in inter-relations with the outside world. In EFL classes, collectivism is mainly reflected in "saving face" or maintain the dignity". Students are very concerned about others' assessment, so in order to avoid making mistakes in public, they often choose to remain silent. As EFL teachers find out an interesting phenomenon in their researches: in spite of the passive class participation among Chinese EFL learners, 80% of EFL students expressed their unwillingness to take the initiative to speak in class, and 85% of the students expressed their hope that everyone should have equal opportunity to speak. In the authors' opinion, this phenomenon can be explained as follows: Due to collectiveness is highly valued in Chinese culture, students do not want to "talk endlessly" in class activities. In Chinese cultures, "talk fluently and endlessly" and "speak volubly" will give people the image of ill-mannered. "Silence is golden" and "Least says," are the code of good conduct deeply rooted in the Chinese people. Therefore, some students advocate that in class they should not speak often, especially when the others are silent; If they talk a lot in classes, others classmates will consider them as showing offs. Most often Chinese students do not want to be special. As a result of fearing out of their group, they always choose to "follow the general trend"---remain silent in classes. At the same time, their strong motivation to learn among all things requires they have a good command of practical language skills. Therefore, EFL learners require their teachers to give them equal opportunities to speak out in classes.

When other factors for passive class participation are studied, traditional Chinese cultures influences such as being implicit, reserved, polite can not be neglected. Obviously, the cultural thought patterns hidden in Chinese students' subconsciousness have a recessive but decisive impact on their EFL class participation. We believe in the level of students' WTC in class will directly affect the cultivation of their communicative ability. Therefore, how to motivate Chinese students' WTC and enhance their communicative capability have naturally become our research project in our EFL teaching practices.

IV. OTHER FACTORS RELATED TO WTC

Another factor that leads to weak WTC in class participation is the eagerness for quick success and instant benefits. Currently most EFL learners are very practical. Many university students are tired out by struggling to cope with a variety of English language exams. Many EFL classes naturally become places for mechanical drills (to meet the demand for exams) instead of language skills. EFL learners primarily focus their attentions on the analysis of grammar, recite new words, doing test papers, etc. Learners' purposes are to get high scores and certificates. There is no doubt that this certificate-oriented foreign language learning have a direct impact on students' class participation activities. Students are not interested in the real situational practices and believe these practices are sort of wasting their precious time in classes. Students would prefer EFL teachers teach them "useful strategies" such as how to guess in exams to help them achieve high scores. It can be seen that Chinese students' lack of WTC in EFL classes, to a certain degree, reflects the impact of current EFL education in China.

Shi Yunzhang found many students believe the lack of linguistic knowledge may hinder their WTC. Very often, they need to translate Chinese into English in their mind before speaking out (2008). This study confirms the anxieties many students have when they speak English or when they are asked to express off the cuff. In addition, many students' risk-taking in EFL classes is relatively low. When students are not quite sure about some words, grammar or expressions, they will first consult the dictionary, or resort to textbooks. If they assume that they might make mistakes, they would rather remain silent in classes. Finally, the learners' attitudes towards EFL study, classroom teaching and class participation all have influences on their WTC. Wang Chuming's research shows some students believe they learn less knowledge in class activities. They still prefer the traditional teacher-oriented style (1990). However, all students agree that the boring classroom atmosphere has suppressed their WTC.

Rod pointed out that group cohesiveness is another important factor that affects the communicative competence. (1985). In a friendly and cohesive group, students are more willing to participate. Teachers' support also plays an important role. As MacIntyre & Clement put it, teachers' linguistic and non-linguistic support has been proved to help promote the students' enthusiasm in class participation (1998). The forms of classroom organization, including teaching styles, the use of the teaching materials and the design of learning tasks, etc, will all influence the students' WTC. Since the traditional lecture modes (teacher-oriented) has been deeply rooted in Chinese learners' minds, students are not accustomed to carrying out their discussions independently or participating in interactive communication in EFL class.

V. CONCLUSION

The research shows that EFL learners' WTC is closely related to the conversational objects, communicative tasks and communication form. It also relates closely to the factors like personal motivation, confidence, personality, interests and culture.

Therefore, in teaching practices, EFL teachers should try their best to enable their students to experience success, help them to enhance self-confidence, reduce anxiety and improve their WTC in foreign language study; it is also strongly advised that more authenticity in EFL classrooms be created and the students' autonomy be highlighted. In this way, the students could be in their best state of mood and study, which, just as Yu Weihua and Lin Minghong said, will definitely contribute to their learning outcomes (2004).

In a word, this empirical study intend to get EFL teachers to know more about their students' WTC in EFL learning process. We do hope that our analyses and the effective measures we put forward to improve EFL learners' communicative competence will work in their EFL study. We also hope that this research will contribute a little bit to the foreign language curriculum design, EFL textbook writing and College English teaching reform.

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The Effect of Written Corrective Feedback on EFL Learners' Performance after Collaborative Output

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Abstract—The purpose of the present study is to investigate the effect of written corrective feedback on EFL learners' performance after completing a set of output activities. The study involved two groups of learners (24 male students) at intermediate level. The first group, consisting of six pairs, worked on four output activities (text editing, composition, transformation and substitution). The second group received written feedback after completing the same activities. Twelve tailor-made dyad-specific tests were constructed and administered to the pairs of learners. Results revealed that the participants who received written corrective feedback after completing the activities outperformed those who did not receive written feedback. The study confirms the view that providing an opportunity for interaction after receiving feedback triggers noticing the gaps between the learners' interlanguage and target language, which facilitates L2 development.

Index Terms—corrective feedback, output activities, collaborative dialogue

I. INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies have been conducted on the types of feedback given to learners and their effectiveness in learning various linguistic features (Carroll, 1996; Carroll & Swain, 1993; Dekeyser, 1993; Doughty, 1994; Spada & Lightbown, 1993). Although early studies raised considerable doubts as to the efficacy of feedback (e.g. Chaudron, 1977; Chun et al., 1982), recent studies provide substantial evidence on its effectiveness in SLA (Carroll & Swain, 1993; Ellis et al., 2001; Ferris, 1997). Studies in the 1990s denote that providing feedback to students on both content and form may improve their learning and result in the development of their interlanguage system.

From a theoretical perspective, a number of proposals have been made in support of the beneficiary role of corrective feedback in SLA. Schmidt's (1990, 2001) Noticing Hypothesis states that noticing is a prerequisite for L2 learning and learners must pay conscious attention to input in order for learning to occur. The proponents of this hypothesis support the facilitative role of corrective feedback in drawing learners' attention to form. They believe that corrective feedback provides a stimulus for learners to identify the gap or mismatch between their interlanguage and the target language. Swain's (1985, 1995) Output Hypothesis also assigns a primary role for corrective feedback. While producing output, learners may experience difficulties in conveying their intended meaning. By providing corrective feedback, in fact, the relevant input would be immediately available and the learners may process language with focused attention. Finally, Long's (1996) extended version of Interaction Hypothesis ascertain the facilitative role of corrective feedback in language learning. Corrective feedback can provide learners with direct and indirect information about the grammaticality of the utterances. Long (1996) argues that "negotiation for meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustments by the NS or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways" (pp. 451-452).

The most considerable classification of corrective feedback includes direct and indirect feedback. Direct corrective feedback occurs when the learners are overtly informed of the existence of an error and provided with the target-like reformulation by their teachers. This type of feedback involves either explicit correction or metalinguistic feedback (Ellis et al., 2006). In explicit correction, the teacher clearly states that what the student has produced is erroneous, whereas in metalinguistic feedback, the teacher provides students with information, comments and questions with respect to the well-formedness of their production (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). In Indirect feedback such as highlighting, underlining or coding, the teacher makes students understand that they have made an error.

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From a theoretical standpoint, learners must pass through four crucial stages in order to learn a second language. According to Garcia-Mayo and Pica (2000), learners must (a) be provided with meaningful and comprehensible input, (b) pay attention to the form and meaning of the input, (c) produce the target language and finally (d) receive feedback in order to modify their production towards greater accuracy, comprehensibility and appropriateness. There has been little emphasis on the final two stages of L2 learning in the Iranian EFL context. The premise of the present study evolves around the role of feedback in focusing learners' attention to their output after collaboration.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Swain (1995) emphasized the role of modified output in second language acquisition. In fact, modified output is the representation of the leading edge of a learners' interlanguage. She suggested that useful feedback from peers could provide opportunities for modified output. More specifically, corrective feedback, defined as "any indication to the learners that their use of the target language is incorrect" (Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 171) can be considered as a kind of modified input, which may lead to modified output on the part of the learner. As learners struggle to test their hypotheses, the external feedback (implicit or explicit) provided by their teachers or classmates can help them notice the problems in their language. When there is no external feedback, learners do not have anything to test their hypotheses against (Swain, 1995). Swain (1997) stressed the significance of providing feedback to learners' collaborative work and argued that when learners complete the task in collaboration, they tend to stick to the knowledge they have constructed together and transfer their knowledge (correct or incorrect) to the following posttest. If they reach correct resolution, they tend to be accurate in their responses and if they do not, they show tendency to choose inaccurate responses (Swain, 1998, pp. 78-79). Thus, it is clear that without feedback, learners may remember their incorrect solutions to their linguistic problems and may transfer them to the new learning situation. In this case, learning also happens but not learning the correct structure.

Earlier, in an experimental study, Carroll, Roberge and Swain (1992) found that learners who received feedback outperformed those who did not receive feedback in the acquisition of the target linguistic forms. Carroll and Swain (1993) further examined the relative effectiveness of various types of feedback on the acquisition of English dative alternation by ESL learners. They found that the provision of negative feedback facilitated learning the selected features. That is, all types of feedback led to learning, but the participants receiving the most explicit (or direct) form of feedback outperformed the other three groups.

Ferris (1997) argues that giving feedback to students on both content and form with underlined errors in their essays might improve their writing. She states that when her learners were given grammatical comments, they revised their writing more efficiently. In an empirical study, Ferris (2002) found that error correction feedback was beneficial because it improved learners' accuracy in the short term. She realised that her students gained positive attitudes about the effect of feedback, which encouraged them to be independent self-editors. Ferris and Roberts (2001) also found that beginner L2 students benefited from being corrected by their teacher. Without feedback, students hardly noticed their own errors, and as a result, frustration occurred. They believe that indirect feedback increases the learners' reflection and attention to the erroneous forms and similarly involves them in guided learning, which may cause long-term retention. Nassaji and Swain (2000) also argued that when input is not sufficient to help learners use correct form and there is no consistency between what they say and what is normally said in the target language, negative feedback can be effective for language learners to prevent them from overgeneralizing from their L1 into L2. They further emphasized that the type of negative feedback is very crucial in its usefulness. That is, the more the feedback is direct, the more it draws learners' attention to their error. Chandler (2003) also states that direct feedback is more effective for learning because it does not confuse the students, gives them more information and provides them with the opportunity to receive immediate feedback, consequently preventing them from making wrong hypotheses. Considering the growing consensus among the majority of scholars on the significant role of direct corrective feedback in SLA, the researchers assumed this type of feedback to be most appropriate for the learners in the context of this study.

Although numerous studies have been conducted on corrective feedback, the bulk of the studies focused on the product of learning, few studies have delved into provision of feedback following collaboration on a set of output tasks. The present study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1) Does collaborative output tasks affect EFL learners' subsequent performance?
- 2) Do learners who receive corrective feedback after collaboration on a set of output activities outperform those who do not receive corrective feedback?

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

Twenty-four male students within the age range of 15 to 26 were chosen for this research. They were invited from a high intermediate level class at the Iran Language Institute (ILI) in Sari, Iran. All of the students were studying English in the foreign language setting with Persian as their mother tongue. These students formed two groups of six pairs (12 students in each group). In order to increase their interaction, they were free to choose their partners. Each pair in the

first group (non-feedback) was asked to attend their classes in a specified time of the first week. The following week was devoted to the second group (feedback).

B. Instrumentation

For conducting the present research, four output activities (text editing, composition, transformation and substitution) were utilized. These activities were taken from the high intermediate ILI English series; therefore, the items were consistent with the participants' proficiency level. The students were encouraged to help each other, correct themselves and one another during the completion of the activities and pay attention to form when errors are made.

The text-editing task required the students to repair a text in order to improve its accuracy. The text was a letter to a friend with 182 words in length and contained 14 mistakes on the use of gerund. Working in pairs, the students were asked to identify the errors. The second task was a composition for which the students were asked to write a paragraph of 100 words in length together on their own favorite topics. They were told that they could not use a dictionary or have researchers' aid during the task. Before starting writing, the students were given time to select their topics. They were also free to write in past, present or future tense. In addition to these tasks, two drills including transformation and substitution, representing mechanical drills in their textbooks, were employed. The transformation drill consisted of 10 active sentences that should be changed into passive voice. The substitution drill consisted of 16 words that should be substituted in selected sentence patterns (see Appendix A for a sample task). There was no time limit for doing these tasks and drills. Completing the whole set of activities varied from pair to pair and took about 40 to 90 minutes. To have a good voice quality, an MP3 player was used to record the conversation between the learners.

C. Procedure for Data Collection

One week before starting the main study, one of the researchers devoted some time to explain the aim and procedure of the study to the students. The participants who were interested in the study were asked to sign a consent form to show their willingness. Twenty-seven students volunteered to participate in the study. Having chosen their partners, each pair was assigned a date and informed of the time of the attendance. The research was carried out in fourteen sessions during four weeks. One of the researchers was present during all these sessions. Before starting each session, she explained how to complete the assignments for each dyad. To encourage joint production, each pair was given only one copy of the activities. During the first week, the first group (non-feedback) completed the activities without receiving any written feedback. On the second week, the next group (feedback) was given the same tasks and drills followed by written feedback by the researchers. The written feedback consisted of explicit provision of the correct forms with no metalinguistic information about the well-formedness of the learners' utterances (see Appendix B for sample feedback).

Ten days after the last session, all pairs were given tailor-made dyad-specific tests in one session. Tailor-made test was used by LaPierre (1994, cited in Swain, 1995) in a pilot study examining the output hypothesis and later by Williams (2001). It is based on the dialogues of pairs of students when they are talking about the language (Swain, 1998). The test aims to assess the students' knowledge which may be constructed through metatalk. This kind of test was created to see whether the participants correctly use the items which were focused on during their collaboration (see Appendix C for sample test). To design the tests, the tape-recorded interaction of the participants was transcribed and analyzed in terms of linguistic features which has been focused on. The data were checked for the occurrence of language-related episodes (LREs) by the two researchers. An LRE is defined as any part of the students' conversation in which they talk about the language (their problems) they are producing, question their language use, or self- and other-correct (Swain, 1997). Agreement rate for identification of LREs between the raters was 95 percent and those four disagreements between the two coders were resolved by discussion. The tailor-made tests were constructed from the focused items in all tasks and drills. The number of items in the tests was the same for the two members of each pair but varied from pair to pair. To estimate the validity of these tests (constructed for 12 pairs) two ILI teachers were provided with 10% of the transcripts along with the testing items on the linguistic episodes focused during the students' interaction. The aim was to determine to what extent the test items measured the learners' ability to produce linguistic forms they talked about during their collaboration. They were asked to rate the items in the tests on two scales (a) corresponded to appropriate and (b) corresponded to inappropriate. The result from the rating showed considerable agreement between the raters (95.55%).

The scoring procedure was very strict and for every correct answer, one score was considered and incorrect answers were scored zero. For further clarification, the design of the study is presented briefly in the following table.

TABLE 1
THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Sessions	Activity
Week 1	NFG completed the activities and were tape-recorded separately
Week 2	FG completed the assignments, received feedback and were tape-recorded separately
Week 3	Listening to their interaction ,transcribing and preparing tests
Week 4	Administering dyad-specific tests for 12 pairs

FG= Feedback group; NFG= Non-feedback group

D. Data Analysis

This study examines whether collaboration and provision of feedback after collaboration would affect EFL learners' performance. To achieve this goal, the recorded pair-talk for both groups was analyzed in terms of language-related episodes (LREs). Following Swain's (1997) definition, self-corrections were also regarded as episodes. It is worth stating that immediate self-corrections were not considered as LREs because it was difficult to distinguish between the self-corrections which were as a result of reflection on language and those which were the performance slip without much reflection on form. Therefore, those self-corrections in which the students explained or reflected on the linguistic forms for some time were regarded as LREs. The total time spent on the completion of the activities was 538 minutes, during which 316 LREs were produced. The identified LREs were further classified according to the type of resolution—the way the students resolved their problems. Following Swain (1995, 1998), LREs were classified into three groups: a) correctly resolved LREs; b) incorrectly resolved LREs and c) unresolved. As the term suggests, correctly solved LREs are those episodes in which the pair members reach the correct answer after collaboration. Sometimes one student in a pair made an error which was corrected by the other member and sometimes both of the students reached the correct answer after a short discussion. With respect to the incorrectly solved LREs, the pairs solved their problems together but they did not obtain target-like forms. Finally, unresolved LREs occurred when the learners did not reach a resolution and continued their conversation.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Evidence from Product Data

Our research questions concerned whether collaboration and written feedback after collaboration affect EFL learners' subsequent performance. To address this issue, a group of EFL learners consisting of 6 pairs received written feedback immediately after completing the activities. The correct responses to the assignments were prepared before the research sessions started. It is worth mentioning that the feedback on composition was not given to the students immediately after completion since it needed some time to correct their compositions. The number of LREs produced in the four activities by the two groups of participants is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
THE NUMBER OF LRES PRODUCED BY 12 PAIRS IN THE FOUR ACTIVITIES

	Text- editing	Composition	Transformation	Substitution	Total
No. of LREs	133	40	88	55	316

After identification of LREs, they were coded based on their type of resolution. The total number of LREs in the transcripts was 316, which consisted of 189 correctly solved, 113 incorrectly resolved and 14 unresolved episodes. The frequency and percentage of each LRE type are provided in Table 3.

TABLE 3
FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE OF LRE RESOLUTION TYPE

	Correctly-solved	Incorrectly- solved	Unresolved	Total
No of LREs	189	113	14	316
% of LREs	59.81	35.75	4.43	100

As was stated, a tailor made test was given to each individual dyad in the non-feedback group (who did not receive written feedback) and in the feedback group (who received written feedback). Unlike the activities, the tests were completed individually by each member of the dyads. This test was constructed on the basis of each pair's correctly solved episodes. Having administered the test, the researchers went through the students' papers to see how many items were answered correctly out of the total number of questions in the test. To answer the first research question, the obtained data from the dyads in the first group who did not receive written feedback were used. That is, the learners' correctly solved LREs were compared with their scores in the tailor-made test. The summary of the results is presented in the following table.

TABLE 4
SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF COMPARISON OF THE MEANS (NON-FEEDBACK GROUP)

	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Correctly solved LREs	12	66.50	14.93	2.68	11	0.01
Tailor-made test	12	58.41	18.94			

The table reveals that the learners' mean scores declined in the testing session. To tackle the research question, we employed a matched t-test and compared the mean scores of the students' correctly solved LREs in during task completion with their correct responses to the tailor made test. The result showed that the mean scores of the two sets of data were statistically different, ($t= 2.68, df=11, p= 0.01$), as the p value came out to be lower than 0.05. This suggests that the performance of the non-feedback group in the tasks significantly differed from their performance in the tests. That is, the pairs' mean score in the correctly solved LREs was significantly higher than their mean score in the subsequent performance. The result may imply that the students' co-constructed knowledge during collaboration (as was revealed in their correctly solved LREs) was not fully transferred to their subsequent performance in the tailor-made test.

The second research question concerns whether the two groups of learners (NFG and FG) differed in their performance after completing the assignments in pairs. To find an answer for this question, we compared the mean scores of the two groups in the tailor made test. The summary of this analysis is presented in the following table.

TABLE 5
SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF COMPARISON OF THE MEANS IN TAILOR-MADE TEST

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t value	df	p
NFG	12	68.41	18.66	2.36	22	0.028
FG	12	73.33	10.47			

In Table 5, the results of the t-test analysis shows a statistically significant difference between the feedback and nonfeedback groups' performance in the test ($t=2.36$, $df=22$; $p=0.028$). This finding suggests that working in pairs may not guarantee better performance in future and in addition to peer feedback, an external feedback from a more knowledgeable interactant is needed to confirm or disconfirm the learners' constructed hypotheses about the target language.

B. Evidence from the Process Data

Receiving written feedback may facilitate the recognition of problems and may encourage learners to 'notice' the gaps in their interlanguage. The evidence for this comes from the dialogues of the learners after receiving feedback. In the following extracts, it is shown that how written feedback made them aware of their linguistic problems, or gaps, as Swain (1998) has pointed out.

Extract 1

S1: *We look forward to seeing? Seeing is correct? To is a preposition?*

S2: *Yes, because 'seeing' is right.*

S1: *I didn't pay attention to this.*

Extract 1 was taken from the students' conversation after receiving feedback on the text-editing task. They compared their own responses with the correct responses provided. S1 knew that the verb assumes "ing" form after preposition, however he was not sure about this case. He asked S2 for help. In the end, he expressed that he did not consider this particular case. It seems that provision of feedback focused their attention to the problem.

Extract 2

S1: *A vacation has been promised.*

S2: *Has been? Not have been?*

S1: *Oh, yes. Vacation. Vacation is singular.*

S2: *Yes. Yes.*

This conversation occurred after two members of a pair received feedback on transformation drill. Their interaction evolved around the use of verb 'have' or 'has' for the subject 'vacation'. Having compared their answer with the feedback, they noticed that the verb 'have' does not agree with the subject 'vacation'. S1 did not get the point at first but after S2 repeated the verbs, he attended to the problem and noticed the difference. Following that, he gave the metalinguistic explanation by expressing the rule.

There are numerous examples in the pairs' conversation indicating that they had the chance to compare their co-constructed answers with the correct responses. This is in accordance with Swain and Lapkin's (2001) statement that the comparison stage between their own output and the reformulated version promotes learners' noticing. This finding lends further support to Schmidt's (1990) noticing hypothesis, which emphasizes the role of feedback in drawing learners' attention to form and recognizing the gap between their linguistic knowledge and the target forms. As Swain (1995) puts it, this form of noticing, which is one of the functions of output, causes a cognitive process that is helpful in the process of SLA.

V. CONCLUSION

The present study was designed to explore whether collaborative output and written corrective feedback have any effect on the performance of EFL learners after pair-work activity. The findings indicated that the students who received written feedback on their productions outperformed those who did not receive feedback. By receiving feedback, the participants had the opportunity to engage in 'cognitive comparisons' between their own responses and the correct answers. The transcripts revealed that receiving written feedback after completing the activities in pairs triggered noticing the gaps between their output (or interlanguage) and the target forms. The feedback may have provided a condition in which learners could test their generated hypotheses and were able to confirm or disconfirm their grammar as manifested in their output (Doughty, 2001). This finding is consistent with Swain's (1985,1995) proposal that external feedback may enable learners replace the incorrect hypotheses about the target language with the correct ones.

While the findings of this study suggest effective evidence for the practice of written feedback on EFL students' pair work, the results should be interpreted within the present context with the limited number of participants, types of tasks and drills. Accordingly, future research is needed to replicate the study using more participants with different

proficiency levels, ages and gender as well as various tasks and activities in other modalities. The present study provides language teachers with information about the effectiveness of collaborative dialogue followed by written feedback. Teachers can motivate learners to see their classes in a positive light. Providing an opportunity for learners to participate in collaborative tasks and similarly interaction after receiving feedback may give them a strong sense of motivation. The students may also show positive attitudes towards receiving teacher feedback and improving their writing.

APPENDIX A: TEXT-EDITING TASK

There are fourteen missing gerunds in this letter. Find and correct them.

Dear Adam

I've been here for three days and am having a great time, but I can't help wish you were here too. Tell your boss I'm really angry at him. He is not let you take any vacation time. Believe it or not, the first night I missed hear all the city noises, but I haven't really had any trouble get used to the peace and quiet since then. Every thing is all so relaxed here – there is no rush around or write things down in your Daily Planner. Get out of New York City was definitely what I needed, even if it's only for two weeks. The ranch has lots of activities-horseback ride, river raft and hike. Tomorrow we're all going to Taos Pueblo to watch some weave being done and to see some Native American dance, which is great because I'm really interested in learn more about Native American culture. And I'm looking forward to see The Magic Flute at the Santa Fe Opera on Saturday. I'll write again in a day or two. Miss you lots.

Love,
Louise

APPENDIX B: FEEDBACK ON TEXT-EDITING TASK

There are fourteen missing gerunds in this letter. Find and correct them.

Dear Adam

I've been here for three days and am having a great time, but I can't help **wishing** you were here too. Tell your boss I'm really angry at him. He is not **letting** you take any vacation time. Believe it or not, the first night I missed **hearing** all the city noises, but I haven't really had any trouble **getting** used to the peace and quiet since then. Every thing is all so **relaxing** here –there is no **rushing** around or **writing** things down in your Daily Planner. **Getting** out of New York City was definitely what I needed, even if it's only for two weeks. The ranch has lots of activities-horseback **riding**, river **rafting** and **hiking**. Tomorrow we're all going to Taos Pueblo to watch some weave being done and to see some Native American **dancing**, which is great because I'm really interested in **learning** more about Native American culture. And I'm looking forward **to seeing** The Magic Flute at the Santa Fe Opera on Saturday. I'll write again in a day or two. Miss you lots.

Love,
Louise

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE TEST ITEMS DESIGNED FOR DYAD 2 (FEEDBACK GROUP)

Choose the best answer.

1. The movie was so sad that they couldn't help.....
 - a) cry
 - b) to cry
 - c) crying
 - d) cried
2. experience is important, so we all told her to keep trying.
 - a) Getting
 - b) To get
 - c) She's getting
 - d) She was getting
3. They told us that they very much looked forward to them.
 - a) visit
 - b) visiting
 - c) visited
 - d) have visited
4. We all celebratedopening Sue's kitchen.
 - a) she
 - b) hers
 - c) she was
 - d) her
5. It's no goodme about your lost cat.
 - a) to tell
 - b) tell
 - c) him tell
 - d) telling
6. She objected toto his birthday party.
 - a) go
 - b) going
 - c) went
 - d)gone
7. If you aren't sure of its meaning, you can lookin a dictionary.
 - a) up it
 - b) at it up
 - c) it up
 - d) for it up
8. The children were asleep. They were very tired, so I didn't
 - a) wake up them
 - b) wake him up
 - c) wake them up
 - d) wake up him
9. When we went to the beach, many peoplevolleyball.
 - a) playing
 - b) was playing
 - c) were playing
 - d) are playing

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Choosing Teaching as a Career: Motivations of Pre-service English Teachers in Turkey

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Abstract—This study examined the career motivations of pre-service English teachers at a state university in Turkey. For data collection, an adapted version of the Factors Influencing Teaching Choice Scale was used and 207 pre-service teachers were surveyed. The findings revealed that social utility and intrinsic values of teaching were important career motivations for the participants which were followed by ability related beliefs. Both male and female participants were more intrinsically and socially motivated, while male participants had higher ratings for job security and employment possibilities. There was not a statistical difference between first and fourth graders' career motivations.

Index Terms—career motivations, pre-service teachers, English language teaching

I. INTRODUCTION

Personal and professional characteristics of good teachers have been vastly stated in research on teacher education (see for example Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; Bailey, 1985; Miller 1987; Prodromou, 1991; Scrivener, 1994). However, what knowledge, beliefs, motivations, and background experience they bring to their roles as teachers are also worth studying since such studies help teacher educators better understand who their students are and they also offer new insights into teacher education process and curriculum development (Brookhart and Freeman, 1992).

In literature on pre-service education, there is also a growing body of research on the attractors affecting the choices people make to pursue a career in teaching. All around the world this issue has gained importance for it is becoming increasingly difficult to motivate young people to the teaching profession as well as keeping the trained force within the profession (Watt and Richardson, 2007; Taylor, 2006; Moran et al., 2001). Moreover, as it is stated by Watt et al. (2007), students' personal beliefs, preconceptions and reasons for choosing teaching as a career shape their "aspirations for professional engagement and the trajectory of their career development" (p.155).

In the Turkish context studies on teacher career motivations have also gained momentum for the last decade. Several studies have been conducted to understand the profiles of Turkish pre-service teachers from specific teaching programs such as pre-school, elementary school, mathematics and biology teaching departments (see Kabadayı, 2008; Saban, 2003; Kılınç and Mahiroğlu, 2009; Aksu et al. 2010; Özsoy et al., 2010). This endeavor to provide insights into different subject areas is also the concern of the researchers of this current study. Thus, this study aims to identify those career motivations prevalent among pre-service English language teachers.

A. A Brief Look at Types and Theories of Career Motivations

The motives for selecting teaching as a career are various. Research studies mainly indicate three basic types or categories of motives for selecting teaching as a career: a. extrinsic motives such as salary, lengthy holidays; b. intrinsic motives such as interest, personal experience, and intellectual fulfillment, and c. altruistic motives as wanting to contribute to the growth of another individual (Moran et al., 2001; Brookhart and Freeman, 1992).

Apart from these traditional conceptualizations, starting from 1950s, several theories of career choice have been developed. One of the earliest ones is Super's self-concept theory (1953) which drew upon the role of individuals' perception of self in choosing a career. According to the theory, the question "Who I am?" is a key factor that plays a determinative role in individuals' choosing a profession. Holland (1959), on the other hand, named this factor as "self-knowledge" and claimed that a good occupational choice depends not only individuals' accurate self-knowledge but also accurate occupational knowledge. In other words, besides developing self-awareness, individuals should also be knowledgeable about the characteristics of the occupation so as to generate an idea whether it is suitable for them. Another theory proposed by Gottfredson (1981) asserts that career choice is determined by two variables, that is, sextype rating and prestige level, which means that people choose particular occupations by examining features of that job regarding its suitability to their gender and its level of prestige.

In addition to these, self-efficacy, a construct first proposed by Bandura (1986), is also considered as an important source of motivation in decision-making process since individuals' perception of their ability to perform an occupation determines whether they will choose that occupation or not.

Yet, some other research studies have looked into theories of motivation in an attempt to identify basis in the career selection process. Drawing upon expectancy-value theory, one of the cognitive theories of achievement motivation, some of these studies suggest that expectations of success and the subjective value of the task are major determinants of motivation for academic choices as well as career choices (Wigfield and Eccles, 2000; Richardson and Watt, 2005; Eggen and Kauchak, 2007). Expectancy for success is influenced by two factors: perceptions of task difficulty and beliefs about one's abilities. That is, it is likely that when people perceive a task as easy, they will put more effort in completing it and similarly people with positive self-concept of ability will have higher expectations of success and therefore be more willing and motivated to invest time and energy into a task. Task value, on the other hand, is influenced by four factors namely intrinsic values, utility value, attainment value and cost. Intrinsic values refer to the pleasure one takes from doing a task, while utility value refers to the usefulness of a task for the individual's future. Attainment value is related to the importance of doing well on the task. Lastly, cost is what the individual has to sacrifice to carry out the task, as well as the effort required to complete it (Eggen and Kauchak, 2007; Richardson and Watt, 2005; Watt and Richardson, 2007).

Taken together, this brief discussion of theories illustrates the fact that individual's career motivations can be explained in a variety of ways depending on one's approach to the issue. Similarly, the literature review of some studies carried out around the world and documented below also supports these different perspectives taken while interpreting the motives behind teachers' career choice.

B. Choosing Teaching as Career

Studies related to the motives lying behind choosing teaching as a career abound in literature. Using both qualitative and quantitative techniques for investigation, majority of them base their interpretations on the traditional classification of intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic attractors. For example, Hayes (1990 cited in Moran et al., 2001) found that in a cohort of American students entering teaching altruistic reasons such as making a positive difference in the lives of children were more significant. Similarly, Stiegelbauer (1992 cited in Fullan, 1993) reported that in her study with Canadian prospective teachers, the need to make a difference to students and society as well as the desire to be role models for students emerged as the main themes for entering the profession. Hammond (2002), in a small scale study including trainee teachers of information and communication technology, found that trainees frequently drew upon their own past experience of teaching as well as their own interest to explain their career choice. On the other hand, in their comparative study of Norwegian and British pre-service teachers, Kyriacou et al. (1999) reported that the participants rated "enjoying teaching" and "enjoying working with children" higher than the other factors, placing more emphasis on intrinsic reasons. Yet, in another study, Sinclair (2008) found that prospective teachers are multi-motivated. In her study, the primary pre-service teachers stated to have the necessary qualities and attributes to be teachers and to work with children as their basic sources of motivation to become teachers besides the factor that they found teaching intellectually stimulating. As can be seen, it is difficult to generalize the reasons why students choose teaching as a career. The variety in their responses may be due to the cultural, social, and economic contexts they live in (Kyriacou et al., 1999) as well as the subject areas they will teach.

In another study, Watt and Richardson (2007), on the other hand, used a comprehensive scale named Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice), which they developed (Richardson and Watt, 2006) heavily relying on the expectancy-value theory. They conducted the study with pre-service teachers enrolled in three Australian universities and found that perceived teaching abilities, the intrinsic value of teaching and the desire to make a social contribution were the highest rated motivations.

As stated in the introduction, in Turkey not many studies have been conducted. Those undertaken, however, present different results. For example, in one of the earlier studies Saban (2003) found that prospective elementary school teachers considered altruistic reasons to be more important and the extrinsic ones such as getting a secure job and a steady monthly income as more influential than intrinsic reasons in their career choice. In another study, Gürbüz and Sülün (2004) reported that prospective biology teachers were primarily motivated by their love for biology, while they rated the extrinsic motive of "job security" as the second reason for choosing teaching career. Similarly, Kılınc and Mahiroğlu's study on biology pre-service teachers yielded the same results (2009). According to the findings of a qualitative study carried out by Boz and Boz (2008), prospective chemistry and mathematics teachers were influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic values emphasizing that especially prior positive experience with the subject itself and teachers play a determining role on the choice of teaching career. In a large scale study Aksu et al. (2010) investigated the profiles of prospective teachers from different teaching programs and found that more than half of the students voluntarily chose to become teachers. On the other hand, the same group of participants reported more extrinsic reasons such as job security, flexible hours and holidays as well as the possibility of "engaging in a secondary employment" as motives that led them to select teaching for a profession. Özsoy et al. (2010) also conducted a large scale study comprising pre-service teachers from four universities and found that the majority of the participants chose teaching not as a "fallback" career, i.e. a last-resort one, but because it was their ideal to teach. Based on this sample of studies done

in Turkey, it could be concluded that Turkish prospective teachers of different subject areas are primarily led by intrinsic and altruistic reasons but also heavily affected by extrinsic factors such as job security and regular income.

However, there has been a dearth of research on the career motivations of prospective English language teachers. Therefore, this study, addressing this gap in research, is an attempt to contribute to our understanding of why this particular group chooses to become teachers with its focus on pre-service English teachers. It is hoped that the results and implications will contribute to the growth of existing literature on the issue and help teacher educators, curriculum developers and policy makers better understand and improve the quality of pre-service teacher education.

C. *Becoming an English Teacher in Turkey*

There are two types of secondary schools, general and vocational-technical, that educate those students who wish to pursue a career in language teaching in Turkey. General secondary schools encompass four years of schooling including two phases: common and division-based education. In the first phase, which lasts a year, all students take compulsory common courses such as Turkish Literature, Mathematics, Physics, History, English etc. The second phase comprises division courses that students have to take depending on their decisions about the field of study they would like to pursue. There are four main types of divisions: Positive sciences, social sciences, Turkish-Mathematics and Foreign Language. This selection might be considered as a turning point in a student's career because they can only prefer departments pertaining to their divisions of graduation while entering university. In this respect, foreign language departments of universities can be preferred by those students who graduate from language divisions of secondary schools.

On the other hand, vocational schools which are called Anatolian Teacher Training High Schools also train students for faculties of education through providing pedagogical courses during their secondary education. For that reason, these students are given extra credits in University Entrance Exam on condition that they choose a career in teaching. Within the selection process, firstly, students take Student Selection Examination (ÖSS) which is centrally administered by Student Selection and Placement Centre (ÖSYM) and secondarily, The Foreign Language Examination (YDS). While the former refers to students' proficiency in the Turkish language, using social science concepts and their mathematical abilities, the latter is concerned with students' English proficiency (ÖSYM, 2006). The English test contains one hundred multiple-choice items covering vocabulary, grammar and reading skills. After the announcement of scores, the prospective university students fill in a preference form and according to their rankings and percentiles enrol in universities.

The entrance age range among Turkish university students does not show variety since as a developing country, career switching or doing another major is not a common phenomenon in Turkey. For this reason, after completing secondary education at the age of 17 or 18 students become eligible candidates for English language teaching departments of faculties of education and they usually complete their undergraduate studies within four or five years time.

However, being an English language teacher in Turkey is not limited to students who graduate from English language teaching departments. Graduates of six other departments functioning under faculties of Science and Letters are also entitled as English language teachers provided that they complete a pedagogical formation course which aims to compensate graduates' lack of knowledge about teaching. To clearly depict the case in Turkey the following figure is provided (see Figure 1).

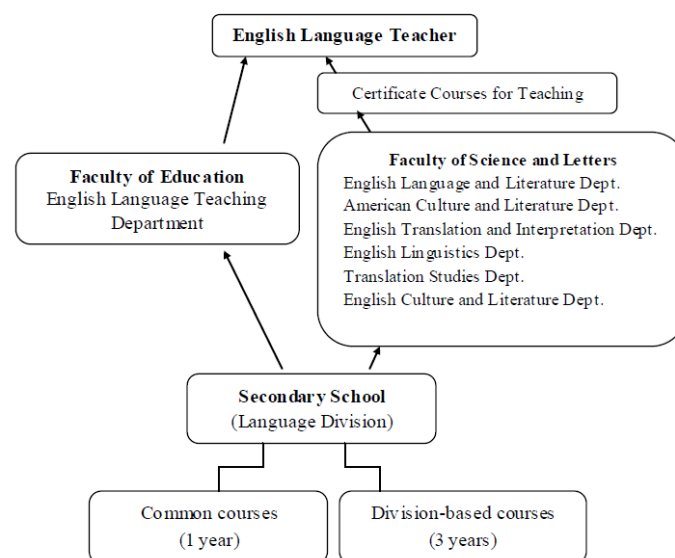


Figure 1. Paths to becoming an English teacher in Turkey

II. THE STUDY

A. *Research Problem and Questions*

The main purpose of this study is to gain insight into the factors influencing people’s decisions who choose teaching English as a career. In relation to this purpose, thus, this study seeks answers to the following questions:

1. What are the career motivations of pre-service English language teachers?
2. Is there a relationship between pre-service English language teachers’ career motivations and their gender?
3. Is there a relationship between pre-service English language teachers’ career motivations and their grade levels?

B. *Methodology*

This study follows a quantitative methodology within a theory-based approach tapping Watt’s and Richardson’s (2007) conceptualization to interpret career motivations of pre-service English language teachers in Turkey. The survey method was taken up as the main methodology since gathering data from a relatively large number of cases was required and the survey methodology enables researchers to gather information that people are able to report about themselves, such as their beliefs and motivations (Best and Khan, 2006; Mackey and Gass, 2005).

C. *Setting and Participants*

The study took place at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University in the spring term of 2008-2009 academic year. The participants were students at ELT Department at the Faculty of Education. 207 students were invited to join the study all of whom voluntarily agreed to participate and the final sample consisted of 207 first and fourth grade pre-service teachers. The following table shows the personal characteristics of the sample (see Table 1).

TABLE 1.
PARTICIPANTS’ DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS.

Characteristics	f	%
Class		
First	104	50.2
Fourth	103	49.8
Gender		
Male	38	18.4
Female	169	81.6

As seen in the table, 104 (50 %) of the participants were first and 103 (49.8) of them were fourth grade learners. Of these while a majority was female prospective teachers (81.6 %) only 38 (18.4 %) of them were male pre-service teachers. The prevailing construction of teaching in Turkey as well as around the world is that of a feminized occupation. Thus, the finding here also confirms that entering teacher candidates are typically female, which is also evidenced in the studies of Aksu et al. (2010), Saban, (2003), and Watt and Richardson (2007).

D. *Instruments*

To collect the data a two- part questionnaire was prepared. The first part asked for demographic information such as age, gender, status of study. In the second part, an adapted version of the Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice) Scale (Watt and Richardson, 2007) with 23 items that were grouped under 6 subscales was used. In this part a prefacing statement to all items was written: “I chose to become a language teacher because...” and the respondents were asked to rate the importance of each factor on their choice of teaching as a career on a seven- point Likert scale with the anchors ranging from not at all to extremely. The questionnaire was completed in a class hour. No difficulties were reported by the respondents who filled out the survey instruments fully without causing any data loss.

The adaptation of the FIT-choice scale

The FIT-Choice scale was originally grounded in the expectancy-value theory of motivation. However, it not only reflects the principal aspects of this theory but also draws upon social cognitive theory and the literature on teacher education and career choice (Richardson and Watt, 2006).

The original scale includes 3 main parts designed to elicit data about the motivations for teaching, perceptions about the profession and career choice satisfaction. The scale related to career motivation includes the “intrinsic values” (individuals’ interest in and desire to teach), “personal utility values” (reasons related to job security, time for family, job transferability), “social utility values” (individuals’ desire to shape future of children/adolescents, enhance social equity, make social contribution, work with children/adolescents), “self perceptions of individuals’ own teaching abilities”(individuals’ perceptions of their teaching abilities), “fallback career choice” (individuals’ selection of teaching as a career because they have not been accepted into their first choices), “socialization influences” (prior teaching and learning experiences, peers’ or parents’ influence on their decisions) subscales (Richardson and Watt, 2006; Watt and Richardson, 2007).

While adapting the instrument, both for the purpose of this particular study and also due to certain contextual reasons some of the items in this scale were rewritten while some of them were left out. For instance, since the FIT-Choice scale was not particularly developed to gather the career motivations of English language teachers, the terms “language” and “language teacher” were included to the items wherever appropriate. It was thought that in this way the items would

make more sense to the respondents who were language teacher candidates. Therefore, for example, item 21 in the original scale which stated “I have the qualities of a good teacher” was turned to “I have the qualities of a good language teacher”. As for the exclusion of some of the items, for example, the group of items put under the factor of job transferability that read “teaching will be a useful job for me when travelling” or “A teaching job will allow me to choose where I wish to live” were excluded since they are not applicable for Turkish foreign language teachers who are non-native speakers of English and therefore barely travel around the world to teach English. After these adaptations, the scale was given its final form including 23 items with two negative ones, which were all in English. One item to check the consistency of the respondents was added which asked them to give the same response that they previously gave to a different item. The Pearson’s Correlation analysis conducted between these items revealed a high positive correlation ($r = .979, p < .01$).

The adapted version of the scale was pilot tested with a group of 165 pre-service English teachers not participating in the main study and pre-service German teachers who checked the clarity of the items. According to their feedback some minor changes were made in the wording of the statements. After the data was collected, its reliability analysis was also carried out. The following table presents the findings (see Table 2).

TABLE 2.
RESULTS OF THE RELIABILITY ANALYSIS FOR THE FIT-CHOICE SCALE FACTORS

Factors	Alpha values
Self-perception	.78
Intrinsic Values	.71
Personal Utility	.85
Social Utility	.88
Socialization Influences	.76
Fallback Career	.83

As the table shows, for all the factors the analysis yielded high reliability values.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Below the findings are presented in relation to the research questions.

A. Research Question 1. Career Motivations of Pre-service English Language Teachers

The preliminary data analysis revealed that participants had moderately high level of career motivations (Mean= 4.82; SD=.89). When the mean ratings for each item are studied, it is seen that participants placed a high value on their liking teaching more than the other reasons (Mean=5.69; SD=1.52), which indicates that they were more intrinsically motivated in their career choice. However, the following 4 top rated reasons are those related to altruistic motivations, all placed under social utility value in the scale. These are; “teaching will allow me to shape child and adolescent values”, “Teaching will allow me to influence the next generation”, “Teaching will provide me to provide service to society” and “teachers make a worthwhile social contribution”. These findings were in line with the findings of Stiegelbauer (1992 cited in Fullan, 1993), Gürbüz and Sülün (2004) and Saban (2003) who also reported that intrinsic motivations as well as those related to making contributions to the lives of others and society were the major attractors for entrant teachers. Similarly, Watt and Richardson (2007) in their study with a cohort of pre-service teachers from 3 Australian universities using the FIT-Choice scale also pointed to the same motivators as being the most important ones.

The least influential reason for participants’ career choice, on the other hand, was choosing teaching as a fallback career. The items “I was not accepted as into my other career choices” and “I chose teaching as a last resort career” were indicated as the least influential factors which were followed by social influences of other people around them. However, it should be noted that while participants rated those motivators related to social influences by other people around them such as their parents low (Mean= 3.10; SD=2.04), they reported “having good teachers as role models” as more influential in their choice for teaching career (Mean=5.29; SD= 1.72), a case which has been emphasized in other studies as well (see for example Stiegelbauer, 1992 cited in Bastick, 2000; Boz and Boz, 2008; Aksu et al. 2010).

The data was submitted to further descriptive analysis to understand participants’ overall career motivations in relation to the sub factors of the scale. Table 3 below presents the mean ratings for each motivation.

TABLE 3
MEAN VALUES FOR FACTORS INFLUENCING TEACHING CHOICE

Career Motivations	Mean	SD
Social Utility Values	5.2895	1.16550
Intrinsic Values	5.2657	1.52310
Self -perceptions	4.9348	1.28730
Personal Utility Values	4.2842	1.36073
Socialization Influences	4.2126	1.23967
Fallback Career	1.8267	1.57552

While the highest rated motivations for choosing teaching as a career included social utility, the intrinsic value of teaching and participants’ perceived teaching abilities, choosing teaching as a fallback career was the lowest rated

motivation. This finding is especially interesting since there are studies evidencing that students choose teaching as a last resort career (see Yong, 1995; Klassen et al., 2011). However, the findings of this particular study and several others (see Aksu et al., 2010; Özsoy et al., 2010; Watt and Richardson, 2007) did not provide support for this opinion.

B. Research Question 2. Career Motivations of Pre-service English Teachers in Relation to Gender

The second research question sought answers for the question what career motivations participants had in relation to their gender and whether these were significantly related. The initial descriptive analysis showed that female participants reported intrinsic career value “I like teaching” as their top motivation for choosing teaching as a career, followed by social utility values and socialization influences (prior positive learning and teaching experience). These findings were consistent with those reported by Saban (2003), who also found that female students had more altruistic and intrinsic motivations than males. The analysis also revealed that the lowest rated motivations for female participants were fallback career, social influences of other people around them. In this group, items “As a teacher I will have lengthy holidays” and “I will have a short work day” which refer to bludging under the personal utility values scale received lower ratings. The male participants, similarly, placed more value on social utility values followed by intrinsic career values. However, among the top rated 9 items those related to job security (Item 6) and employment opportunities (Item 14) also received higher ratings by male participants (Mean=5.10, SD=1.73; Mean=5.03, SD=1.74 respectively). This finding is also congruent with those in other studies (Bookheart and Freeman, 1992; Saban, 2003; Richardson and Watt, 2006; Kılınç and Mahiroğlu, 2009).

The overall results of the initial descriptive statistics with the mean ratings for gender differences are presented in the table below.

TABLE 4
GENDER DIFFERENCES FOR CAREER MOTIVATIONS.

Factors	Gender	Mean	SD
Intrinsic Values	Female	5.3313	1.53681
	Male	4.9359	1.28681
Social Utility Values	Female	5.3126	1.17895
	Male	5.1410	1.16115
Self –perceptions	Female	4.9663	1.29234
	Male	4.7692	1.28681
Personal Utility Values	Female	4.2536	1.37318
	Male	4.5556	1.26082
Socialization Influences	Female	4.2193	1.25192
	Male	4.2244	1.24710
Fallback Career	Female	1.8037	1.54304
	Male	1.9231	1.72268

However, as displayed in Table 4, the independent samples t-test analysis revealed no statistically significant differences between the gender of the participants and their career motivations ($p > .05$). Similarly, Kılınç and Mahiroğlu (2009) pointed out that the biology student teachers in their study did not report gender based career motivations. This is also supported by Richardson and Watt’s study (2005) investigating factors influencing career choice at an Australian University. Out of five different factors as *social status, career fit, prior considerations, financial reward and time for family*, the only significant difference was about prior considerations. In that vein, Johnston et al.’s study (1999) in British context revealed that male and female primary teacher trainees are in agreement about factors influenced their decisions to enter teaching profession, namely, *perceived job satisfaction, contribution to society, imparting knowledge, job security, mentally stimulating work, good holidays, respectable job, family approval, status and promotion prospects*. However, they elucidated significant gender difference about two factors as *working with children and salary*, which showed that males placed less emphasis on the importance of working with children but more emphasis on salary.

The results of these studies illustrate that, although males and females are reported to be in the same line about the effects of the majority of aforementioned factors, further empirical studies are required to understand the place of gender as the factor influencing individuals’ reasons for entering teaching as a profession.

As for the grade differences, the mean ratings were also calculated and put in the table below.

TABLE 5
GRADE DIFFERENCES FOR CAREER MOTIVATIONS.

Factors	Grades	Mean	SD
Intrinsic Values	First	5.2374	1.34802
	Fourth	5.0245	1.23757
Social Utility Values	First	5.2066	1.26200
	Fourth	5.3490	1.09098
Self-perceptions	First	4.8283	1.34802
	Fourth	5.0245	1.23757
Personal Utility Values	First	4.2111	1.42625
	Fourth	4.4062	1.28725
Socialization Influences	First	4.1052	1.20159
	Fourth	4.3366	1.29200
Fallback Career	First	1.7374	1.52252
	Fourth	1.9216	1.63311

As Table 5 illustrates, first graders rated intrinsic values, social utility values and self-perceptions of language and teaching abilities higher than the other ones. In line with the former group, fourth graders also rated intrinsic values, social utility values higher than the others as the other two sources of motivations, namely personal utility values and socialization influences, were rated in between. However, while the 1st graders indicated intrinsic values as the main sources of their career choice, the 4th graders showed social utility values as more influential. This difference in perception might be due what prospective teachers experience during their teacher education. While they enter the faculty being only concerned about what they enjoy doing, through years of study and teaching experience during School Experience and Practicum courses they start observing how teaching is socially important. Certainly, to be able to determine whether such changes in perceptions do occur or not, longitudinal studies should be conducted.

Not surprisingly, the fourth graders also indicated those factors related to their self-perceptions of abilities in teaching and language as more influential in their career choice. This difference in perceptions may also be related to the effect of training at the faculty as explained above. Literature also points out that especially teaching experience has an effect on the self-efficacy perceptions of pre-service teachers (Eslami and Fatahi, 2008).

Lastly, for both grade levels, fallback career was the lowest rated career motivation. Similar to gender, the independent samples t-test analysis yielded no statistically significant differences between the grade levels and sub dimensions of career motivations ($p > .05$).

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study aimed to obtain insights into career motivations of pre-service English language teachers in a particular university in Turkey. Overall, the sample in this study featured high levels of career motivations. Therefore, it could be concluded that in terms of occupational motivations these student teachers were enthusiastic to enter teacher education.

The mean values for the sub dimensions of social utility, intrinsic values, self-perceptions, personal utility values and socialization influences being moderately high, on the other hand, indicate that reasons for entering teaching for this sample are multi-faceted as stated in another study by Sinclair (2008). Most noticeably, the motives for selecting teaching career in this cohort were headed by social utility values and intrinsic career values. As it was documented by several researchers such as Yong (1995), Bastick (2000) and Klassen et al. (2011) especially in developing countries the reasons given for the motives to enter teaching emphasize extrinsic attractors in comparison to English speaking metropolitan countries where intrinsic and altruistic motivations are reported as the main sources of career motivations. As Yong (1995) reported, “extrinsic” entry career motives of pre-service teachers may undermine their long-term commitment to teaching. Thus, the overall findings of this current study could be interpreted as positive and promising not only for pre-service English language teacher education which aims to train quality teachers but also for but also schools where these prospective teachers will find job opportunities after graduation. Yet, whether these motives are shared by other prospective teachers or not needs to be researched involving larger samples from different universities to be able to elaborate more on the results obtained here.

Of particular note in this study was the finding that the choice of teaching career was a voluntary one rather than a fallback career, which contradicts the general public opinion that teaching is a poor choice. Although the data in this study came from only one English language teaching department in Turkey, several other studies conducted with different subject area pre-service teachers with similar findings (see for example Aksu et al., 2010; Özsoy et al., 2010) seem to support the suggestion that this result may be considered as a sign of raising standards in teacher education with regard to career choice decisions in Turkey.

Together with the fallback career, parents’ and other people’s such as friends’ influence was the other attractor which was found to be rated low by the participants. As opposed to this finding, however, the prospective teachers in this study reported the influence of prior teachers as role models as one of the main reasons for their career choice. Literature is replete with studies that have shown time and again that teacher is the “most influential school-related force in student achievement” (Stronge, 2007, p. x). Similarly, having positive teacher role models also appears to be a significant factor for career choice decisions (Stiegelbauer, 1992 cited in Bastick, 2000). It is already known that skilled and qualified teaching workforce can influence young people’s lives by portraying images of good teaching and

demonstrating good professional and personal traits. This fact, therefore, emphasizes the need to supporting practicing teachers by providing them with opportunities for professional as well as personal development through in-service training and other academic activities. This, in return, calls for more strategic and long term planning and investment by Ministries of Education.

As for the relationship between gender of the participants and career motivations no statistically significant difference was found in this study. Both groups in differing degrees put emphasis on the influence of those motives that come under the sub dimensions of intrinsic, social utility values and self-perceptions, although female participants were observed to have higher ratings. On the other hand, male participants perceived those motives related to the other three sub dimensions, personal utility values, socialization influences and fallback career as slightly more influential on their choice of career than female participants. Although not found statistically significant, male participants' emphasis on financial rewards of the occupation suggests that "economic survival maybe a far more relevant issue than self-realization" (Fitzgerald and Betz, 1994, p.104) or any other higher order, altruistic motives. Especially those reasons such as job security, steady income, and lengthy holidays seem to be regarded more by males, which is not surprising for the Turkish context where economic uncertainties cause many people to lose their jobs especially in private sector where teachers are left with no legal protection against the hiring and firing policies of these institutions (Aksu et al., 2010).

Similar to gender, this current study did not find a significant difference between grade levels and career choice motivations of the participants. One of the reasons for looking into the 1st and 4th grade prospective teachers' motivations in this study was to see whether training has an effect on their perceptions. As the findings suggest, except intrinsic values, the 4th graders rated all other sources of career motivations higher than the first graders did, which might indicate a shift in view due to the training prospective teachers receive. However, to be able to make definite and reliable conclusions they should be observed and studied all through their years of education, which is an implication for further research.

The impact that career choice has on people is a long-term one and an unwilling choice may lead to low academic achievement during pre-service education. Since the quality of pre-service teacher is closely related to the motivations, beliefs, attitudes and perceptions of prospective teachers, understanding these established psychological constructs gains importance. Only with such an insight could it be possible to develop training programs and attempt to change their entering beliefs. While doing so we should not forget that these ideas and beliefs once set determine the practices of teachers in real classrooms.

An unwilling choice of career not only jeopardizes the quality of teacher education but also is reflected in dissatisfaction and early burnout in future career (see for example Kan, 2008; Dolunay, 2002). Therefore, young people who choose to be teachers primarily because they are inspired by those factors such as their love for children and teaching or by the motive to help others grow may be considered as indicators of better induction into future roles. Yet, in the Turkish context it is not the sustainable employment but a lack of commitment to teaching and efforts for professional development which form the basis of teacher-related problems. As this study revealed high levels of entry career motivations supporting the similar findings of different studies, then probably more should be done to investigate how and why these highly motivated individuals lose their enthusiasm to teach and stay up-date. This issue calls for following graduates once they start teaching and investigating those reasons lying behind their burn-out.

Lastly, it should be noted that there are limitations that pertain to the data set in this study. To begin with, this study examined the career motivations of pre-service English teachers enrolled in a department of a particular state university in Turkey. As such being the case, the findings cannot be said to depict the full picture of all pre-service teachers' career choice motivations. Therefore, similar studies comprising different samples from different English Language Teaching departments should be conducted to better understand the career motivations of prospective English language teachers.

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The Impact of Reading Strategy Training on the Reading Comprehension of Iranian EFL Learners

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Abstract—This article examines the strategies training teachers employ in various stages of instruction in classroom language learning. Therefore, this study aims at determining the difference in the strategy use by readers at an upper-intermediate level. The subjects of this study were preparatory ELT students at Islamic Azad University, Malayer branch. The students were administered an inventory of strategy use during their in-classroom reading studies. Data was analyzed through a percentage study. It was reported in the study that readers participating in strategy training courses differed significantly from those who did not. By recognizing the differences between the two groups during the reading stage, foreign language teachers were advised to manipulate training their students in reading strategies before starting the reading courses. A sentence or a paragraph may also help the reader to understand a specific word (the contextual meaning). The students should be guided to make use of the strategies they have already learned to reach and capture the meaning (the message) given in the reading material.

Index Terms—reading comprehension, strategy, training, reading materials

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays English is regarded as an international language. Because of this status it has been widely used in different areas such as commerce, education as well as the internet. With these uses of English, there are created so many needs to this language. Reading is undoubtedly one of the important factors which should be regarded seriously while learning this international language. Because of the importance of this skill, there are naturally many ways to improve the ways the students read and comprehend a passage. Many researchers have focused on these ways and have carried out some studies in various parts of the world to explore the best ways from which a reader can benefit from his or her reading skills. They have changed the classroom activities hoping to revolute the reading comprehension. Thus new and modern methods have been proposed some of which have been proved to be fruitful, while others have not been so useful.

But after some time, researchers understood that these techniques and methods did not help learning by themselves. There was another dimension to language learning: individual differences such as age, interest, gender, and so on. Grenfell and Harris (1999) pointed at this important fact by saying “Methodology alone can never be a solution to language learning. Rather it is an aid and suggestion” (p. 10).

In this era the researchers have reached to a very important conclusion. The conclusion has been that instead of focusing on the reading methods and wasting the time with the methodology of language teaching it is better to invest some time on individual differences and find out the ways in which each learner can benefit more from his or her reading. This shift led to an increase in the number of studies carried out regarding learner characteristics and second language learning. One of the most popular aspects of study was language learning strategies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A lot of theorizers have drawn their attention towards reading comprehension and strategy training because of the importance of the issues. Followings we have mentioned the most relevant literature to provide the reader with the necessary background.

A. The Definition of Reading

Learning in general is a very demanding process. Concerning language learning the matter becomes much more complicated. It not only involves learning the structures, vocabulary items, some idiomatic expressions and cultural aspects of the language but it also involves being proficient in the skills needed to understand and communicate in the target language effectively. There are many skills required in a language but the main ones are listening, reading, writing and speaking. The first two are the receptive skills while the latter two are the productive ones. Without a full mastery of the receptive skills, it is difficult to achieve mastery in productive ones.

Reading is one of the receptive skills which is of great importance in language teaching and learning. There are many reasons for its being important. Firstly, learners come across it a lot in their daily lives. Secondly, since the students in this research are preparatory learners who are learning English for academic purposes, it is definite that they will have to read a lot of long articles or books in their departments. Without understanding the texts, they cannot learn anything; as a result, cannot be successful in the exams.

Since reading is an important skill in language learning, it is necessary to define it. Aebersold and Field (1997) define reading as follows: "Reading is what happens when people look at a text and assign meaning to the written symbols in that text" (p. 15). In this definition, there are two necessary entities for the process: the text and the reader. Reading as a skill is then the interaction between these two entities. According to Stauffer (1969) reading means "getting information from the printed page" (p. 5). It can be concluded from this definition that one of the reasons for reading is to get some information out of the text in order to find out something or in order to do something with the information you get. It may not be necessary to read a text fully depending on the purpose. Therefore, readers develop some strategies to deal with reading. As Wallace (1992) says "Experienced readers make judgments during any reading activity about the degree of care and attention which the material warrants. In the real world, effective reading means a flexible and appropriate response to the material in hand, and this is always guided by the reader's options, including the option to give up" (p. 5). While one is reading a text, there is always a purpose in his/her mind because reading is a purposeful activity. In this sense, the purpose for reading determines how the text should be read. If the person is looking for a number in a telephone directory, s/he should be very selective. S/he should scan the directory for the number needed. On the contrary, a researcher needs to read an article in detail to get the main ideas of the writer and to learn more about the subject. Nevertheless, it can still be argued that any reading is selective. Wallace (1992) shares the same idea by saying, "Just as we filter spoken messages in deciding what to attend to, so do we filter written messages. And even when we commit ourselves to a full reading, that reading will still be selective, some parts being read with greater care than others" (p. 5).

B. The Importance of Reading Strategies

Reading is one of the most important skills which a person has to deal with throughout his life time. It needs a lot of practice and experience to understand a passage and the information conveyed in it. The matter becomes more complicated when the text appears in a foreign language in which the reader is not proficient enough. However, there are always some clues which guide the reader. As Wallace (1992) said "There are two things which we all know about language: first that we use it for a purpose; second that it only makes sense in context, that is as part of a larger text or in a situation" (p. 3). It is not always easy to understand a passage carefully without using certain strategies. Strategies are defined as "specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information" by Brown (1994, p. 104). As it can be understood from the definition, strategies are not easy to explore and use especially in a foreign language. This is where the language teacher comes onto the stage. The duty of a teacher is then to guide and teach learners how to be effective readers in a foreign language.

C. The Important Points in Teaching Reading Comprehension

It can be said that reading is a complicated skill. As Richards (quoted in Aebersold and Field, 1997) says, Reading in a second language is a dynamic and interactive process in which learners make use of background knowledge, text schema, lexical and grammatical awareness, L1- related knowledge, and real world knowledge, as well as their own personal purposes and goals, to arrive at an understanding of written material. At the same time readers' teachers' views of the nature of reading are seen to be shaped by their own social, cultural, and personal histories (p. ix).

When reading a text, both the writer and the reader are actively engaged in the process. While the writer is trying to convey the message implicitly or explicitly stated in the passage, the reader is busy with decoding that message. However, it is not as easy as it may seem. There are lots of things to consider while teaching reading in a foreign language.

In recent years, there have been great developments in the field of English language teaching. One of the earliest considerations was a new approach to reading. In this approach, two different processes were introduced to language teaching and learning. These were namely bottom-up and top-down processing.

D. Bottom-up Processing

"In bottom-up processing, readers must first recognize a multiplicity of linguistic signals (letters, morphemes, syllables, words, phrases, grammatical cues, discourse markers) and use their linguistic data-processing mechanisms to impose some sort of order on these signals" (Brown, 2001, p. 299). In order to do this, one should have a good knowledge of the language itself so that the signals which make sense can be selected easily. Nuttall (1996) likens bottom-up processing to "... a scientist with a magnifying glass or microscope examining all the minute details of some phenomenon" (p. 16). Therefore, as a teacher, one can move from grammar points and vocabulary to direct the learners to focus on the message. However, there is one disadvantage of bottom-up processing. Language learners are sometimes too much interested in individual words or phrases that they forget about the overall meaning of the text so teachers

must be aware of this problem and must be ready to take any immediate actions where necessary in order not to lose the wood for the trees.

E. Top-down Processing

In top-down processing, learners draw on their intelligence and experience to understand a text (Brown, 2001). Readers come to the reading process with some knowledge of the world around them in their mind and they use this knowledge to make sense of a text. According to Nuttall (1996), a reader using top-down processing is like an eagle overlooking the landscape below. Top-down processing is useful to get the overall meaning of a text.

In language classes, students are required to have general predictions about the text and then seek for the writer's message. Therefore, a teacher can give some ideas to form generalizations about the topic to process the information as an initiator. Then the students are required to process information in the text (Saricoban, 2002).

In the past, lots of reading specialists defended bottom-up processing as being the best way to teach reading. However, more recent research has shown that a reading lesson should make use of both bottom-up and top-down processing, called as "interactive reading". Since both of the processes are equally important in reading, a combination of them would be the best solution. In both modes of processing, students will need different strategies to improve their reading skills.

F. Schema Theory

What has been referred as the students' background knowledge about the world around them in top-down processing is called as their schemata. A text does not carry meaning on its own. The reader brings his experiences, emotions and cultural knowledge, that is, schemata, to the text and refers back to these to make sense of the previously acquired knowledge. According to schema theory, comprehending a text is an interactive process between the readers' background knowledge and the text itself (Saricoban, 2002).

There are three different kinds of schemata that are used in the reading process. One of them is the content schema. "It provides readers with a foundation, a basis for comparison" (Aebersold and Field, 1997, p. 16). Using their content schema, readers can compare an event in the text with an event they have experienced before or with similar events in their culture such as a wedding. The other one is formal schema, "which refers directly to the organizational forms and rhetorical structures of written texts" (Aebersold and Field, 1997, p. 17). Before they start actual reading, readers know that a newspaper article is different from a personal note or a letter. The knowledge readers bring to a text about structure, vocabulary, grammar, and level of formality constitutes formal schema. The last schema type is linguistic schema, which includes the decoding features readers need to recognize words and see how they fit together in a sentence.

G. Learning Strategies

It is hard to deal with a new language and try to understand something written in it. The possible solution for this is to adopt some strategies to cope with the text. There have been many researchers interested in learning strategies and they define the term 'learning strategies' differently. According to Ellis (1994), "A learning strategy is 'an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language'" (p. 530). Another researcher Oxford (quoted in Ellis, 1994) defines it as "... behaviors or actions which learners use to make language learning more successful, self-directed and enjoyable" (p. 531). By looking at the last definition, it can be said that Oxford sees learning strategies as behavioral. Another researcher Rubin (quoted in Hedge, 2000) defines learner strategies as "any set of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval and use of information, ... that is, what learners do to learn and do to regulate their learning" (p. 77). In the definition, there are two concepts: what learners do to learn and what learners do to regulate their learning. The former involves strategies that deal directly with the second language (cognitive strategies) and the latter involves strategies that manage learning (metacognitive strategies). As a language teacher, one should know whether it is possible to help learners acquire and develop strategies of either kind which will enhance their ability to learn inside or outside the classroom. (Hedge, 2000)

Any language teacher one should be aware of his/her students' needs and weaknesses and start working on them directly. The teacher should design the lessons in such a way that the students will be guided to become efficient readers. As Wallace (1992) points out "Good learners tend to use the same strategies as good experienced readers, drawing on as much of the surrounding text as possible, being prepared to tolerate uncertainty, using a wide range of textual cues in predicting what comes next, and generally being flexible in their response to the texts. The teacher, by watching the various ways in which his or her learners process texts, can encourage the use of those strategies which are observed to be most effective" (p. 59).

Some of the reading strategies and skills are:

1. predicting
2. skimming
3. scanning
4. detailed reading
5. guessing unknown words
6. understanding main ideas

7. inferring
8. understanding text organization
9. assessing a writer's purpose
10. evaluating a writer's attitude

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

Two upper-intermediate level groups participated in the study. All of the students in the groups, aged between 18-20 were selected from among the upper intermediate EFL students of IAU, Malayer Branch. They took part in the coeducational classes, too.

B. Instruments

The materials used in the present study were reading passages selected from among the passages of Developing Reading Skills. The passages were interesting enough to raise the students' motivation. The mentioned passages were accompanied with pictures so that the students in the experimental group could talk and collaborate on their meaning in a better way.

The data for the study were collected via quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. The pretest and the posttest results provided the quantitative data, and the qualitative data came from the students' interviews which were carried out after each strategy training session.

C. The Pretest and the Posttest

At the beginning of the study, before the training sessions, both of the groups were given a pretest in reading. After the test, the students carried out their lessons as mentioned above for 16 weeks. At the end of 16 weeks, the students received a posttest to see whether the experimental group differed significantly from the control group in the development of reading strategies. The posttest was prepared in accordance with the pretest. In terms of topic selection, it was aimed not to bias the students with a different topic so the same topic with a different point of view was chosen. The questions were prepared considering the training sessions and the objectives of the course. Before students took the test, the same procedure was followed. It was again proofread by the same expert instructors.

D. Interviews with Students

An interview was conducted with each of the students in the experimental group in Farsi at the end of the study. It consisted of 6 questions aiming at getting an overall feedback from the students with regard to two components of this study, which were the reading strategies covered in each session and the students' written feedback to these sessions.

In fact, not all the students were inclined to have the interview. There were about 3 or 4 students who came to the interviews just because the researchers called them on an appointment basis. These were the students who were also not so interested in the strategy training sessions. These students were mainly the ones who were expected to fail the course because they did not like English at all. They had the same tendency in all the lessons not only in strategy training ones. Apart from these students, the others were all eager to take part in the interviews.

E. Design and Procedure

In the first group, namely the control group, there were 20 students. These students received no specific training on reading strategies. They followed their course books and did the reading exercises as they appeared in the book. In the second group, the experimental group, there were also 20 students. These students were specifically trained in reading strategies to improve their reading skills. The experimental group also followed the course book but the reading texts and exercises in the book were exploited in different ways to serve the purpose of strategy training.

The experimental group was taught by one of the researchers who was the teacher of the group; however, the control group had another teacher. The researchers informed the other teacher about the study and the importance of following the course book only in the control group's class. In the end, they came up with the following solution: The control group's reading lessons were to be carried out by the one of the researchers only and the objectives related to other skills such as grammar, writing and revision to be covered by the main class teacher.

The teacher of the control group did not teach any reading lesson in his class. In addition to actual reading lessons, the students also dealt with reading in their writing and grammar lessons, but in these lessons, teaching reading or strategy training was not the main aim. Therefore, they are excluded from this study as reading lessons.

At the beginning of the study, a pretest covering the objectives that the students were expected to achieve in reading such as understanding main ideas and text cohesion, guessing meaning from the context was administered to both groups. The test was administered to another upper intermediate class to get the reliability of the test and it was found to be 0.91. After the pretest, the students in the experimental group received strategy training for 16 weeks while the students in the control group continued to follow the course books only.

During the training sessions, the students were informed from the strategies used in reading and were encouraged to use them in their further reading as well. They also took part in an interview after each session in which they were asked

to answer the questions that the researchers provided them with. Then, at the end of the 16-week training, both groups took a posttest, again designed by the researchers, to see if there was a difference in the students' performances after the training they had received.

F. The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine whether an approach to teaching reading through using the strategy training into the instruction would yield a better reading performance than teaching reading following the course book alone at upper intermediate level. It was an exploratory experimental study. The data were collected through quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. The pretest and the posttest results provided the quantitative data, and the qualitative data came from the interviewing with individual students carried out after each strategy training session according to the questions that the researchers had provided to see if the students make use of these strategies in their extensive readings out of class and if they would benefit from those strategies.

IV. RESULTS

Generally the results obtained from this study correspond with what the other researchers have found out. The studies evaluating the effectiveness of strategy training were also carried out for different skills in language learning. Bialystok, O'Malley, Cohen and Apek (quoted in Ellis, 1994) conducted studies on vocabulary learning strategies. The common conclusion in all of these studies was that students benefited from strategy training in the related field. Another study by O'Malley et al (quoted in Ellis, 1994) investigated the effects of strategy training on the learners' performance on a listening and speaking task. In the end, it was found that while there was not a significant difference in the listening task between the two groups, in the speaking task, the experimental group which was specifically trained on how to present a two-minute talk outperformed the control group.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The researchers were able to make the following generalizations by examining the results of this study:

1. The students of IAU, Malayer branch are mostly unaware of the strategies involved in reading; therefore, they are usually unsuccessful in the exams. Some good readers are, on the contrary, use the strategies they use in their mother tongue.
2. Raising students' awareness on the strategies used in reading works well in reading classes. Students benefit a lot from the activities and turn out to be better readers as the time goes by.
3. Having achieved something which they had found to be very difficult motivates students greatly and encourages them to practice outside the class as well.
4. Written and oral feedback provides a means through which a teacher can gather information on whether activities carried out in lessons work or not. In this way, teachers can find a way to modify their lessons according to students' feelings and needs.

The results of the qualitative data revealed that the students benefited a lot from the activities and made use of the strategies in their further readings. However, they also emphasized some points to consider when these activities are planned to be carried out. They are as follows:

1. One of the most important findings of this study was that the students benefited a lot from the study and realizing the effectiveness of such training, they complained a lot about not receiving this kind of detailed training before. Therefore, both in their journals and in the interviews as well, they emphasized strongly that they would have liked to be trained on reading strategies starting at the very early levels of their language education. In short, it can be concluded from students' responses that such kind of an instruction should start from the first lesson because later on, it becomes difficult for students to change their habits. In addition, they should be done at all levels, not only in the upper-intermediate or another specific level.
2. The texts and question types must be similar to the ones that appear in the exams because undoubtedly the main aim of students is to be successful in their exams first.
3. In order to create a suitable environment for a reading lesson, outside factors such as the noise coming from the other classes should be minimized. In other institutions where reading plays a great role in the curriculum, there must be separate reading classes isolated in a silent part of the building. If it is not possible to have separate classes, the institution must make sure that the walls surrounding the classroom are thick enough not to allow for any noise to be heard from the classes next door since students' concentration is quite important in a reading lesson.

To conclude, having taken the limitations of the study into consideration as well, it can be said that the students in the experimental group benefited from the training. They enjoyed the study as well since they were given a chance to see that reading is not difficult if the reader is provided with the necessary strategies and knows when and how to use them. Therefore, both the students and the researchers found the study useful.

VI. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Some recommendations can be made if a similar study is to be carried out. First of all, creating strategy awareness requires a lot of time. However, in a limited amount of time, to get the results which have been hypothesized at the beginning of the study is a difficult target to achieve. Therefore, the researchers must be very sure of the instruments to be used in the study. In addition, preparing for the training sessions is both demanding and requires a lot of time so it would be best to pilot the materials prepared beforehand to see if they work or not since it would be very difficult to make the necessary changes as the study goes on.

Secondly, the students also contribute a lot to the study with their feedback journals and the interviews held with them; therefore, they must be made sure that their effort is considered. Either orally or by giving small gifts, they must be appreciated.

In conclusion, bearing everything that is mentioned in mind, it can be said that teachers at Islamic Azad University of Malayer should realize the importance of strategy training and incorporate it in their lessons. In addition, the components of this study can be integrated into the university syllabus or the syllabus of other institutions where reading is considered to be an important skill and objective.

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The Semiotic Analysis on the Appearance of Chinese and American Pavilions in Shanghai Expo

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Abstract—To avoid the inconvenience caused by cultural misunderstanding, it is necessary to get to know other cultures. World expo provides a chance for people to learn different cultures. As the representatives of their countries, appearance of pavilions can reflect their unique culture vividly. From the perspective of semiotics, this paper mainly analyzes the cultural connotations reflected in the elements of Chinese and American pavilions' appearance. The paper also discusses the deep roots of differences of the two cultures with the help of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's value orientations.

Index Terms—semiotics, appearance, cultural connotations, Chinese and American pavilions, Shanghai expo

I. INTRODUCTION

As the rapid development of science and technology, the communication between different cultures becomes more necessary and possible. Therefore, it is of great importance to learn how to communicate effectively and obtain profound knowledge of different cultures. World expo is a grand meeting which combines world economy, science and technology and culture from different areas. It not only shows new conceptions and techniques, but also reflects features of various cultures. Under the theme of "Better City, Better Life", each pavilion in Shanghai expo has contributed to display its distinguishing cultural features.

The former studies on Shanghai expo2010 pay more attention to the distinct signs, such as the emblem, slogans and mascot in order to introduce the theme reflected by the signs. However, the significance of pavilion's appearance and cultural differences contained in the expo haven't been widely recognized. Moreover, most of the former studies analyze cultural elements only based on culture and communication theories which are abstract. It is need to present cultural phenomenon by virtue of theories in other fields. The nature of communication can be seen as a sign exchanging process (Huang Yuhuang, 2006). Semiotics can help people to have a profound and complete understanding of cultural features.

This paper attempts to study the cultural features contained in the appearance of Chinese and American pavilions in Shanghai expo from the perspective of Peirce's semiotics so as to help people to have a clearer understanding of the two cultures and their differences.

II. PEIRCE'S SEMIOTIC THEORY

American scholar Charles S. Peirce and Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure are both regarded as the founder of modern semiotics. Peirce's semiotics which is different from Saussure's dyadic semiotics is a kind of triadic semiotics. He defines a sign as a triad made of three indecomposable elements: a representamen, an object, and an interpretant (Chandler, 2002, p.32):

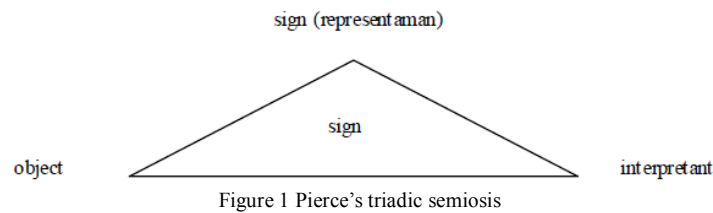
A representamen: the form which the sign takes (not necessarily material);

An interpretant: not an interpreter but rather the sense made of the sign;

An object: to which the sign refers.

According to Peirce, "a sign... (in the form of a representamen) is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its object. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the ground of the representamen" (Peirce 1960, p.28). The interaction between the representamen, the object and the interpretant is referred to by Peirce as "semiosis". The relationship between the three elements can be

seen in the following figure (Peirce 1998, P411):



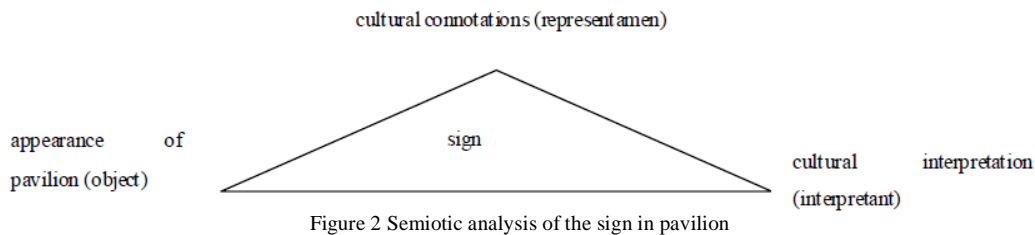
By “semiosis” I mean, on the contrary (to dyadic relation), an action, or influence, which is, or involves, a cooperation of three subjects such as a sign, its object, and its interpretant, this tri-relative influence not being in any way resolvable into actions between pairs. (Peirce, 1998, p.411)

Peirce's semiotic theory can be seen as a kind of cognitive philosophy. Thus, Peirce's semiotic theory is widely used to analyze signs with rich implications.

III. THE SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF THE PAVILIONS' APPEARANCE

Every element of the appearance in the pavilions of Shanghai expo is a sign adopted by the country to convey messages so as to communicate with people from other countries and show their own rich cultural deposit. As the first sight of pavilions, the appearance can be regarded as the most notable and typical representative of a country.

According to Peirce's semiotic theory, the appearance of pavilion is also made of three indivisible elements: the appearance of pavilion (the object), cultural connotations reflected by the object form (representative) and the cultural interpretation (interpretant). The relationship and interaction among these three elements can be shown by the following diagram:



As a national feast, Shanghai expo expresses the philosophy of “understanding, communication, togetherness, and cooperation” to facilitate friendly international communication and improved cultural exchange. The process of semiosis is closely related to culture through the explanation of interpretant. A particular sign may have its unique meanings in certain culture. So elements of the pavilions' appearance must have rich cultural connotations which can be shown through the process of semiotic analysis and cultural interpretation.

A. Semiotic Analysis of Chinese Pavilion's Appearance

The most notable sign of Chinese pavilion is its appearance including the traditional dougong style, the 56 beams of it, the shape of the pavilion (which is like a Chinese original complex form of character “華”) and the color “Chinese red”. This sign is a combination of icon and symbol.

The architectural style of Chinese pavilion is originated from the traditional Chinese dougong style which represents the culture of traditional Chinese architecture. It was widely used in the Spring and Autumn Period and developed into a complex set during the Tang and Song dynasty. Traditional Chinese architectures are mostly made of wood. Dougong, which is a system of interlocking wooden brackets inserted between the top of a column and a crossbeam, is a unique structural element in China.

In the dougong system, a large wooden block is placed on a column to provide a solid base for the bow-shaped brackets which support the beam or another one above it. Usually, the wood of squares is named dou, and the bow-shaped one is called gong. The main function of it is to provide a support for the weight of the horizontal beams that span the vertical columns by transferring the weight on it over a large area to the vertical columns (<http://en.wikipedia.org>). Another function of it is to heighten the eaves in order to get light well. The more the eave protrudes, the more layers of dougong are. Besides, this kind of design also has the decorative function and is traditionally used in crucial buildings such as palaces and temples. The number of the dougong layers is used to indicate the importance of building and the rigidity of hierarchy by the rulers. The end of each arch extends outward, so it possesses intricate artistic beauty through architectural treatment.

Among others, traditional Chinese buildings are most designed symmetrically. The main architecture of building is designed to lie on the central axis, and accessory ones are designed to surround it to achieve the symmetrical effect and give prominence to the main one. This kind of arrangement reflects Chinese traditional understanding to architecture

and the pursuit to beauty. This type of inner beauty is harmony.

The traditional architectural style is successfully combined with modern techniques and factors in Chinese pavilion for the purpose of communication. So it may remind visitors of the importance of such style in traditional Chinese architecture and creativity and wisdom of our ancestors. On such a grand occasion, Chinese people display the traditional architecture rather than present one not only because of its special function and unique appearance, but also in accordance with the habit of introducing and taking example by traditional wisdom.

The main body of the building-dougong is supported by four large columns, and the dougong has 56 beams inserting each other for the purpose of supporting the building system. These beams can be seen as the symbols of Chinese 56 ethnic groups that support each other all the time for the prosperity and development of the country. China is a country with 56 ethnic groups which all have abundant distinct cultural deposits. Different from the "melting pot" USA, Chinese people are accustomed to emphasize the union of the nation in all sorts of occasions. This kind of character is the heritage from ancient times. In all ages, Chinese people are proud of contribution of different groups and usually stress unity on all sorts of occasions.

The 56 beams also represents that all the groups in China make their contribution to the world feast, and it can be explained that all the groups of people pool their efforts together to the country.

The appearance of the pavilion seems like a Chinese character "華" in the original complex form. The appearance of the pavilion is the representative of a country. This Chinese character reminds visitors of China's Chinese name. The original meaning of "hua" is flowery and illustrious. It also means Chinese nowadays because it is originated from the phrase "hua xia" which means glorious Chinese. Besides, it displays Chinese original complex character. This kind of character has rich cultural connotations. The stroke of Chinese character traditionally can be classified into eight basic forms. The order of writing Chinese characters is also essential. As we known that language is not natural and is created by people with the development of the society, and each language can reflect its own ethnic and cultural identity. Therefore, written language which is also created by certain people can reflect certain culture. Chinese people show an inclination of integrated thinking which means to consider the cognitive objects as a whole. There are many forms of integrated thinking including symmetry, doctrine, combination and linking (Zeng Li-ying, 2001). This kind of thinking pattern can be reflected by the structure of Chinese characters.

The theory that "man is the integral part of nature" is the core of traditional Chinese philosophy and governs their lives and behaviors in almost every aspect. This idea is a result of Chinese farming culture and stress the harmonious relationship between man and nature. It is a part of Chinese civilization and has influence on Chinese people's personality extensively. Meanwhile, the structure of Chinese characters can help us all remember the essence and importance of the thought of harmony.

Red is a typical color in China. It is frequently used by Chinese people to be the symbol of joy, happiness and hospitality. Most phrases connected with the word "red" have complimentary sense. It is said that the particular preference for red of Chinese are from the worship and expectation of sun (Ji Xiaojing, 2003). The blazing sun has a strong sense of mystery. Besides, the red color of sun represents beauty and holiness.

Traditionally, red is closely related to happy events such as wedding, joyous festival, birth, housewarming, advancement, to name but a few. On these occasions, people use red things to complement the lively and hotter atmosphere. Red character of "happiness", red candles, red bridal array, red lanterns and red flowers all symbolize pleasure, joy and happiness. Red also represents victory, success and fortune. If people pass entrance examination, their names will be presented on red papers. In happy events, such as spring festival, people also can get red envelopes.

In old times, red also stands for riches and honor. Noblemen usually wore red clothes, and their homes would be painted with red lacquer. In traditional Chinese opera, people with red face are loyal, honest and upright. In modern times, it also can represent revolution. The revolution of communist party of China is called "red revolution". The word "red" is added also in the names of activities and in things related with communist party in China. For instance, "red songs" are songs to describe and praise the contribution of Chinese communist party. Red tour, red resources and red relics are also places and things related to the Chinese communist revolution.

In conclusion, red is a favorable color in China and has the connotation of lucky and happiness. The color of the pavilion not only displays traditional Chinese culture, but also reflects Chinese people's wishes to achieve a successful conclusion of Shanghai expo.

B. Semiotic Analysis of American Pavilion's Appearance

With the advantage of hosting world expo2010, China has more materials and funds. Comparatively, layout of American pavilion is simpler. Whatever it is plenty or casual, the appearance of the pavilions all can reflect and represent their unique culture.

The appearance of American pavilion is like an eagle spreading the wings. The roof garden looks like a hawk nest. As we known, eagle occupies a high position in American culture. American eagle which is also called the bald eagle is the national bird of the United States. The bald eagle has beautiful appearance and ferocious temperament. It is the representation of courage, strength and victory. The eagle motif is printed not only on the national emblem. It appears in their daily lives. It could be understood in a way that eagle is considered as the totem by Americans. Besides, the core of eagle culture is that the strong shall rule over the weak. In American, people believe that they must try their best to

devote into their work and become powerful to be success. Thus, they use every opportunity to display their talents. Beside, eagle culture shows the philosophy that human nature is evil. Thus, they must strive to be good.

The eagle spreading wings makes visitors feel American people's hospitality and ambition. In front of the entrance of American pavilion, there is a grove of green trees and a new made artificially waterfall. This kind of design can prevent visitor from suffering insolation, and the water of the waterfall comes from water tanks. It also can remind visitors that American people can make full use of nature because they believe that human beings can master over nature by wisdom and creativity.

Meanings of signs are actually the products of human culture. The analysis of the two pavilions shows that the two countries have their own cultural features and there are differences between the two cultures. Thus, it is necessary to illustrate the deep roots of the cultural differences.

IV. CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE CULTURAL ELEMENTS

Value can be seen as the overall merit of people that guide them make choices and regulate behaviors. There are also values that tend to permeate a culture. Such values are called cultural values.

Cultural values are transmitted by a variety of sources (family, media, church, school, state, and so on) and therefore tend to be broad-based, enduring, and relatively stable. Most important, as is the case with cultural belief, cultural values guide both perception and communication. That is, our values get translated into action. An understanding of cultural values helps us appreciate the behavior of other people. An awareness of cultural values also helps us understand our own behavior (Samovar & Porter; 2000: 60).

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck are pioneers in the study of cultural value orientation. After examining hundreds of cultures, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck(1961) concluded that people from different cultures has five different value orientations: human nature orientation, relationship of humankind to nature, time orientation, activity orientation and relational orientation. Besides, each orientation has three types. The types of them can be listed as follows: 1) Human nature: evil, mixture of good and evil, and good. 2) Human nature relationship- subjugation to nature, harmony with nature, and mastery over nature. 3) Time: past, present and future. 4) Activity: being, being-in-coming, and doing. 5) Relational: lineality, collaterality, and individualism. Thus, through the following analyses, the deep roots of cultural elements reflected by the pavilions are hoped to be deduced on the basis of Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's value orientations.

A. *Cultural Analysis of Chinese Pavilion*

With five thousand years of civilization, Chinese culture has a long history. Influenced by Confucianism, the traditional Chinese belief about human nature is that man's nature at birth is good. In China, people believe that human's nature is basically good. People are pure and innocent when they come to the world. Such view can be presented in the structure of the stroke of Chinese character.

The value orientation of good human nature implicates that everyone is kind and can be kind to others. It guides people keep balance in life. So harmony plays an indispensable role in Chinese people's life. The importance of harmony in Chinese people's life can be shown in various aspects. Generally speaking, Chinese people value the harmonious relation with other people and nature. So they pay more attention to cooperate with others and get used to live harmoniously with every living creature in the world. In the design of Chinese pavilion, the interlocking structure of dougong style shows the cooperation between beams, and the 56 beams symbolizes the cooperation and power of all the ethnics in China. It obviously shows the spirit of collaterality in China.

Although the material of the pavilion is different from that in old times –the material of pavilion is not wood and there are lots of modern items, the use of this style can reflect the wisdom and creativity of traditional Chinese architecture. China is a country that values the effort of the ancients. It is traditional virtues that set an example for the ancients and learn from the past. This kind of character of Chinese people demonstrates the culture of this country is past-oriented which means believing strongly in the significance of prior events.

The traditional Chinese culture emphasizes that people should live harmoniously with nature and other people. Red color used in the appearance of the pavilion can be seen as the representative of hope and hospitality in China. From the perspective of cross-cultural communication, red which is widely used in grant occasions in China is also can be regarded as the symbol of cooperation. It encourages people to embrace together and make concerted effort for a better world.

B. *Cultural Analysis of American Pavilion*

American culture is characterized by individualism. Personal right and benefit is the supreme pursuit of American people. They believe that people can realize their values by their personal strivings and insistence. Respect and pursuit of individualism can motivate enthusiasm and bring most people's wisdom and potential into full play. Individualism is the core spirit of American value system. Pursuit of liberty and worship of development and competition are all features of American culture. Such characteristics are closely related with the history and religion of United States.

The concept of individualism in American has deep root. It can be traced back to the Puritanism which plays an important role for the establishment of the North American colonies. Strictly speaking, Puritanism can be seen as a kind

of attitude or values more than religious group. Purists insist that everyone is equal and advocates thrifty, simplicity and self-dependence. Besides, American culture is influenced deeply by European colonists. Expansions of colony makes American people awake and realize the persecution from colonists. They fight for liberty, equality and democracy, and finally win. So this country extremely values people's right and self-dependence.

Generally speaking, eagle is the symbol of freedom, strength, power and victory. The bald eagle, the national bird of the United States, appears on many important objects, such as, seal of the president of the United States, national emblem and coins. American culture is closely related with eagle culture. Their attitudes towards human nature are that human beings are created evil, and they must strive to be good through self-independence.

Influenced by the history, geography and eagle culture, American people believe that human beings can live a better life by taking advantage of nature. In their mind, human beings powers are unlimited, and they can overcome all the nature forces with great effort. Thus, they can make full use of natural resources. The design of American pavilion reflects their belief vividly.

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that there are value divergences between the two countries which have different culture and history. The world is changing to be a small village because of increased communication. To live a better life, people from all over the world cooperate with each other. It is said that the cultures also face integration and globalization. Whereas, the deep values of a nation can not be shifted easily. Value differences can be presented on any occasion in any time.

V. CONCLUSION

There are signs around us, and everything conveying meanings can be seen as a sign from the perspective of semiotics. Most signs have their specific meanings, and they can explain different cultures and connotations more vividly. With the rapid development of world economy and policy, the communications between different cultures become increasingly frequent. It is important to make a comfortable communication. To avoid misunderstanding, it is necessary to understand different cultures.

Shanghai expo 2010, as a grand feast, can attract more attentions and express more cultural features. This paper analyzes the semiotic meanings and cultural connotations of appearance of the Chinese and American pavilions in Shanghai expo. It can be noticed that the two cultures all have their own unique features, although they all try to reflect the theme "one world, one dream". The signs, such as icons, symbols and colors, can be seen as the representatives of certain cultures. They all express certain meanings with their unique design and intensive verve. It's worth nothing that semiotic analysis of these visual elements can help people have a deep understanding. To sum up, it is not an easy process to learn various cultures. But we can understand different cultures from more pleasant way, which is appreciating their particular design of their pavilions.

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The Causes of Reading Difficulty: The Perception of Iranian EFL Post-graduate and Under-graduate Students

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Abstract—This study investigates the causes of the reading difficulty as perceived by under-graduate and post-graduate EFL learners. 34 post-graduate and 36 under-graduate students at the University of Isfahan took part in this study. In particular, this study tries to know whether there is any difference between the perceptions of these two groups of learners. A questionnaire synthesized Eskey (1986), and Bernhardt (1991), cited in Lin (2002), was used as the main instrument for analysis of knowledge categories affecting reading comprehension. The questionnaire considered three general categories of linguistic, conceptual and socio-cultural knowledge as the building blocks of reading. It consists of four multiple-choice questions, all accepting multiple responses. The results of the frequency analysis showed that post-graduate students, with higher level of language proficiency, attached less importance to linguistic knowledge as the factor helping reading comprehension success, but most importance to socio-cultural and conceptual knowledge. With the decrease of linguistic knowledge; however, under-graduates attached better reading comprehension to linguistic knowledge rather than socio-linguistic and conceptual knowledge.

Index Terms—conceptual knowledge, linguistic knowledge, socio-cultural knowledge, post-graduate students, under-graduate students

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is the primary source of language input for most of EFL learners since they are living in a context in which English is not spoken. They mostly start learning English through reading books, texts, articles, etc. Considering the great importance of reading for EFL learners, knowing about what constitute reading skill and what can end in difficulty for EFL learners in the course of reading a text deem to be crucial. To find the problematic areas of reading for EFL learners of varied proficiency levels, different classifications of reading sub-skills or sub-sections must be taken into account.

Reading is not a single-factor process; it is a multivariate skill involving a complex combination and integration of a variety of cognitive, linguistic and non-linguistic skills ranging from low-level processing abilities to high-order knowledge of text representation and integration of ideas with global knowledge. (Nassaji, 2003). Hirsch (2003) believed that at least three principles have useful implications for improving students' reading comprehension; the first one is fluency which allows the mind to concentrate on comprehension, second, breadth of vocabulary increases comprehension and facilitates further reading and finally, domain knowledge, the most recently understood principle, increases fluency, broadens vocabulary and enables deeper comprehension. He continues that knowledge of reading comprehension requires knowledge of words and the world.

Eskey (1986) categorized the knowledge crucial to reading into two types; knowledge of form and knowledge of substance. Knowledge of form is linguistic in nature and includes graphophonic, lexical, syntactic and semantic knowledge. Knowledge of substance, on the other hand, entails cultural and pragmatic knowledge. Bernhardt (1991) identified two types of knowledge; domain-specific knowledge and culture-specific knowledge.

A number of studies examined the role of so-called low-level processes including lexical, syntactic or grammatical knowledge in reading comprehension. Quian (2002) in a study of investigating the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and academic reading performance concludes that using a combination of vocabulary depth and size measures results in a greater ability to predict reading performance. Van Geldern et al. (2003) have shown that grammar is as important as or even superior to vocabulary in predicting reading performance.

Shiotsu and Weir (2007) in a study of relative significance of syntactic knowledge and vocabulary breadth found that syntactic knowledge was a better predictor of text reading comprehension than vocabulary. Furthermore, the relative significance of syntactic variable was not limited to the readers of lower ability alone. Mecarty (2000) concluded that

lexical and grammatical knowledge correlate significantly with reading comprehension; however, only lexical knowledge explains reading comprehension. Investigating the role of lexical knowledge on general reading comprehension, Hawas (1990) concluded that the participants who did not know the meaning of some of the words in the passage were unable to answer the corresponding reading comprehension questions.

By reviewing studies mentioned here and other studies (Alderson, 1993; Berry, 1990), it can be understood that both lexical and syntactic knowledge are crucial to reading comprehension. Purpura (2004) even goes further in defining grammatical knowledge so that it includes knowledge of phonological, lexical and cohesive forms along with their meanings.

Regarding the socio-cultural and cognitive knowledge influencing reading comprehension, Lin (2004) in a study of cross-cultural barriers in reading English concluded that mastering linguistic knowledge of vocabulary, phonetics and grammar is helpful in decoding words' symbols, however, in the process of reading, many Chinese students already possessed the above knowledge, but still could not comprehend the text completely so understanding the cultural content of what is being read is a crucial factor in reading comprehension.

Abu-Rabia (1998) investigated the social and cognitive factors influencing reading comprehension and concluded that students scored higher on tasks of reading comprehension with the texts from their own cultural setting than texts from unfamiliar setting. In other words, culture familiarity improves learners' performance on reading comprehension. Anderson and Gipe (1983) investigated the effects of cultural background on reading comprehension of cultural texts using texts that were either related or unrelated to the participants' cultural background. The result shows a significant correlation between cultural background and reading comprehension.

In a study on the perception of the role of prior knowledge in reading comprehension, Lin (2002) mentioned that:

"So far as EFL reading comprehension is concerned, it seems that the more EFL vocabulary, syntax and formal structures are learned, the less importance is attached to them and greater importance is attached to conceptual and socio-cultural knowledge." (p. 186)

Considering the classifications presented, it can be concluded in general that the knowledge needed for a successful reading comprehension or in other words, the knowledge that may cause difficulty for EFL learners in comprehending a reading text if it is not extant in learners' mind, can be divided into three broad categories, namely, linguistic, conceptual (related to the content of what is being read) and socio-cultural knowledge.

The present study is trying to find out what the areas of reading difficulty are in the mind of Iranian under-graduate and post-graduate students while dealing with a reading text in English. On the basis of the classifications presented, the study is to find out:

1. What knowledge has been considered to be the most important and at the same time difficult for Iranian under-graduate and post-graduate students in reading English texts?
2. Do the ideas of learners vary as their proficiency varies?

II. METHOD

A. *Participants*

To address the questions, a survey was conducted among 70 EFL students, 34 post-graduate (MA) and 36 under-graduate, junior students, at the University of Isfahan. The subjects were culturally and linguistically homogeneous, in the sense that they were all Iranian, but their proficiency level varied as they were under-graduate and post-graduate learners. The age range of post-graduate students was 22 to 35 and under graduate ones was 20 to 22. They were all students of English. The post-graduate (MA) students were TEFL major and the under-graduates were English literature junior students.

B. *Instrumentation*

The current research deployed a questionnaire synthesized Eskey (1986), Bernhardt (1991) analysis of knowledge categories affecting reading comprehension. The questionnaire made by and cited in Lin (2002) used as the instrument by the researchers in the present study. The questionnaire considered three general categories of linguistic, conceptual and socio-cultural knowledge as the building blocks of reading comprehension. It consists of four multiple-choice questions, all accepting multiple responses. One of the choices was "other factors" to let students openly express their own ideas regarding the question. To validate the questionnaire in context of Iran, it was presented to one of the lecturers at the University of Isfahan and two post-graduate students to comment on the questions and choices. They considered it suitable for the purpose of the present research. There was no need to translate the questionnaire into students L1 since the wording was quite comprehensible to students, at the same time; they were allowed to ask any question in case they required to.

C. *Procedure*

A brief introduction to the purpose of the survey and questionnaire was given to the two groups of learners, under-graduates and post-graduates, separately. The students were asked to rank the choices from the most important to the least important and use numbers for ranking. They were also told that in the last choice they could add their own ideas. There was no time limitation and the students were allowed to think carefully and then rank the choices.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *The Ranked Multiple Responses to Question 1*

1) The major factors that cause difficulty in reading comprehension are (You may choose more than one factor. Please rank the factors you choose in order from most important to least important.)

- A) Unknown EFL vocabulary
- B) Too complicated syntax and /or formal structure
- C) Unfamiliar content
- D) Lack of necessary socio-cultural background knowledge
- E) Other factors such as (please specify)

The frequency of the ranking of the choices by both under-graduate (junior level students) and the post-graduate (MA level students) is summarized in table 1 as follows:

TABLE 1:
RANKED MULTIPLE-RESPONSES TO QUESTION 1

response		A	B	C	D	E
MA level	rank		4	6	14	10
Junior level	rank	16	10	8	2	

In the question of the major factor of difficulty, as the table shows, choice C was ranked as the highest for MA level students and choice A was the highest in rank for the junior level students. In other words, unfamiliar content was assumed to be the major factor of difficulty for post-graduate students and unknown vocabulary was considered the most important to under-graduate ones.

B. *Ranked Multiple Responses to Question 2*

2) The English text, which contains no new words, might not be comprehensible, mainly because of the following factors; (You may choose more than one factor. Please rank the factors you choose in order from most important to least important.)

- A) Unable to decide on the sense in which a word is used when the word may be used in several different senses.
- B) Unable to understand the idioms in the text
- C) Unable to understand the subject content
- D) Lack of necessary socio-cultural background knowledge
- E) Unable to understand the syntax and formal structure used in the text
- F) Other factors such as (please specify)

Table 2 summarizes the difference between the perceptions of the two groups regarding the incomprehensibility of a reading text.

TABLE 2:
RANKED MULTIPLE RESPONSES TO QUESTION 2

response		A	B	C	D	E	F
MA level	rank	14	10	2	2	6	
Junior level	rank	16	4	2	8	6	

As the table shows, for post-graduate and under-graduate students, the fact that a word can have multiple senses makes a text incomprehensible. The least important factor was lack of content knowledge for junior students, while content knowledge along with socio-cultural knowledge were both the least important for MA students.

C. *Ranked Multiple Responses to Question 3*

3) The major factors that could cause poor performance in reading comprehension are (You may choose more than one factor. Please rank the factors you choose in order from most important to least important.)

- A) Nervousness
- B) Difficult or boring content
- C) Shortage of time
- D) Lack of necessary socio-cultural background knowledge
- E) Other factors such as (please specify)

TABLE 3;
RANKED MULTIPLE RESPONSES TO QUESTION 3

response		A	B	C	D	E
MA level	rank	2	6	10	16	
Junior level	rank	10	6	14	6	

As the table shows, lack of socio-cultural knowledge was selected to be the factor that caused poor performance for MA students while shortage of time was the crucial factor for junior level learners. Nervousness could not affect the performance of MA students comparing with the junior levels. But content and socio-cultural factors are not important for junior level learners.

D. Ranked Multiple Responses to Question 4

4) Suppose you read an English text or sentence for the first time. If you find it easy to understand, it is mainly because of the following factors (You may choose more than one factor. Please rank the factors you choose in order from most important to least important.)

- A) Absence of unknown EFL vocabulary
- B) Simple EFL syntax
- C) Familiar socio-cultural background
- D) Other factors such as (please specify)

TABLE 4:
RANKED MULTIPLE RESPONSES TO QUESTION 4

response		A	B	C	D
MA level	rank	20	8	6	
Junior level	rank	4	30	2	

Referring to table 4, absence of unknown EFL vocabulary makes reading comprehension easy for MA, post-graduate students and a simple syntax makes the comprehension easier for juniors. Socio-cultural background is the least related to the easiness of a text from the viewpoint of both groups.

IV. CONCLUSION

To find the answer to the questions of the study, a closer examination of the questionnaire results is crucial. The first question was a general one; it was designed to identify the causes that subjects believed might lead to difficulty in reading comprehension. Among the six choices, a, and b concerned readers' linguistic knowledge, while choices c and d concerned content knowledge and socio-cultural knowledge respectively. The factor that makes a reading text difficult for post-graduate students was lack of content knowledge, while under-graduate learners thought of unknown vocabulary to be problematic. Since post-graduate students are of a higher proficiency level than junior students, it is quite logical to think that unknown vocabulary or syntax is not a factor that may cause difficulty; in other words, the importance of basic knowledge of English vocabulary or syntax maybe diminished for them while juniors are still struggling with the lexical meaning in a text. The findings of this question are in line with Lin's study (2002) in which higher level students attached greater importance to conceptual and socio-cultural knowledge. And also in line with Lin's research (2004) in that the content is a crucial factor in comprehending a text. The findings for under-graduate candidates were in line with Mecartty (2000) and Hawas (1990) asserting that only lexical knowledge explained reading comprehension and that the participants who did not know the meaning of some of the words in the passage were unable to answer the corresponding reading comprehension questions.

The second question was intended for investigating how the subjects perceived factors other than vocabulary. It is not uncommon that EFL learners cannot understand a text that contains no unknown words, this frequently happens in the researchers' own classes. While it is common that EFL readers can recognize the entire individual words in a text, we found them unable to produce a meaningful interpretation of the text. So the second question seeks to find the major causes of such failures. Both under-graduate and post-graduate students agreed on the fact that words with multiple senses make a text incomprehensible. This agreement approved the aforementioned claim that EFL learners may not comprehend a text since every English word has more than one meaning and knowing all of them is sometimes impossible for EFL students, because living in a non-native context takes the chance of having more contact with English in different contexts; the fact that can be clearly seen in EFL reading classes.

The third question was set to investigate the major factor that might cause the EFL readers impaired performance in reading. The choices did not concern the linguistic knowledge. Choices a and c refer to the psychological and time limitation pressures on students while reading a text; choices b and d, however, refer to content and socio-cultural knowledge respectively. Lack of socio-cultural knowledge was the factor attributed to poor performance by post-graduate students, while shortage of time was the crucial factor for junior level learners. The findings for junior students were in line with Lin(2002) in which the middle-school and tertiary level EFL majors agreed on ranking time pressure as the top choice in impaired reading comprehension. MA students, thanks to their higher proficiency level, can manage their time, so to them lack of a cultural background causes reading impairment.

The fourth and also the last question concerned the opposite of what the first three questions addressed. It intended to find out the factors that might make a text easy to understand. The first two choices addressed the linguistic knowledge, while the second two choices addressed the conceptual and socio-cultural knowledge respectively. Absence of unknown EFL vocabulary makes reading comprehension easy for post-graduate students whereas a simple syntax makes the comprehension easier for juniors. The findings of this question were in line with Shiotsu and Weir (2007), Van Geldern et al. (2003) and Alderson (1993) for under-graduate students in which the syntactic knowledge was the better indicator of successful reading comprehension; however, only lexical knowledge explains reading comprehension as Mecarty (2000) concluded and post-graduate students perceived.

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The Various Concepts of Curriculum and the Factors Involved in Curricula-making

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Abstract—This paper aims at probing into the nature of curriculum by critically reviewing literature relevant to the term “curriculum.” The multiple definitions associated with the term are inductively presented in conceptualizations so as to clarify what are the curricular issues that teachers should be concerned about in the school context. This paper then argues for the need to consider a broader spectrum of “curriculum” that embraces the whole aspects in the curriculum development process, for example, objectives, content, methodology, and evaluation of students, especially when a curricular review or evaluation is undertaken.

Index Terms—curriculum, curriculum development, curriculum evaluation, hidden curriculum, teaching methods, teaching objectives

I. INTRODUCTION

Curriculum is often one of the main concerns in the educational field. What kind of curricula should we offer to learners? Educators and teachers are concerned about what choices are to make about teaching content and methods. As for the parents, they would like to know what their children are going to learn. Learners are also concerned about what kinds of content they are going to have in class. “Curriculum” seems to be considered greatly as what teachers are going to teach and, in other words, what learners are going to learn. In fact, “curriculum” is also closely related to how well the learners learn—the outcomes. Thus, as an umbrella term, “curriculum” includes a lot of issues, for example, teaching curriculum, learning curriculum, testing curriculum, administrative curriculum and the hidden curriculum. This paper presents relevant literature associated with the term “curriculum” to help clarify what is the entity that we need to be concerned about in the school context.

II. CURRICULAR CONCEPTUALIZATIONS

What is implied in the term “curriculum”? The answer to the question is hardly conclusive. There are a variety of definitions in relation to the term “curriculum.” The indecisive nature of the term is owing to divided perceptions of stakeholders, e.g. students, educators, researchers, administrators, evaluators with their own agenda of emphasis in educational discourse. The void of uniformity reflects the complex nature of the concept of “curriculum” in its own right. Arguably, it is therefore necessary to clarify the conceptualization of the term curriculum, before the outset of any curriculum-related endeavours such as curriculum planning, implementation, evaluation, and empirical studies undertaken by administrators, teachers, researchers, and evaluators. In this vein, this paper seeks to clarify different conceptualizations of this term.

According to Pratt (1994, p.5) and Barrow and Milburn (1990, p.84), the word “curriculum” is derived from the Latin verb *currere*, “to run.” “*Currere*” became a diminutive noun and meant a “racing chariot” or “race track.” An extension was made by Cicero who associated the term with *curriculum vitae* that means “the course of one’s life.” He also associated it with *curricula mentis* that metaphorically refers to “the (educational) course of the mind.” It was not until the nineteenth century that the term was commonly used in the educational field.

A great number of researchers or educators (e.g. Barrow & Milburn, 1990; Beauchamp, 1977; Goodson, 1994; Longstreet & Shane, 1993; Marsh, 1997; Wood & Davis, 1978) have shed light on what curriculum is through their reviews of, or critical comments on, this term. An example is what Goodson (1994) describes of curriculum “as a multifaceted concept, constructed, negotiated and renegotiated at a variety of levels and in a variety of arenas” (p. 111). This view reflects the complex and interactive nature of curriculum. Longstreet and Shane (1993) reveal another side of curriculum which requires decision making:

Curriculum is a historical accident—it has not been deliberately developed to accomplish a clear set of purposes. Rather, it has evolved as a response to the increasing complexity of educational decision making (p.7).

Barrow and Milburn (1990) and Beauchamp (1977) note how the term “curriculum” is in some cases used in very limited contexts, but in other cases very broadly. With a little bit expansion, the author of this paper takes Beauchamp’s view of conceptualization to examine the term “curriculum” in the order from the narrow to the broad. Definitions made by different researchers are provided to better understand the conception of curriculum.

A. *Curricula as a Set of Objectives*

Curriculum can be seen as a means of achieving specific educational goals and objectives. In this sense, a curriculum can be regarded as a checklist of desired outcomes. In the curriculum development process, generally speaking, the objectives are clear and specific in behavioral and observable terms. The emphasis on objectives is the characterization of an objectives curriculum model. In this sense, the focus is on products or ends, and is also teacher-orientated or administrative-oriented. If it is the latter, curriculum is set by politicians without consulting teachers and very few of the teachers feel any sense of “ownership” for the material they are compelled to teach.

B. *Curricula as Courses of Study or Content*

Curriculum can be understood as a process of selecting courses of study or content (Beauchamp, 1977; Wood & Davis, 1978). In this sense, a curriculum also either describes or prescribes the content and goals of formal instruction but lays the means of instruction out of the foreground of focus. Although this use of the curriculum appears similar to the above-mentioned definition-*Curricula as a Set of Objectives*-in terms of the inclusion of goals, in fact, there is a different focus. The first definition emphasizes the specification and prescription of instructional objectives whereas the definition here focuses on course content rather than learning objectives. The “courses” feature a variation of scope and amount. The definition here can be exemplified by the terminology of Wood and Davis (1978) in their monograph aiming at designing and evaluating higher education curricula in the University of California, Berkeley. They suggest that a curriculum be considered as a “totality of courses that constitute a course of study offered by an institution or followed by a student” (Wood & Davis, 1978, p.16).

C. *Curricula as Plans*

A curriculum can be seen as a plan, or a sort of blueprint for systematically implementing educational activities. This sense of the term combines content with instructional methods and hence has a wider scope than the former two curricular paradigms because of the inclusion of methods. In this vein, Tom (1984) canvasses curriculum as “a plan for teaching or instruction” (p.89). Similarly, Pratt (1994) conceives it as “a plan for a sustained process of teaching and learning” (p.5) with a specific focus on content and the process of teaching and learning. What is worth noting is that this view of curriculum is not pragmatically equated with methods themselves in action. Pratt (1994) further explains this by stating that “actual teaching and learning is not curriculum, for curriculum refers to plans for instructional acts, not the acts of instruction themselves” (p.5). According to this view, curricula can be likened to construction blueprints. As a blueprint is not a building per se, a curriculum is not actual teaching or learning.

D. *Curricula as Documents*

Other people, for example, Brady (1995), view curriculum as a document--an outline of a course program that is written on a piece of paper. Thus, curriculum “has become associated with the official written programs of study published by ministries or departments of education, local authorities or boards of education, and commercial firms or teams of educational specialists working on specially funded projects” (Barrow & Milburn, 1990, p.84). This view of the visual written document attached to curriculum derives from the need that, particularly in the phases of curriculum development and implementation, a written form has to be made to include a statement of objectives, content, method, and assessment. The presentation of the document purports to provide teachers with a model to follow in the curriculum process. In this sense, curriculum is synonymous with the term, “syllabus” (Barrow & Milburn, 1990, p.84).

E. *Curricula as Experiences*

Instead of regarding curricula narrowly as formalized classroom content or prescriptive learning objectives, it may be useful to think of them more holistically as programs for experiences. Following this line of definition, one may recall what Marsh (1997) posits of curriculum as “an interrelated set of plans and experiences which a student completes under the guidance of the school” (p.5). That means: the relationship between “plans and experiences” is intertwined, where “plans” are attributed to planned curricula in advance and “experiences” refer to unplanned happenings in classrooms. Although planning is a precursor to action, it is important to acknowledge that unplanned happenings often occur in classroom settings. For this reason, Marsh (1997) states, “the actual curricula which are implemented in classrooms consist of an amalgam of plans and experiences...” (p.5). In other words, teaching is seldom entirely spontaneous or planned, but rather an interplay between impulse and intention; learning experiences extend beyond the classroom to activities outside the classroom (Marsh, 1997). In this sense, the experiences mean the possible learning experiential encounters that learners would engage themselves in inside or outside the classroom. All interactions that students are exposed to, in an academic environment, can be considered part of their curriculum. Hence, the whole range of experiences students are likely to undergo in the course of their education, such as school clubs, assemblies, excursions, fetes, and academic competitions, are parts of the extended curriculum. In this light, the experiences of teaching and learning can be viewed as post-curricular activities. In the same vein, the American Educational Research Association’s *Encyclopedia of Educational Research* defines curriculum as “all the experiences that a learner has under the guidance of the school” (Kearney & Cook, 1961, p.358). Barrow and Milburn (1990) echo this by describing a curriculum as “all the experiences that a child has in school” (p.85). Thus, the subject matter provided for students, the actions of teachers (attitudes and motivations) in the classroom, the actions of students (reactions, attitudes, and motivation), and the instructional materials can all be understood as facets of the experiential curriculum.

This line of interpretation of curriculum gives rise to its link to “hidden curriculum,” a term used to describe the unwritten social rules and expectations of behavior that are often not taught directly but are assumed to be known (Hyles, Truatman, & Schelvan, 2004). “Hidden curriculum” hinges on location, situation, people, age, and culture; more importantly, it varies with the motive or purpose of the curriculum “architect”—the persons who lay the hidden curriculum in a given setting, such as teachers, administrators, or the school authority (Autismnetwork, n.d.). To further complicate the matter, “hidden curriculum” embraces a strong bond with culture, especially in the context of teaching and learning a language, as language and culture are two sides of a coin. Many cultures have unstated rules involving eye contacts, proximity, gestures, and ways of addressing people. Some cultures are high-context cultures where non-verbal cues are more important than the words that are said, whereas in low-context cultures, words, rather than non-verbal cues, express the real meaning of the conversation (Hyles, Truatman, & Schelvan, 2004). The rules involving the non-verbal are all subsumed in the culture-related experience. In this light, curricula can even be conceptualized as broadly as culture. Joseph, Bravmann, Windschitl, Mikel, and Green (2000) expound this notion of curriculum-culture link.

Using a cultural lens, we can begin to regard curriculum not just as an object (content), but as a series of interwoven dynamics. Curriculum conceptualized as culture educates us to pay attention to belief systems, values, behaviors, language, artistic expression, the environment in which education takes place, power relationships, and most importantly, the norms that affect our sense about what is right or appropriate (p.19).

While “curriculum” is an interactive process developed among learners, teachers, materials, and the environment (Chen, 2007), it functions as a mirror that reflects cultural beliefs, social and political values and the organization. “Hidden curriculum” contains underestimated importance of the dynamics of human interactions in organizational behavior which are imperceptible, but have a powerful influence on institutional culture/climate (Nieto, 2007). In this sense, culture refers to the values and symbols that affect organizational climate. According to Owens (1987), the symbolic aspects of school activities (e.g., traditions, rites, and rituals) are subsumed, for these are “the values that are transmitted literally from one generation of the organization to another” (p. 168). The reason why hidden curriculum or learning culture counts lies in its important role in cultivating wholesome, successful students. The substance of hidden curriculum is learning acquired “by default” through participation in the activities of an institution, rather than by what has been directly taught (Atherton, 2009). The covert or unintended message sent to the students might be either an enhancement or a detriment of their learning; therefore, “hidden curriculum” gives cause for concern in students’ learning experiences/processes. As “hidden curriculum” includes factors of social acceptability, vulnerability, safety, anxiety and self-image, it is crucial for the students to understand the world as the understanding empowers them to manage the world around them (Autismnetwork, n.d.). In fact, “all students must internalize a specific program of social norms for training in order to function effectively as members of a smaller society, the school, and later on as productive citizens of the larger American society” (Wren, 1993, p. 3). Therefore, the interactions between teachers and students as well as between administrators and students assist the students in shaping their attitudes and ideals (Henry, 1955).

One might argue against the likelihood to exhaust enumerating of the definitions of the term, “curriculum”; nevertheless, based on the definitions stated above in order, by and large, the curriculum elements refer to goals or objectives in the first definition and to content and goals in the second definition. They refer to teaching methods in addition to content and goals in the third definition and a combination of content, goals, methods and assessment in the fourth definition. In the fifth definition, the broadest one of all in scope and breadth, the curriculum elements encompass not only all four ingredients included in the third definition but also extracurricular activities, learning environment and even hidden curriculum as well as cultures that would entail learning experiences.

The enumeration of the definitions, thus, can be illustrated in algebra equations as follows.

1. Curricula as a set of **objectives = goals or objectives**
2. Curricula as **courses of study or content = content + goals**
3. Curricula as **plans = content + goals+ teaching methods**
4. Curricula as **documents = content + goals + methods + assessment**
5. Curricula as **experiences = content + goals + methods + assessment + extracurricular activities and learning environment + hidden curriculum + cultures**

The linear alignment of the definitions helps grasp the meanings of the term in varied breadth, as shown in Figure 1.

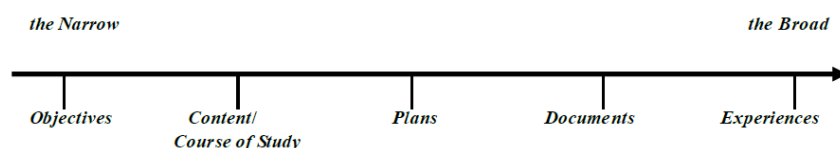


Figure 1. Linear Conceptualization of “Curriculum” from the Narrow to the Broad

Similarly, the concentric illustration demonstrates the inter-relationship among the definitions in distinct scope as follows.

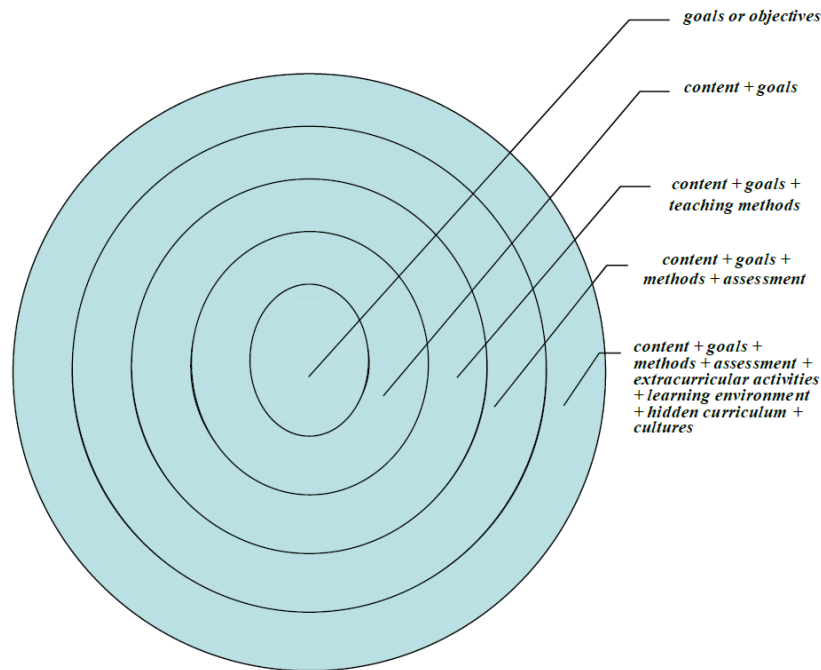


Figure 2. Concentric Ring of Conceptualization of "Curriculum"

III. TOWARDS A BROADER VIEW OF CURRICULA

Despite variations in perceiving the term "curriculum," according to Brady (1995, p.75) and Nunan (1988, p.4), the curriculum development process generally entails four elements: objectives, content, methods, and evaluation. Reynolds and Halpin (1982, p.23) have extended this view by considering "outcomes" as a fifth element of any curriculum by some educators. In this article, an even wider view of curriculum is recommended: one that includes the learning environment and considers the social dimensions of the schooling experience as an important element in achieving curricular effectiveness. Examples of application of the wider view of curriculum to curricular evaluation as such can go to Partlett and Hamilton (1976) in their illuminating evaluation, Walberg (1971) and Stufflebeam, Foley, Gephart, Guba, Hammond, Merriman, and Provus (1971) in their CIPP model, who include the situation or environment analysis while attributing the analysis to part of decision making and judgment. The situation analysis investigates all kinds of human and physical resources. These resources echo what Pratt (1980) is concerned about of educational "logistics" that refer to "the detailed planning of all the means--human, material, and administrative--for the delivery of instruction" (p.369). According to Pratt (1980), the logistics therefore include "materials, equipment, facilities, personnel, time, and cost" (p.369).

This recommended broader notion of curriculum embraces the previously mentioned essential elements of the curriculum process. This view seems oriented to Nunan's (1988) and Richards' (1984) views of an amalgamated process and product model in which a product-oriented ends-means model is fused with a process-oriented approach. A body of scholars (e.g. Brown, 1995; Richards, 1984; Richards, 2001) posits that curricular models include needs analysis, methodology, and evaluation as well as procedures for developing goals and objectives. Similarly, Nunan's learner-centred model (1988) suggests "needs analysis, goal identification, objective setting, materials development, learning activities, learning mode and environment and evaluation" (p.19) be included in as essential elements. In comparison, Nunan, however, advocates a broader scope of "curriculum" than Richards does; i.e. curriculum designers should consider learner issues such as learning difficulties and strategies as well as situational conditions such as resources available.

The rationale for adopting an integrated ends-means and process-oriented model are three-fold. First, as Nunan (1988, p.20) points out, curricula which do not consider both process and product features are too narrow in scope--they fail to highlight key features of the curriculum development, implementation, and revision process. A second important reason is that an integrated model avoids the general tendency for some product-oriented approaches to downplay the importance of methodology. According to Nunan (1988), it allows for "greater flow and integration between planning processes, implementation processes and evaluation" (p.20). The various curriculum development activities are viewed as ongoing processes within the teaching-learning process and in the evaluation circle. One may argue that looking at curriculum only from a single perspective such as content, outcomes or objectives would be unbalanced and limited in the scope. As a result, there is a possibility of bias, resulting in making false judgments and failing in understanding the complexity of curricula and aspects of teaching and learning. Especially, when one step further is taken to do the evaluation of curricula before initiating curriculum reforms, one needs to take into consideration all aspects of curricula.

IV. CONCLUSION

How a curriculum is planned poses itself as one of the most important factors that predetermines the success and effect of curricular implementation. Curriculum planning and instruction are closely connected to each other, and so are the curriculum planning and outcomes. In order to achieve satisfactory outcomes, the issue as to what the essence of “curriculum” is about should be clarified before any curricular endeavors, such as curriculum planning, implementation, and even evaluations, are attempted. This paper has sought to illustrate the nature of the term “curriculum” by looking into the literature associated with it. One might find the relevant literature on the term is exhaustive, and the endeavor to illustrate all the entries would be a mission impossible. In fact, probing into the related literature does not act as the main thrust of the paper but paves the way to argue for a broader view of curriculum and the curriculum development process, especially when a curricular review or evaluation is undertaken.

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Form-focused Instruction: A New Interpretation of TBLT in Iranian EFL Setting

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Abstract—Task-based language teaching (TBLT) with its emphasis on the application of meaningful tasks seemingly undermines the importance of teaching language forms to the extent that many teachers and learners around the globe have come to believe that TBLT is the easy way out of the maze of English language learning. Nevertheless, a close inspection of the practical aspects of the approach may prove otherwise. The researchers of the present study have investigated the applicability of TBLT in the Iranian setting where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL). In so doing, a 15-item questionnaire with two versions for EFL learners and teachers was developed in Farsi by the researchers based on the one used by Schulz (2001). It was administered to 145 learners and 36 teachers in a language school in Tehran, Iran. Based on the findings it could be concluded that ELT in Iran is not fully compatible with TBLT and form-focused instruction which includes both Focus on Form as well as Focus on FormS is more promising in the EFL setting of Iran.

Index Terms—form-focused instruction, Iranian EFL setting, real-life tasks, TBLT

I. INTRODUCTION

Task-based language teaching has been very well received in the majority of English language teaching circles in Iran. The abundance of task-based materials on the one hand and the increasing dominance of high stakes task-based examinations such as IELTS have accelerated this shift of paradigm. Nevertheless, the over-enthusiasm of ELT policy makers in Iran has prevented them to realize that the full implementation of TBLT requires certain preconditions which may be precarious if not completely absent in a country like Iran where learning and teaching grammar remains to be a major hurdle. The present study aims at elucidating the inevitability of a form-focused version of TBLT in the Iranian EFL setting.

A close look at the history of language teaching reveals that almost all methods after Grammar Translation Method have been after the development of communication ability in learners. It was not until the late 1970s that scholars such as Wilkins, Widdowson, Candlin, and Brumfit attempted to devise a framework for a communicative approach to language teaching. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the result of the shift of paradigm from a linguistic perspective to a communicative one, became widespread during 1970s and early 1980s. CLT brought about the idea that the best way for language learning is communication and actual involvement in language interactions. It presented the PPP model (presentation, practice, production) where students master “the target language in ready-to-assimilate pieces” (Foster, 1999). The CLT movement developed into TBLT because tasks were considered to be useful means for applying the principles of CLT. In other words, tasks were chosen to convert the theoretical principles of CLT into practice.

In task-based language teaching and learning, the learning activities focus on the meaningful use of language within a social setting. The classroom teaching and learning activities are organized around tasks instead of around language items. The assumption is that by engaging learners in a task, they would be able to learn the structure of the language in a more natural and meaningful way, while task completion can bring about many opportunities for the learners to interact with others (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). In this way, learners benefit not only from comprehensible input proposed by Krashen (1981; 1985; 1994) but also from the opportunities to negotiate meaning and engage in naturalistic and meaningful communication referred to by Swain as comprehensible output hypothesis and by Long as interaction hypothesis (Swain, 1985; Long, 1996).

Tasks are defined as activities performed by learners through which they use the target language for a communicative purpose in order to achieve an outcome. Prabhu (1987) stated that a task “is an activity that requires learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allows teachers to control and regulate that process” (p. 17). Breen (1987) views language tasks as a range of work plans, from simple to complex that learners use to communicate meaning. To Breen, “all materials for language teaching ... can be seen as compendia of tasks” (p. 26). Skehan’s (1998) comprehensive account of the nature of a task refers to a task as a meaningful activity with

communicative intentions which involves real-life like activities similar to those learners may encounter outside the classroom environment.

Nunan (2006), on the other hand, asserts that learners try to activate their grammatical knowledge in performing a task to express meaning rather than to manipulate form. Moreover, he adds that completing a task requires learners to focus on meaning rather than on form although form is considered to be an important factor in task completion. The extent to which form has been emphasized over meaning is well demonstrated in Long's (1996) interpretation of task goals and includes Focus on FormS, Focus on Meaning, and Focus on Form.

Wilkins's classification of syllabi, however, comes useful when discussing the conflict between form and meaning. Wilkins (1976) classifies syllabi into analytic and synthetic. The former refers to those syllabi which introduce language in holistic chunks and thus learners are expected to analyze and break them into parts. The latter, conversely, introduces language in discrete lists of items requiring learners to synthesize and put together the elements of language for use in communication, leading to a step by step acquisition of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up.

Doughty and Williams (1998) asserted that the traditional notion of forms always entails isolation or extraction of linguistic features from context or from communicative activity. As Long and Robinson (1998) contended, "Synthetic syllabi, together with the corresponding materials, methodology, and classroom pedagogy lead to lessons with a Focus on Forms" (p. 16). In synthetic syllabi, pedagogical material and accompanying classroom procedures are designed to present and practice a series of linguistic items, or forms. Synthetic syllabi (such as lexical, structural, and notional functional), as Long (1997) mentions, are accompanied by synthetic methods (Grammar Translation and Audio Lingual Method, for example). Long (1997) indicates several problems existent with Focus on FormS. As he maintains, Focus on FormS lacks needs analysis to identify the communicative needs of a particular group of learners, and there is no means analysis to ascertain their learning styles and preferences; thus, as he argues, it is a one-size-fits-all approach. Furthermore, as he puts forward, linguistic grading, both lexical and grammatical, tends to result in pedagogic materials which are essentially artificial and functionally restricted or what may be called language usage rather than language use. Finally, leaving learners out of syllabus design ignores the major role they will play in language development; that is, the internal syllabus of learners is ignored.

A typical response to frustration with Focus on FormS has been a radical pendulum swing: a shift of allegiance to an equally single minded focus on meaning (Long, 1997). These kinds of lessons with a Focus on Meaning are purely communicative. In Focus on Meaning approach, classroom work is wholly concerned with communication of meaning, with no attention given to the forms used to convey the message. The Natural Approach of Krashen and Terrell (1983) and other non-interventionist approaches are examples of this position.

Wilkins (1976) termed the language teaching syllabi of Focus on Meaning as analytic. "Analytic approaches are organized in terms of the purposes for which people are learning language and the kinds of language performance that are necessary to meet those purposes (p. 18)." As Long (1997) mentioned, in analytic syllabi, learners are presented with comprehensible samples of communicative second language use and it is the learner, not the teacher or textbook writer, who must analyze the L2, at a subconscious level, and induce grammar rules simply from exposure to the input, that is from positive evidence alone. The assumption is that grammar is best learned incidentally and implicitly. According to this view, L2 acquisition is essentially similar to L1 acquisition.

According to Izumi (2002), the major support for the communicative approach comes from immersion education in which the focus is on meaning through subject matter instruction and the provision of rich, comprehensible input. However, the evaluation of the immersion program in Canada in addition to some other content-based courses revealed that although learners develop excellent comprehension skills and fluency, their productive skills lack native like accuracy. The language developed is characterized by fossilization or classroom pidgin as a result of learners' trying to communicate freely beyond their limited linguistic competence. Moreover, unlearnability of some L1–L2 grammatical contrasts requires either the enhancement of positive evidence or the provision of negative evidence of some kind.

In spite of this, Focus on Form has received considerable attention in late decades as theorists and researchers have called for an integration of meaning-focused and form-focused instruction in the L2 educational settings. As defined by Richards and Schmidt (2002), Focus on Form in a technical sense is a brief allocation of attention to linguistic form as the need for this arises incidentally in the context of communication. This may be contrasted with a Focus on FormS (plural), referring to the kind of focus on form (or rule) where there is a 'structure of the day', usually pre-specified by the teacher or textbook. Unlike the synthetic approach of Focus on FormS to language, where the primary focus of classroom activity is on language forms rather than the meanings they convey, Focus on Form consists of an occasional shift of attention to linguistic code features by the teacher or one or more students (Long & Robinson, 1998). In this way, the learners' attention is drawn precisely to a linguistic feature that is necessitated by a communicative demand.

In fact, Focus on Form has developed as a reaction against a communicative approach which advocates the exclusive use of meaning-focused activities in language classrooms. As Nassaji (1999) pointed out, indeed, with the introduction of the communicative approach in second language teaching and learning, there appeared a strong tendency not to focus on linguistic forms and consequent downplaying of the status of grammar teaching. Yet, the perspectives on language teaching and learning have changed dramatically. New perspectives advocate a principled Focus on Form approach to L2 learning arguing that approaches which are entirely based on some content knowledge are inadequate for the

development of accuracy in language (Nassaji, 1999). According to Long (1997), Focus on Meaning alone is insufficient to achieve full native-like competence and can be improved upon, in terms of both rate and ultimate attainment, by periodic attention to language forms as object. There are three fundamental assumptions behind Focus on Form instruction. The first assumption is that meaning and use must already be evident to the learner at the time that attention is drawn to the linguistic apparatus needed to get the meaning across; second if learners need a form that they realize they do not know or fully control, this may increase the salience, and consequently, noticing of that form, and the last assumption is that negative feedback obtained in negotiation work or elsewhere may be facilitative of SL development, at least for learning certain L1-L2 contrasts.

In short, as Poole (2005) puts it, Focus on Form instruction is a type of instruction that, on the one hand, holds up the importance of CLT principles such as authentic communication and student-centeredness, and on the other hand, maintains the value of the occasional and overt study of problematic L2 grammatical forms, which is more reminiscent of non-communicative teaching.

Alternatively, some scholars like Spada (1997) have advocated the use of the term form-focused instruction. Form-focused instruction refers to any pedagogical effort which is used to draw the learners' attention to language form either implicitly or explicitly. This can include the direct teaching of grammar (e.g. through grammatical rules) and/or reactions to the learners' errors (e.g. corrective feedback). The degree of explicitness of form-focused approaches is ranging from an occasional shift of attention to linguistic features to a provision of explicit positive and negative evidence.

As Long (1997) also discussed, Focus on Form should not be confused with form-focused instruction. The latter is an umbrella term which refers to any pedagogical technique, proactive or reactive, implicit or explicit and is used to draw students' attention to language form. It includes Focus on Form procedures, as well as all the activities used for Focus on Forms, such as exercises which are specifically written to teach a grammatical structure proactively. This means that it is the teacher not the learner who decides when is the appropriate moment for learning the new item. Focus on Form, however, refers only to those form-focused activities that arise during, and are embedded in meaning-based lessons; they are not scheduled in advance, as is the case with Focus on FormS, but occur incidentally as a function of the interaction of learners with the subject matter or tasks that constitute the learners' and their teacher's predominant focus.

Thus, according to Long (1991), two kinds of form-focused instruction can be distinguished: Focus-on-FormS and Focus-on-Form. The former involves the pre-selection of specific features based on a linguistic syllabus and the intensive and systematic treatment of those features. As a consequence in Focus on FormS instruction the primary focus of attention is on the form that is being targeted. In contrast, in Focus on Form instruction the primary focus of attention is on meaning. Attention to form arises out of meaning-centered activity derived from the performance of a communicative task.

TBLT in the Iranian EFL Setting

ELT in Iran, like many other countries, has started to opt for task-based language teaching in the last ten years. Nevertheless, the applicability of TBLT in a foreign language setting like Iran with its political, cultural, and social characteristics needs to be investigated thoroughly. The majority of studies on the use of tasks have been conducted in settings where English is a second language (ESL) or in settings such as India, Malaysia, Singapore, and the UAE where there is abundant interaction between the locals and English speaking expatriates and hence the context of language learning very much approaches ESL situations. In other words, TBLT mainly addresses ESL settings where learners' primary objective is having real-life interactions both inside and more importantly outside the classroom. ESL settings also privilege learners with native or near-native teachers together with high amount of exposure in the form of intensive courses. In Iran, however, English class hours during the formal education which starts at the age of 12, when students start their junior high, is only four hours a week and the majority of classes in private language schools at best provide six hours of instruction. Moreover, the chance of using English outside the classroom is very limited and perhaps far less than many other EFL settings. Finally, the immediate objective of a great majority of English learners in Iran is not communication in real life situations but success in some kind of exam. Children and adolescents are headed for the centralized university entrance exam and many adults need to sit for some high-stakes tests such as IELTS or TOEFL for educational or immigration purposes. We, thus, hypothesize that ELT in Iran, at least in its present status, is not fully compatible with TBLT mainly because the major requirements of a successful task-based class are absent in the majority of English classes found in this country. We, further, argue that form-focused teaching can and should play a more significant role in the EFL setting of Iran as the findings of the following study suggest. Hence, prior to the advancement of the study the following research questions were raised to evaluate the use of TBLT in the Iranian EFL setting:

1. Do learners like studying grammar?
2. Is explicit teaching of grammar necessary?
3. Are real-life tasks useful for language learning?
4. Are real-life tasks enough for learning language forms?
5. Should error correction be an essential part of classroom instruction?
6. Are the hours of instruction enough for providing learners with the language exposure they need?

II. METHOD

A. Participants

The participants of the present study were in two groups:

- The first group included 145 Iranian EFL learners from 15 classes who were randomly selected from among about 900 learners studying at a relatively popular English language school in Tehran. They were all adults with their age ranging from 18 to 40 with different educational backgrounds although the majority (90%) had at least finished their undergraduate studies. They were studying at three general levels of beginner, intermediate, and advanced.

- The second group embraced 36 Iranian English teachers both male and female who voluntarily participated in this study. They had a minimum of three years of teaching experience and all held at least a bachelor degree. Only 40% had been studying in an English-related major but all had passed a general proficiency test and had attended the teacher training course of the language school which is a 3-day intensive course touching upon the major trends of language teaching methodology from the Grammar Translation to the more recent approaches in CLT such as content-based and task-based teaching.

B. Instrumentation

Data gathering in this research was mainly done through a questionnaire with two versions of learners' and teachers'. The questionnaire was developed in Farsi (see Appendix for the English translation) by the researchers based on the one used by Schulz (1996, 1997 cited in Schulz, 2001) which concentrated on extracting learners' and teachers' opinions and attitudes toward teaching grammar and error correction in the US and in Colombia. The first version of our questionnaire had 22 questions which were reduced to 15 after being piloted. The reliability of the abridged version was calculated through Cronbach Alpha ($r = 0.79$). The questionnaire aimed to elicit the agreement or disagreement of both learners and teachers on a Likert-scale (originally on a 1 to 5 scale, but changed to a 1 to 3 scale for computations) about six major issues regarding:

1. learners' attitude towards learning grammar
2. necessity of explicit teaching of grammar,
3. usefulness of real-life tasks for language learning,
4. sufficiency of real-life tasks for learning language forms,
5. necessity of error correction, and
6. limitation of exposure to classroom hours.

C. Procedure

Being descriptive, the procedure of the present study was limited to the preparation of an opinionnaire and its administration to the students and teachers of a number of classes at different proficiency levels in a language school in Tehran.

III. RESULTS

The 15 questions of the questionnaires in six sections provided data on the issues addressed in this study. The findings are summarized in the following table:

TABLE 1.
FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF LEARNERS AND TEACHERS' RESPONSES

	N	S1		S2		S3		S4		S5		S6	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Learners	145	114	79	126	87	123	85	91	63	130	90	127	88
Teachers	36	23	65	33	92	30	85	22	60	31	87	25	65

The following shows the views of the learners:

1. 79% liked to study grammar.
2. 87% believed that the explicit teaching of grammar is necessary for better understanding of each lesson and activity.
3. 85% believed that using real-life tasks are useful for learning to communicate in English.
4. 63% believed that real-life tasks are NOT enough for learning the language, 23% were undecided and only 14% believed that real-life tasks are enough for learning a language.
5. 90% were in favour of error correction. They preferred to be corrected by the teacher while speaking in class and also thought it was necessary for the teacher to correct all their writings.
6. 88% agreed that the major obstacle for successful language learning in Iran is the lack of an English speaking environment and the limited hours of instruction in language schools.

Teachers had more or less similar views as extracted from the questionnaire:

1. 65% believed that students like to study grammar.
2. 92% agreed that grammatical explanations are necessary.
3. 85% thought it is possible to learn English through real-life tasks.

4. 60% admitted that real-life tasks are NOT enough for learning the language, 20% were undecided and 20% believed that real-life tasks are enough for learning a language.
5. 87% agreed that all kinds of error correction are useful for students.
6. 65% regarded the limited hours of instruction and the characteristics of Iranian foreign language setting as the main problems of English language learning.

For a close examination and comparison of the views of the learners and teachers, a series of Chi Square Tests were conducted on the six sections of the questionnaires. Table 2 illustrates the results:

TABLE 2.
X² VALUES FOR THE SIX SECTIONS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4		Q5		Q6	
	df	Q1	df	Q2	df	Q3	df	Q4	df	Q5	df	Q6
X ² Observed	1	3.371	1	0.60	1	0.049	2	0.86	1	0.364	1	7.06**
X ² Critical		3.84		3.84		3.84		5.99		3.84		3.84

** P< 0.01

In the first section, the observed value of X² (3.37) is only marginally smaller than the critical X² value of 3.84. This indicates that learners have a positive attitude towards the study of grammar more than what their teachers assume, Nevertheless, this difference failed to appear significant in this study. In Sections 2 to 5, the obtained values of X² are far smaller than the critical values (at 1 df except for Section 4 at a df of 2) showing that learners and teachers held more or less the same views. Finally, in Section 6, the observed value of 7.06 being greater than the critical value of 6.64 (p<0.01) signifies that teachers adopted a milder position compared to learners towards the problems related to the limited hours of instruction and the characteristics of EFL settings.

IV. DISCUSSION

Regarding the first and second sections, it can be said that learning grammar is not only disliked by learners, as we might think, but it is also considered to be essential by both learners and teachers in the development of language proficiency. Hence, it can be concluded that it is necessary to also Focus on FormS and teach grammar explicitly both proactively and reactively.

The applicability of real-life tasks which is addressed in the second and third sections is generally viewed as plausible in the sense that except an undecided minority, the majority of both learners and teachers believe that these types of tasks, as the main source of authentic language, are an indispensable if not sufficient part of EFL materials. Furthermore, as expected, teachers in this study were more optimistic about the use of real-life tasks as compared to the learners.

The findings related to the fifth section showed that learners welcome error correction and in fact regard it as one of the major responsibilities of a teacher. The same view is held by teachers. This positive attitude towards error correction or negative evidence usually increases as learners pass early stages of language learning and gain enough self confidence not to be discouraged by frequent corrections of their own or classmates' errors.

Finally, addressing the sixth section, the data showed that, to a greater extent, learners and, to a lesser extent, teachers hold the limited amount of classroom instruction in the special EFL setting of Iran responsible for their inability to learn and teach English effectively.

V. CONCLUSION

The present study was an attempt to evaluate the applicability of TBLT in the context of Iran. The empirical data gathered through two questionnaires administered to two groups of Iranian EFL learners and teachers signified that TBLT can become more applicable in the Iranian EFL setting only if it is inclined towards form-focused instruction. Moreover, it could be deduced from the findings that real life tasks in form-focused instruction are necessary to promote communication in Iranian EFL classrooms as they may be the only means of exposure to authentic language, but they are certainly not enough as they are inclined to train inaccurate learners. Furthermore, form-focused instruction as a comprehensive approach would allow for any pedagogical effort to draw the learners' attention to language form either implicitly or explicitly. When dealing with problematic forms, the teacher can respond proactively and adopt a structure-of-the-day kind of approach, or respond reactively through giving corrective feedback to learners' errors. In addition, form-focused instruction emphasizes the necessity of "noticing" to language forms within the context of communicative interactions which is even greater in the Iranian EFL settings where classroom is the only place in which real life activities can be simulated. It is noteworthy that in Iran, TBLT with a form-focused instruction has to deal with only one question: when to Focus on Form and when to Focus on FormS depending on the difficulty of the form, proficiency level of the learners, and the role of the form in performing the task.

To conclude, in EFL settings like Iran where almost the only contact with the target language is in the classroom, the instruction should expose learners to both structured as well as natural language to let them experience how language is used in real life interaction and also internalize the necessary knowledge of linguistic forms to make the interaction possible.

APPENDIX

LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE

		strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	strongly disagree
1	I like the study of grammar					
2	I think it is better if teachers explained the grammatical point(s) of each lesson and its related activities.					
3	Some grammatical points are too difficult to be understood without the teacher's explanations.					
4	The formal study of grammar is essential to eventual mastery of a foreign language.					
5	Teachers' grammatical explanations are necessary for learning English grammar.					
6	In Iran, it is possible to learn English through real-life tasks (i.e., finding a building on a map, reservation of a room in a hotel, making stories based on pictures).					
7	In Iran, Task-based activities can lead to learning daily-life language.					
8	Task-based activities in our course book are enough for learning grammar and vocabulary.					
9	For doing classroom activities, it is better that the teacher explain grammatical points and the meaning of the new words.					
10	Fluency is more important than accuracy in speaking. I dislike it when I am corrected in class.					
11	When I make errors in <i>writing</i> , I would like my teacher to correct them.					
12	When I make errors in <i>speaking</i> , I would like my teacher to correct me.					
13	I learn a lot when my teacher corrects <i>the errors made by my fellow students</i> in class.					
14	Learning English is difficult in Iran because of its EFL setting.					
15	The limited hours of classroom instruction in the majority of language schools makes learning difficult.					

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

		strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	strongly disagree
1	Students like the study of grammar					
2	It is necessary for a teacher to explain the grammatical point(s) of each lesson and its related activities.					
3	Some grammatical points are too difficult to be understood without the teacher's explanations.					
4	The formal study of grammar is essential to eventual mastery of a foreign language.					
5	Teachers' grammatical explanations are necessary for learning English grammar.					
6	In Iran, it is possible to teach English through real-life tasks (i.e., finding a building on a map, reservation of a room in a hotel, making stories based on pictures).					
7	In Iran, task-based activities can lead to learning daily-life language.					
8	Task-based activities in the course books of the language school are enough for teaching grammar and vocabulary.					
9	For doing classroom activities, it is better that the teacher explain grammatical points and the meaning of the new words.					
10	Fluency is more important than accuracy in speaking. Students dislike it when they are corrected in class.					
11	Correcting the <i>writing</i> of students is necessary for improving their grammar and vocabulary knowledge.					
12	It is necessary to correct learners when they make errors in <i>speaking</i> .					
13	Correcting learners' errors is useful for their peers.					
14	Learning English is difficult in Iran because of its EFL setting.					
15	The limited hours of classroom instruction in the majority of language schools makes teaching difficult.					

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An Eclectic Method of College English Teaching

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Abstract—The paper has taken a critical view of various approaches of language teaching, each of which may has its advantages and disadvantages. By analyzing these approaches and objectives of college English teaching, the writer tries to develop an eclectic method of language teaching strategy, which includes formal instruction and communicative activates. The respective role of teachers and students is also discussed in this paper.

Index Terms—college English teaching, communicative activities, role of students

I. REVIEW

In the long history of English teaching, people have tries various approaches to facilitate language learning. Before we design a new method, we have to take a critical view of these previous approaches.

A. *The Grammar-translation Method*

This method can be traced back to the study of Latin. It was the standard way of studying foreign language in the 19th century. As its name suggests, it focuses on the grammar learning with the principal technique of translation. It views language learning as grasping morphology and syntactic by memorizing rules. The goal is to appreciate literature. Speaking ability is relentlessly neglected. Though the class is easy to organize with this method, its usefulness is highly limited. Its major defect lies in no concern for students themselves. They are only passive path-followers. Besides Sentences are taught in isolation. Students cannot learn how to use sentences in communication. Additionally, vocabulary selection is based on reading texts instead of coverage and words are presented with translation equivalence so that interference of mother tongue cannot be avoided.

B. *The Direct Method*

From the latter part of the 19th century, many scholars made radical changes from Grammar-Translation Method. Parallel to the Reform Movement, interest was directed to the natural learning principles which provided foundation for Direct Method. Opposite to the Grammar-Translation Method it put emphasis on everyday spoken language instead of literary language. Its advocates argued that language could be taught through demonstration and action. So target language is the means of instruction and communication. Both speech and listening comprehension are taught. Correct pronunciation and grammar are emphasized. Grammar is taught inductively. According to H.H.Stern, it was “a first attempt to make the language learning situation one of language use and to train the learner to abandon the first language as the frame of reference”(Stern, 1983, p.459). However, it leads to much criticism because of its overemphasis on the similarities between first language acquisition and second language learning. Secondly, misunderstanding may arise because mother tongue is strictly forbidden. Lastly, it is not so realistic as it claims because it is too demanding for the teacher. Reading and writing abilities which many students need are neglected.

C. *The Oral Approach and Situational Language Teaching*

In the 1920s and 1930s, some British applied linguists including Harold Palmer and A.S. Hornby, developed an approach which was known as the Oral Approach. It is differentiated from the Direct Method in the aspect that it selects vocabulary and grammar systematically with gradation. Its key feature is that new language points are introduced and practiced in situations. Its theory of language is known as British “structuralism.” Speech is regarded as the basis of language and structure is viewed as the heart of speaking ability. Material is taught orally before it is presented in written form. This theory regards language learning as habit formation. As a result, accuracy is considered crucial. However, in the boring process of repetition and substitution, students can never develop communicative strategy in real situations.

D. *The Audiolingual Method*

In the mid-fifties, Audiolingualism appeared on the basis of Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) in America. Although in many aspects, it sounds similar to the Oral Approach, it differs in its alliance with American structural linguistics and contrastive analysis. Language is viewed as a system containing meaningful elements governed by certain rules. Behaviorism manifests itself in this approach. Language is regarded as verbal behavior and habit formation is considered crucial. Dialogues and drills are the basic elements of practice. Aural-oral training is provided before developing other skills. This approach leads to widely used courses such as English 900. When its theoretical

foundations were attacked, this approach declined. Its failure can also be traced to “lack of effectiveness of the techniques in the long run” (Stern, 1983, p. 465). Basic patterns cannot ensure learners the ability to talk about different topics.

E. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

From the later 1960s, Situational Language Teaching began to be rejected. Later on, some new principles were rapidly accepted. They became known as the Communicative Approach of which there are many versions. All of them aim to “(a) make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and (b) develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication.” (Richards, 1986, p.66). It starts from a theory of language as communication. Classroom activities focus on meaningful tasks and information sharing. In these activities, students contribute a lot in a cooperative atmosphere. The teacher is the facilitator of the communication process and the participant of learning-teaching group. It is a great progress to include communicative and contextual elements into teaching since language is a tool for communication. Its classes are much more interesting. However, sometimes students have no sense of achievement. It is difficult for students with poor grammatical ability to develop ideal communicative competence. And the adoption of CLT requires the development of materials and evaluation systems.

F. Total Physical Response (TPR)

Proposed by James Asher, it takes a structuralist views of language. Verbs, especially imperative verbs are considered basic elements of language learning. It draws on three learning hypotheses. Firstly, Asher sees first and second learning almost the same. Speech evolves after listening comprehension has been established. Secondly, Asher claims language is learned through actions via right-brain. Lastly, it is one of humanistic approaches because Asher considers the absence of stress as key of successful language learning. Thus, at the beginning stage, students only have to do imperative drills. Speech is delayed until they are ready. Obviously, students can enjoy the classroom activities, which will facilitate learning. And from psychological point of view, combination with actions will increase the probability of successful recall. However, it can only be used for children at a beginning stage. We'd better associate it with other methods.

G. The Silent Way

In contrast to TPR, this method devised by Caleb Gattegno holds that the teacher should be as silent as possible while the students should produce as much language as possible. Its structural syllabus is just like some traditional method, but the way the classroom activity organized is innovative. Three factors, learners' process of discovery, accompaniment of physical objects and problem solving facilitate learning. Under Gattegno's hypotheses a teacher should present an item once and then direct students' response by silent means. Finally, the teacher should get out of the way during learners' interaction. Cuisenaire rods, pronunciation charts (Fidels) and word charts are used to help practice and recall. These means can stimulate memorization. Learners acquire sense of independence, autonomy and responsibility so that they will learn to learn by themselves, but I don't think total lack of feedback will produce ideal result. Besides, its content lacks communicative value.

H. Community Language Learning (CLL)

This method, which was developed by Charles A. Curran and his associates, is based on Counseling-learning theory. In recent versions, language is regarded as a social process in which feedback is emphasized. They also hold an interactional view of language. There are two kinds of interactions, those between learners and those between learners and knowers. The learner-knower relationship is compared to client-counselor relationship. The learners will undergo five stages of development: dependant, self-as-sertive, resentful, tolerant and independent. This process is parallel to the development of children. The students sit in circles and talk about any topics which interest them. The “knower” helps them with the language they want to use so that they can use the target language. The conversations are tape-recorded and transcribed to help them review. The teacher will elaborate on some grammatical points after discussion. Learners learn something when they need it so that it is easy for them to remember. It will keep the learners' motivation high by paying much attention to their communicative intent. Learners' emotions and feelings are highlighted. However, input is somewhat limited since there is difference between needs and wants. It may also lead to inadequate control of the grammatical system of the target language. Additionally, the evaluation becomes very difficult for lack of syllabus.

I. The Natural Approach

In 1983, Tracy Terrell and Stephen Krashen published The Natural approach, which attracted a lot of interest. The term natural means the principles similar to those of naturalistic language learning in young children. They maintain that language's main function is communication and lexicon is critical in language. According to Krashen's language acquisition theory, acquisition is unconscious while learning is conscious. Comprehensible input (the input that is slightly beyond learners' level) should be presented as much as possible before speech ability “emerges”. Furthermore, a low affective filter will facilitate learning. To achieve this goal, it is up to the learners when to speak and what to speak about. In the pre-production stage, students are exposed to the target language without responding in that language. In the early-production stage, students respond with single words. And in the speech-emergent phase, students

involve in communicative activities. This approach has the advantage of communicative method and humanistic method. There is still a problem, however, on how the fluent speech will necessarily emerge after the acquirer has received enough input.

J. Suggestopedia

This method is developed by the Bulgarian psychiatrist-educator Georgi Lozanov. It has borrowed from yoga and Soviet psychology. According to him, most learning takes place in a relaxed but focused state known as "pseudo-passive state". Suggestion is at the heart of Suggestopedia. Learners return to the state of infant while the teacher serves as authority. Learners thus regain self-confidence. Learning environment is considered so important that classroom is decorated as bright and cherry and reclining chairs are arranged in a circle. The use of music is one of its conspicuous features. The teacher gives proper dramatic readings with a musical background. Its syllabus contains mainly dialogues. The texts are selected to cater for learners' emotional needs. New material is presented with its translation. The students follow the pattern of fixation, reproduction and new creative production. They are also asked to memorize a long list of vocabulary. Although this method has received much criticism, we can still borrow something for our purpose. For example, the original idea of using music in reading can benefit learners a lot.

II. OBJECTIVE

With the increasing development of economy, people throughout the world get in touch with each other more frequently than ever. As a result, leaning foreign language has become more and more important, especially English which is almost the international language. In China, English is one of the major subjects for college students. As the College English Syllabus requires: "College English aims to develop in students a relatively high level of competence in reading, an intermediate level of competence in listening and a basic competence in writing and speaking. After completion of the course, the students should be able to use the English they have learned as a means to obtain whatever information they need in their field of specialization and also a solid foundation for further improvement of their command of the language" (1986, p.1-2).

That is to say, a successful learner can use English as a way of communication and they can also make further improvement independently. Many Chinese learners have learned many grammatical rules, but it is difficult for them to communicate with appropriate sentences in real situations. From CET-6, we can see that they do not do well in writing. It suggests they lack an ability to produce coherent discourse. In a word, they need to increase their communicative competence urgently.

III. THEORY OF LANGUAGE AND THEORY OF LEARNING

There is no single method which could guarantee successful results. We have to take an eclectic view in the previous methods according to learners' needs and objectives. Before we design concrete techniques, we should make it clear what language is and what factors facilitate learning.

A. Theory of Language

The advocates of communicative approach maintain the theory of language as communication. They have discussed the communicative competence from many aspects. A recent version is held by Canale and Swain (Richards, 1986,p.71) As they claim, there are four dimensions of communicative competence: grammatical competence, socio-linguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. Grammatical competence means grammatical and lexical capacity. As to socio-communicative competence, it refers to the social context of communication. Discourse competence focuses on the interconnectedness of individual message. Strategic competence refers to the strategies in communication, such as strategies to initiate or terminate communication.

This analysis represents the communicative view of language. In fact, language is one way of communication. Structures which are components of language serve to perform various functions in social context.

B. Theory of Learning

Firstly, let's see the relation between input and output. According to Krashen's Natural Order Hypothesis, people acquire language most effectively by receiving sufficient I+1 input which is slightly beyond their current level. After sufficient input has been provided, learners can speak fluently. Great importance is attached to input. It is just like first language acquisition. Without enough input of natural target language, it will be difficult for learners to produce native-like speech. However, input itself is not enough. Krashen fails to explain convincingly how input can be automatically transferred into output. In fact, if the learner never speaks target language, he will never reach speech fluency. For example, many Chinese students who are good comprehenders speak broken English. Swain proposed the Comprehensible Output Hypothesis. She argued that we have to actually speak in order to learn.

By speaking the target language frequently, learners can also identify their limitations. When they put their knowledge into use, they will recognize what they don't know and then they can fulfil the gap afterwards. In this way, they can improve step by step.

Output and input are complementary. Peter Skehan discusses six roles of output (1998, p16): 1) To generate better

input. 2) To force syntactic processing 3) To test hypothesis 4) To develop automaticity 5) To develop discourse skills 6) To develop a personal voice

From these six roles, we can see that output and input are closely related. In interaction, one gives feedback to his counterpart so that he can get input more finely tuned. From the input, the learner can also learn how to express meanings. Additionally, the learner can draw revealing information for his language hypotheses from feedback. In this sense, learning is best facilitated if the learner receives sufficient input and generates enough output. In class, the teacher should make a balance between input and output. Traditional class is full of teacher's instruction. Input is over-emphasized. The learner has no opportunity to speak the target language. Its drawback is obvious. In an ideal class, the teacher gives sufficient input and at the same time provides the students opportunities of meaningful communication.

Secondly, I quite agree with the humanistic approach which engages the whole person. Learners should be treated as individuals. Their emotions and feelings will affect learning process. Sometimes, affective factors even contribute more than the cognitive factors. As Krashen points out, learners with a low affective filter receives more input. According to him, three kinds of affective variables are related to second language acquisition: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Many investigations have proven that there is a positive association between learning effect and motivation in learning. Harmer (1991) distinguishes two kinds of motivation: extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation. It has great pedagogic implication. What a teacher can do is to help learners highly motivated by making learners attracted by the target culture, making teaching process attractive or giving learners sense of achievement, etc. If the learner really wants to learn, he will succeed more easily. Besides motivation, self-confidence and anxiety also affect learning outcome. Some learners often complain when they are relaxed, they can do much better what they cannot do in examination. In fact, during the examination, the affective filter is high. If the learner does listening comprehension at that time, the information he processes is much less than the input. It suggests that the teacher should create a supportive environment to help the learner lower the affective filter. However, the absence of stress also has the negative effect. Many learners have the experience that they memorize well before the examination. They are afraid of failure in examination. In this case, they try their best to learn. Consequently, learners with proper stress can achieve best results.

Lastly, learning styles and learning strategies will influence the learning rate. The main categorization of learning style is the concept of field dependence/independence. Field independence learners are more likely to separate the whole into its components and analyze them independently. Field dependant learners tend to perceive problems as wholes. They are more sociable. (Skehan, 1998) There are some alternative views of styles. Peter Skehan points out neither pole of the style dimension is regarded as being as 'better' but instead is simply seem to suggest alternatives. Further, each pole is seen as having advantages for different tasks. Thus, it is rewarding for learners to know about their own style and try the alternatives in different tasks. It will also be helpful if the learner knows something about good learning strategies and apply them in their learning. For example, Brown and Perry (1991) conducted an investigation of three vocabulary-learning strategies: keyword (forming a visual association between the target word and some acoustically similar word), semantic (integrate the target word into the learner's existing semantic system), and keyword-semantic (combination of the first two). It proved that the third strategy resulted in the best retention. Some learners only learn words by rote. If they use the previous memorization strategy for reference, they can get higher recall rate. So if language learners are aware of their learning strategies and make use of other good ones, their leaning will be more effective.

IV. ACTIVITIES

In class, there should be a rich mixture of activities, which mainly includes formal instruction and communicative tasks. The content and form of these two categories should also be versatile. There are several reasons. First of all, grammatical competence is a component of communicative competence. Widdowson (1978, p144) believes "the teaching of language as communication calls for an approach which brings linguistic skills and communicative abilities into close association with each other." Although college students have learned much about grammatical system of English, some of them still get confused by some basic grammatical concepts. Secondly, it is for the benefit of all the students. Different students have different learning styles and preferences. Some prefer formal instruction while some enjoy communicative activities. If the teacher pays no attention to their respective need, they will feel insecure and have no sense of achievement. A variety of activities will cater for the interest of all the students and be suitable for mixed ability groups. During these activities, learners will also notice different learning strategies and make improvement. Lastly, monotonous activities can never keep the students highly motivated. Only various activities can catch their attention.

A. Formal Instruction

Traditionally, the role of the teacher is the sole instructor who analyzes texts and grammar. This method should be abandoned. However, appropriate elaboration of vocabulary and grammar should be reserved. Before students read a text or do listening comprehension, some knowledge of key words will lead to effective result. Sometimes, difficult syntactic structure of certain sentences will prevent the students understanding the whole text. In this case, the teacher's

explanation is necessary. It will help the students become conscious of such structures so that they will not find it difficult next time. Some students' grammatical competence is far from adequate. It is necessary for the teacher to fill the gap. However, this kind of formal instruction should not take up most of a class. The way of teaching vocabulary and grammar is various. Take vocabulary teaching as an example. As Harmer (1991) asserts, for learners at intermediate levels, we'd better ask the students to discover what a word means and how it is used. Thus, for college students, explanation and translation should not be always used. The teacher can present new words in a story or real situations, especially those related to the students' lives, so that students will learn the meaning in context. Pictures and actions will also help the students discover the meaning. Additionally, new words can be presented with other similar words so as to make its meaning clear. As to grammar, we'd better explain it in a discourse so that its communicative value is stressed. Rather than know about rigid syntactic rules learners can use appropriate structures in various types of discourse.

B. *Communicative Activities*

Communicative activities are the main part of a class. There are all kinds of such activities. For instance: role play, problem solving, debate, group discussion and etc. Written communicative activities such as writing reports should also be included. There are three points we should pay much attention to.

First of all, a balance between input and output is recommended. The rationale has been discussed before. In practice, we can integrate more than one macroskill. For example, after listening to several pieces of news from VOA, we can ask students to write a comment on the news. Their specific content and form should cater for the learners' communicative intent. The topics should include what the learners' need and what they want. For example, the topics interest the college student are strongly recommended, such as environment protection, Internet and cultural difference. For students of different specialties, relevant information can be provided to help them deal with English material of their field of specialization. As the facilities of universities are much better than before, we can make use of these modern means such as videotapes and films. Traditional or popular English songs can increase the learners' interest as well as develop their listening comprehension. Articles selected from Internet can also serve as complementary reading material. Additionally, teacher can encourage the learner to read English novels and newspapers after class because input from class is far from sufficient.

Secondly, the teacher should refrain from too much error correction. Even if the learner makes great mistakes, the correction should be provided after he finishes his contribution. Otherwise, it will be difficult for them to develop fluency. The responsibility of error correction can be assumed by the students themselves rather than the teacher so that they will learn from mistakes. For example, after the students write a report, they are asked to form a group. Each group member reads all the reports of this group. Then, they discuss whether there are grammatical mistakes, inappropriate sentence for the style, or incoherence in the discourse. They will develop independence in this process.

Thirdly, it is important to learn how to learn. Students will be sensitive to the learning process if they are encouraged to reflect on their learning styles or talk about their learning strategies. Opportunities should be provided to plan their own learning. Simultaneously, the teacher gives some directions in learning strategies. In this way, learners can continue learn foreign language effectively after the course is over.

V. LEARNER ROLES AND TEACHER ROLES

Learners are the center of the class. They have multiple roles. As individual, they are active participants of the activity, explorer of the language, negotiator and evaluator of the learning process. Their needs and interests influence the course. As a group member, the learner is the source of the input and part of a support system. Students work co-operatively in classroom activities. Their output is the others' input. They help each other in solving problems rather than depending wholly on the teacher. We can use group discussion in solving the problems so as to encourage independence. In a word, the learner takes initiative in the classroom.

The teacher is the guide of the learning process. Krashen and Terrel consider it important to tell the learners what they should and should not expect of a course. At the very beginning, the learner can have a specific goal. The role of guide also lies in giving advice for learning strategies. During the communicative activities, the teacher is both the organizer and the resource. When the activity is finished, the teacher gives appropriate feedback which focuses on the content of the activity. Communication of meaning is primary. When the use of English is discussed, emphasis should be laid on the appropriateness according to different roles the learner plays instead of grammatical mistakes. Additionally, it is important for the teacher to create a warm atmosphere in classroom so that a positive attitude on learning English is easy to develop.

VI. CONCLUSION

All the previous approaches have something we can make use of. I try to develop a way appropriate to Chinese college students. However, the specific procedures and activities should depend on the specific learners. Different groups of learners at different time call for different treatment. Continuing research is needed as the course progresses.

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Does Critical Thinking Enhance EFL Learners' Receptive Skills?

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Abstract—This study explored the effect of Iranian EFL learners' critical thinking abilities on their receptive English language proficiency skills. With this purpose in mind, the researchers administered the Persian version of Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal (WGCTA) and the Interchange Objective Placement Test (Lesley, Hansen, & Zukowski-Faust, 2005) to 96 Intermediate EFL learners, and correlated the scores obtained from the two tests to see whether there is any significant relationship between critical thinking and proficiency. Results from Pearson product-moment correlation showed significant correlations between WGCTA subscales and proficiency scores. Furthermore, while logical interpretation was the only important variable in predicting both reading and listening comprehension scores, a stepwise multiple regression consisting of Watson-Glaser subscales 1 (drawing inferences), 2 (recognizing assumptions), and 4 (logical interpretation) successfully predicted total proficiency test scores ($R = .43$). To see to what extent total scores for critical thinking may affect English language proficiency, three groups of High, Mid, and Low were formed based on critical thinking scores. The mean proficiency scores of the three groups were compared. One-way ANOVA indicated significant differences in the mean proficiency scores among the three groups. The results of the post-hoc Scheffe test revealed that there was a significant difference between the proficiency scores of the high creative group and those of the two other groups. The implications of the results were discussed.

Index Terms—critical thinking, Watson-Glaser, listening and reading comprehension, proficiency

I. INTRODUCTION

Being democracy-seeking in nature, Paulo Freire's (1970) and John Dewey's (1916) views on education have inspired many scholars, researchers, and teachers who are ready to help learners have their voices heard in and out of the classroom. The 'banking' approach to education hinders learners from thinking critically by imposing on them a passive stance which makes them adaptive to the status-quo.

However, the banking concept of education has been rejected by critical pedagogues who aim at liberating students from the confines of those classrooms in which the teacher is traditionally expected to transfer knowledge to students, while students receive and accept the information, right or wrong, without deserving the right to question the authenticity of the knowledge being transferred.

Unfortunately, as Gatto (2001) puts it, schools do not let our children take an active role in community life: "School, as it was built, is an essential support system for a model of social engineering that condemns most people to be subordinate stones in a pyramid that narrows as it ascends to a terminal of control" (p. 13).

The relation of critical thinking to academic achievement had been confirmed by many researchers (e.g., Birjandi & Bagherkazemi, 2010; Fahim, Bagherkazemi, & Alemi, 2010; McCutcheon, Apperson, Hanson, & Wynn, 1992; Yeh & Wu, 1992). Moreover, SLA research is one area in which critical pedagogy and critical language awareness are considered by many researchers (Canagarajah, 1999; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Pennycook, 1999, 2001; Ramanathan, 2002) to be crucial aspects of both language teaching and language learning. Thus instruction in critical thinking, which aims at achieving the ability to explore, criticize, or advocate different ideas, to reason inductively and deductively, and to infer sound conclusions from ambiguous statements (Freeley & Steinberg, 2000), ought to be the cornerstone of second or foreign language teaching classrooms.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the following paragraphs, the researchers briefly review the theoretical and empirical findings pertaining to critical thinking as well as its applications in general education and language learning.

A. Critical Thinking: Definition

Critical thinking has been defined extensively; it is defined as “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends” (Dewey, 1933, p. 118). It encompasses, in Pithers and Soden’s (2000) words, a number of skills such as, the ability to focus the problem, uncover assumptions underlying a problem, inference, reason inductively and deductively, and judge the validity and reliability of assumptions and sources of information. As Chafee (1988, p. 29) puts it, critical thinking is “our active, purposeful, and organized efforts to make sense of our world by carefully examining our thinking, and the thinking of others, in order to clarify and improve our understanding”. It also involves such important factors as interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation (Facione, 2006).

Accordingly, several scholars and researchers have made attempts to devise tests of measuring critical thinking (e.g., Facione, 1990a, 1990b; Ennis & Millman, 1985; Ennis & Weir, 1985; Norris & Ennis, 1989; Norris & King, 1984; Shipman, 1983; Ross & Ross, 1976; Fraser, 1980; Sternberg & Baron, 1985; Wagner, & Harvey, 2003; Watson & Glaser, 1980, 2006). While some of these tests such as Test on Appraising Observations (Norris & King, 1984) measure only one aspect of critical thinking, others like the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal (Watson & Glaser, 1980) cover multiple critical thinking abilities. This latter test, comprising five subsections, is one of the most reliable and valid measures of critical thinking (Gadzella & Baloglu, 2003; McKown, 1997), and had been employed by many researchers (e.g., Birjandi & Bagherkazemi, 2010; Fahim et al., 2010; Ghaemi & Taherian, 2011; Loftspring, 2006; McCutcheon et al., 1992).

B. Critical Thinking in Education

From an educational perspective, there is a general agreement among scholars and researchers on the importance of raising students’ critical awareness in schools and in the classroom many of whom have found significant relationships between critical thinking and academic achievement (e.g., Frisby, 1992; Giancarlo & Facione, 2001; Jacobs, 1995; King, Wood, & Mines, 1990; Kokinda, 1989; Mines, King, Hood, & Wood, 1990; McCutcheon et al., 1992; Nelson, 1994; Tsui, 2002; Villavicencio, 2011; Yeh & Wu, 1992).

Jacobs (1995), for example, made use of the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) in order to examine the role of critical thinking in private university students’ scores on the Student Aptitude Test (SAT). The results indicated that CCTST scores were strongly related to students’ verbal intelligence as measured by the SAT. In another study, Villavicencio (2011) studied the relationship between critical thinking and achievement among two hundred and twenty engineering students. It was found that critical thinking was significantly positively correlated with students’ final grades. Moreover, Yeh and Wu (1992) investigated the relationship between critical thinking and elementary and secondary school students’ academic achievement. They employed the Cornell Critical Thinking Test, Level X (CCT-X) for measuring critical thinking, and found that scores from this test correlated significantly with students’ total achievement scores. In a similar vein, McCutcheon et al. (1992) explored the relationship between critical thinking skills and academic achievement among sixty psychology students. The results of their study revealed that two subscales of Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal (WGCTA), i.e. the ability to draw valid inferences and the ability to weigh and interpret evidence, were predictive of higher achievement scores. In her attempts to find out the relationship between critical thinking abilities and academic achievement among forty-nine nursing students, Kokinda (1989) used the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal as a valid measure of critical thinking, correlated the scores obtained from this test with students’ achievement, and found significant results. Although most of the studies have highlighted significant results regarding the effect of critical thinking on academic achievement, there are studies such as the one conducted by Azar (2010) which have found no significant relationship between the two variables.

C. Critical Thinking in Language Learning

When it comes to language learning, particularly learning English as a second or foreign language, where a combination of historical, social, cultural, and political issues is involved, the necessity of working on critical thinking among ESL/EFL learners is more severely felt, and needs to be equally highlighted by lesson planners, materials developers, teacher educators, and teachers.

With this in mind, it is unfortunate that only a few studies (e.g., Birjandi & Bagherkazemi, 2010; Fahim et al., 2010; Ghaemi & Taherian, 2011) had been conducted so far to throw some light on the importance of critical thinking in English language classes. Birjandi and Bagherkazemi (2010), for example, examined the relationship between the critical thinking ability of English language teachers and their success in teaching as measured by the Successful Iranian EFL Teacher Questionnaire (SIETQ). They found out that three subscales of the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal, i.e. drawing inferences, interpreting evidence, and evaluating arguments were predictive of about 50% of higher teacher success. In a similar vein, Ghaemi and Taherian (2011), having employed the same instruments, found a significant relationship between EFL teachers’ critical thinking and their professional success. In another study, Fahim et al. (2010) investigated the relationship between eighty-three EFL learners’ performances on the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal and the reading module of TOEFL. The participants were in advanced 3 and 4 levels. The researchers found that learners’ scores on the reading test increased significantly with their scores on the WGCTA.

Such issues, to the researchers’ best knowledge, have not yet been sufficiently approached by SLA researchers. In their attempts to initiate research on such issues, the researchers undertook the present study in order to determine to

what extent successful performance on the listening and reading comprehension sections of the Interchange Objective Placement Test is contingent upon learners' critical thinking ability.

III. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Given what was said above concerning the importance of critical thinking and its ignorance by professionals in ELT profession, the present study was undertaken to uncover the extent to which the critical thinking ability of EFL learners may enhance, or hinder, their reading and listening comprehension. The following questions and null hypotheses were thus put forth:

A. Research Questions

- Q1: Is there any significant relationship between critical thinking subscales and learners' listening comprehension?
 Q2: Do critical thinking subscales affect learners' reading comprehension?
 Q3: Does the total score for critical thinking affect learners' English language proficiency?

B. Null Hypotheses

HO1: There is no significant relationship between Iranian EFL learners' critical thinking skills and their listening comprehension ability.

HO2: There is no significant relationship between Iranian EFL learners' critical thinking skills and their reading comprehension ability.

HO3: There is no significant relationship between Iranian EFL learners' total score for critical thinking and their English language proficiency.

IV. METHOD

A. Participants

Ninety-six female Intermediate EFL learners from a variety of academic backgrounds took part in the study. They were selected from five private language institutes in Mashhad, a city in north-eastern Iran (The Iran Language Institute, Jihad-e daneshgahi Institute, Khalaghan-e-Javan Institute, Kish Language Institute, and Ferdowsi Language Institute). These institutes were selected because they were among the most creditable private language institutes in Mashhad. Having assured learners of the confidentiality of the results, the researchers selected the subjects based on their agreement to take part in the study. The participants ranged in age from 15 to 38 years old (mean = 19.51, standard deviation = 4.88), and varied in their English language learning experience from 18 months to 7 years.

B. Instruments

Two instruments were employed in the present study:

Firstly, the Persian version of Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal, Form A (WGCTA-FA) was used for measuring critical thinking. The test encompasses five subsections, namely drawing inferences, recognizing assumptions, making deductions, interpreting evidence, and evaluating arguments, each comprising 16 items with two to five alternatives. The appraisal is not subject-specific and can be completed in 60 minutes. The test-retest reliability of the original appraisal ($r = 0.81$) has been reported by Watson and Glaser (1980), and the reliability coefficient of its Persian adaptation has been estimated by Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.85$) in Faravani (2006). A composite score for the five subscales of the test is obtained with values varying from 0 to 80. In the present study, Cronbach Alpha estimated the reliability of the whole items as 0.76.

Secondly, the Interchange Objective Placement Test was employed to test learners' listening and reading comprehension, and also language use. It is a 70-item multiple-choice test, designed by Lesley, Hansen, and Zukowski-Faust (2005), and primarily measures the receptive skills, i.e. listening and reading, and grammar components. The test consists of three sections: listening (20 items), reading (20 items), and language use (30 items). The administration of and answering the Objective Test requires 50 minutes. The Listening items assess learners' ability to understand main idea, context, and supporting details in a conversation, as well as the speaker's intent. The Reading questions, likewise, measure learners' ability to understand main and supporting ideas in written passages, vocabulary, and also the author's intent. Moreover, the Language Use section investigates learners' ability in recognizing contextually appropriate and grammatically correct statements. As Lesley, Hansen, and Zukowski-Faust (2005, p. 5) have pointed out, "the different components of the test may be administered to individuals or to groups, and in any order". In the present study, the researchers have utilized the total Objective Placement Test containing three subcomponents of proficiency, i.e. listening comprehension, reading comprehension, and language use.

C. Procedures

The two instruments mentioned above were distributed among 96 EFL learners. The administration phase occurred during class hours by prior arrangement with the instructors. The instruments were submitted to the learners who were asked not to mention their names on the answer sheets; rather, in order to receive reliable scores on critical thinking and proficiency, the tests were coded numerically. Since the WGCTA was in Persian, no questions were expected to be

raised by the participants; however, the researchers were present in all administration sessions and encouraged the participants to raise whatever questions they had.

The data gathered from the two tests were analyzed by utilizing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0. To examine the normality of the distribution, descriptive statistics was employed. To investigate the role of critical thinking in learners' English proficiency scores, Pearson product-moment correlation was applied to the data. To find out to what extent the five subscales of critical thinking might have predictive power in learners' English language proficiency subcomponents (listening, reading, and language use), multiple regression analysis was run. Finally, in order to compare the effect of total critical thinking scores on total proficiency scores among low, mid, and high critical thinkers, Levene's test of variance homogeneity, One-way ANOVA, and the post-hoc Scheffe test were conducted, respectively.

V. RESULTS

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive results of WGCTA and the Objective Placement Test subscales. As can be seen in the table, the participants' scores ranged from 5 to 56 on WGCTA-FA with a mean score of 42 (M = 42.2), and from 14 to 65 with a mean score of 44 (M = 44.68) on the Objective Test.

TABLE 1.
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF WGCTA AND PROFICIENCY

	N	# of items	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
<i>WGCTA subscales</i>						
Drawing inferences	96	16	0	10	5.02	2.542
Recognizing assumptions	96	16	0	14	9.91	3.071
Argument evaluation	96	16	0	14	9.17	3.018
Deductive reasoning	96	16	0	14	9.41	2.834
Logical interpretation	96	16	0	13	8.73	2.654
Total critical thinking scores	96	80	5	56	42.23	11.243
<i>Proficiency subscales</i>						
Listening	94	20	0	20	13.66	3.993
Reading	94	20	4	20	12.83	3.795
Language use	94	30	7	30	18.12	4.355
Total proficiency scores	94	70	14	65	44.68	9.448
Valid N (listwise)	94					

To examine whether there are significant correlations between learners' critical thinking and their proficiency, Pearson product-moment correlation was applied to the data. The results revealed that the total score for proficiency was significantly and positively correlated with Drawing inferences (r = 0.271, p < 0.01), Argument evaluation (r = 0.255, p < 0.05), Deductive reasoning (r = 0.263, p < 0.05), and Logical interpretation (r = 0.325, p < 0.01). However, no significant relationship was found between proficiency and Recognizing assumptions (p > 0.05) (see Table 2).

TABLE 2.
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN CRITICAL THINKING SUBSCALES AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

	Proficiency
Drawing inferences	0.271**
Recognizing assumptions	0.053
Argument evaluation	0.255*
Deductive reasoning	0.263*
Logical interpretation	0.325**

** Shows the existence of significant relationship at the level of 0.01

* Shows the existence of significant relationship at the level of 0.05

Furthermore, the researchers conducted the regression analysis with a Stepwise method to see whether and to what extent critical thinking can predict learners' proficiency scores. The results reveal which variables are important in predicting English language proficiency. Logical interpretation was the only important variable in predicting both reading comprehension (R = .28) and listening comprehension (R = .22) scores. Total scores for English proficiency explained 16% of the total variance, (Adjusted R² = 0.16, p < .05) using a combination of Logical interpretation, Drawing inferences, and Recognizing assumptions. Logical interpretation was the best predictor for proficiency scores (Adjusted R² = 0.09, p < .05), indicating that high scorers in Logical interpretation received higher grades on the proficiency test. On the other hand, recognizing assumptions subscale was the best predictor of lower grades on the proficiency test. Table 4 presents the results for English proficiency being regressed on the variables of interest in this study (WGCTA subscales).

TABLE 3.
REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR CRITICAL THINKING SUBSCALES AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY SUBCOMPONENTS

Predictors	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	P	B
<i>Total proficiency scores</i>						
Logical interpretation	0.325	0.106	0.096	10.884	0.00	0.421
Drawing inferences	0.381	0.146	0.127	7.749	0.01	0.255
Recognizing assumptions	0.438	0.192	0.165	7.120	0.02	-0.270
<i>Listening comprehension</i>						
Logical interpretation	0.222	0.049	0.039	4.747	0.03	0.222
<i>Reading comprehension</i>						
Logical interpretation	0.284	0.081	0.071	8.083	0.00	0.284

From a statistical perspective, the assumption behind the null hypothesis is that there is no significant correlation between Iranian EFL teachers' critical thinking ability and their proficiency. To test this hypothesis, Pearson product moment correlation was run. Table 4 depicts the coefficients of this correlation between total WGCTA and proficiency scores. The calculated correlation coefficient is 0.331 which is significant at 0.01 level of significance ($r = 0.331$, $p < 0.01$). Put it another way, the two variables at issue are significantly positively correlated with each other and, thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

TABLE 4.
CORRELATION BETWEEN TOTAL WGCTA AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY SCORES

	Proficiency
Total critical thinking	0.331**

** Shows the existence of significant relationship at the level of 0.01

To further analyze the data, a One-way ANOVA was conducted so that the researchers could compare the effect of critical thinking on English proficiency among low, mid, and high critical thinkers. Prior to conducting One-way ANOVA, however, Levene's test, which assesses variance homogeneity in different samples, was employed. As can be seen in Table 5, Levene's test indicated equal variances ($p > 0.05$), hence the appropriateness of conducting a parametric test such as ANOVA.

TABLE 5.
LEVENE'S TEST OF VARIANCE HOMOGENEITY

Levene's statistics	df1	df2	Sig.
0.467	2	89	0.629

The results from One-way ANOVA revealed that proficiency differed significantly across the three subgroups of critical thinking: $F(2, 89) = 7.57$, $p < 0.05$. In other words, the main effect of critical thinking on English language proficiency is significant. Table 6 presents the results of One-way ANOVA for low, mid, and high levels of critical thinking and proficiency.

TABLE 6.
THE RESULTS OF ONE-WAY ANOVA FOR LEVELS OF CRITICAL THINKING AND PROFICIENCY

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1145.008	2	572.504	7.573	.001
Within Groups	6728.209	89	75.598		
Total	7873.217	91			

In the light of the above, the researcher used a post hoc comparison of means in order to locate the differences among means. To this end, Scheffe test, which allows very powerful testing of grouped means against other grouped means, was used. The results of the post-hoc Scheffe test indicated that, at the level of 0.05, there was no significant difference between the proficiency scores of the two low and mid critical thinking groups. However, the difference between the proficiency scores of the high group and those of the two other groups was significant in such a way that the proficiency scores of the high group were greater than those of the mid and low groups (Table 7).

TABLE 7.
THE RESULTS OF POST-HOC SCHEFFE TEST FOR PROFICIENCY

	N	Subset for alpha = .05	
		1	2
low	26	40.92	
mid	35	43.54	
high	31		49.55
Sig.		.506	1.000

VI. DISCUSSION

Placement tests have always functioned as one of the most demanding gate keepers to a myriad of workplaces and academic institutions in the majority of countries. Their growing significance calls for an investigation into the way such tests and their different sections are allied with cognitive notions of current interest in psychology and in language pedagogy. One such notion is the ability to think critically. The present study was conducted to see if there was a statistically significant relationship between EFL learners' critical thinking ability and their performance on the Interchange Objective Placement Test. The results of the study are discussed below.

A. *The Relationship between Critical Thinking and Learners' English Proficiency*

The results of Pearson product-moment correlation showed significant and positive correlations between the total score for proficiency and four subscales of WGCTA: Drawing inferences, Argument evaluation, Deductive reasoning, and Logical interpretation. Although no significant correlation was found between proficiency and Recognizing assumptions ($p > 0.05$), it can be strongly claimed by the researcher that critical thinking is a crucial factor in explaining EFL learners' high proficiency levels. This finding is quite in line with that obtained by Fahim et al. (2010), and similar to those obtained in other studies (Kokinda, 1989; McCutcheon et al., 1992; Villavicencio, 2011; Yeh & Wu, 1992).

B. *Prediction of English Language Proficiency Subcomponents by Critical Thinking*

The predictive power of critical thinking subscales for English language proficiency was gauged by conducting the regression analysis the results of which were indicative of predicting 16% of the variances in proficiency scores by a combination of Logical interpretation, Drawing inferences, and Recognizing assumptions (Table 3). While the Recognizing assumptions subscale was predictive of lower grades on the Objective Test, the Logical interpretation subscale was the best predictor for proficiency scores, indicating that high scorers in Logical interpretation received higher grades on the proficiency test. It was also the sole predictor of the listening and the reading subcomponents of the Interchange Objective Placement Test. Therefore, Logical interpretation, which refers to interpreting evidence to decide if conclusions are legitimate or not, may be of prime importance for developing receptive skills like listening and reading.

C. *The Role of Total Critical Thinking Scores in English Language Proficiency*

Having conducted the correlation analysis, the researchers found a significant relationship ($p < 0.01$) between total scores for critical thinking and learners' English proficiency scores. In addition, the results of One-way ANOVA and Post-Hoc Scheffe test revealed the three groups of learners classified based on their critical thinking scores, namely, High Critical thinking, Mid Critical thinking, and Low Critical thinking learners, demonstrated different levels of proficiency. In other words, the high critical thinking group enjoyed higher proficiency scores than the mid and low critical thinking counterparts. This finding is similar to those found in other studies in which critical thinking proved to be an important correlate of academic performance (e.g., McCutcheon et al., 1992; Villavicencio, 2011; Yeh & Wu, 1992), and quite in line with Fahim et al. (2010) who concluded that there is a direct relationship between critical thinking and the scores on the reading module of TOEFL. Therefore, not paying enough attention to critical thinking in foreign language classes, in turn, may lead to children's inability of obtaining excellence in English proficiency required of them to be able to perform well in placement situations.

The present study has some useful implications for classroom instruction. Since critical thinking skills can be developed and taught (Halpern, 1993; McKown, 1997), and due to the findings of the present study and those of the other studies mentioned above, it is suggested that critical thinking be developed as a core academic skill so that multiple educational outcomes are accomplished by learners. As far as English language classrooms are concerned, critical thinking can be enhanced through teachers' manipulation and mediation of learners' cognitive abilities. This may simply be accomplished, for example, by asking challenging questions which raise learners' critical awareness. Fisher (2003, cited in Jarvis, 2005) suggests seven types of questions that can stimulate critical thinking: Context, temporal order, particular events, intentions, choices, meaning (meta-discourse message), and telling. As a case in point, 'debate' is an essential activity which presupposes freedom of speech as one of the preconditions for the investigation of and judgment about contemporary problems. However, granting learners freedom of speech in every way possible may disturb classroom environment which is often characterized as emphasizing discipline and obedience on the part of learners. This may be even more evident in foreign language classes where a confluence of cultural, social, biological, personality, contextual, and racial factors are involved.

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Figurative Language and Stylistic Function in J. P. Clark-Bekederemo's Poetry

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Abstract—Earlier studies on J.P Clark-Bekederemo's poetry have concentrated on literary and some linguistic features, highlighting the relation of theme and figuration in the works. However, such studies have paid little attention to the role figurative language plays in foregrounding stylistic functions in the texts, which is very crucial for a comprehensive description and interpretation of the poet's idiolect. This study, therefore, investigates the stylistic value of figuration as semantic signifiers or reinforcers in the poetry. Specifically, with M.A.K. Halliday's three metafunctions of language viz: ideational, interpersonal, and textual, as the analytical model, the study examines the use of figurative devices such as imagery, metaphorization, rhetorical operations, humour, and figures of sound, to foreground aspects of meaning in the texts, in relation to context of situation and textual function. The study posits that any serious stylistic exploration of J.P Clark-Bekederemo's poetry and poetry in general, must foreground the role figurations play in conveying textual messages and producing aesthetic effects.

Index Terms—J. P. Clark-Bekederemo, poetry, figurative language, stylistic function

I. INTRODUCTION

The role played by figurative language in encoding the meaning of a literary text cannot be over emphasized. Specifically, it serves both functional and artistic purposes. This infers that, figurative language acts as semantic signifiers in texts and also helps the literary artist in achieving beauty in form.

The critical fact that emerges from the foregoing is that, figurative language constitutes the cornerstone of the literariness or ornamental nature of literary language, as it enables the writer to exploit and manipulate the latent potentials of language, in sundry ways, for specific stylistic effects. Importantly, this pattern of language use is more predominant in poetry than other genres of literature (i.e. drama and prose). Balogun (1996) avers that,

What distinguishes poetry from the other two major genres ...is the emphasis it places on the imaginative use of language... it is the common practice of the poet to use words figuratively and hence the proliferation of figures of speech, collectively called imagery, in poetry (p.349-350).

Ogunsiji (2000) adds that, figurative language is "... a form of picture language" (p.56). The implication of this viewpoint is that, figurations do not only decorate poems and endow them with aesthetic value, they also convey connotative meanings and produce certain special effects, which enrich the texts and make their meanings more precise and concrete. According to Balogun (1996), this fact explains why, in poetry, "... we predominantly look beyond the ordinary denotative meaning of the language to its connotative or implied meaning" (p.349).

The present study, therefore, adds to the corpus of works on J.P. Clark-Bekederemo's poetry, by investigating the role played by figurative language in producing the desired meanings and aesthetic effects in the poetry.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW / THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Stylistics is the branch of general linguistics which focuses on style (i.e. the specific way a particular writer or speaker expresses himself), particularly in works of literature. According to Cluett and Kampeas (1979), it is the judgment of the tangible manifestation of style.

Over the years various theories have been propounded by different scholars, to explicate the concept of language and its use, particularly in literary circles. This fact underscores the critical place of language in human existence, as it constitutes the bedrock of human socialization and civilization. The Russian formalism of the 1920s and the structuralism school of the 1960s, postulate the existence of a special "poetic language", as distinct from "ordinary" or "scientific" language. Wellek and Warren (1963) also distinguishes a poetic use of language, in the sense that, it is non-referential, non-practical, non-casual, etc (p.22-26). This implies that "poetic language" is unique as a result of its conscious use of linguistic and imagistic devices to foreground aspects of meaning.

Another fundamental aspect of the language of poetry is its deviant character. The language of poetry inherently and overtly deviates from linguistic conventions or norms, at all levels of its use i.e. semantic, phonological, lexical, syntactic, etc. According to Crystal (1987), it is this deviant and abnormal feature of the language of poetry that stylistics focuses on (p.71). Chomsky's Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG), is also germane to the present

discourse, as it postulates the disparity and relations between deep and surface structures. The point is that the meaning of surface linguistic constructs like poetry is retrievable only in the deep structure.

However, since the primary concern of the present study is on the functional aspect of language, we shall adopt M. A. K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), as our analytical model, in the sense that it focuses not only on the structure of language, but also on the properties of discourse and its functions in specific social and cultural situations. Specifically, the study adopts Halliday's three multifunctions of language viz: ideational, interpersonal, and textual for the textual analysis. The ideational metafunction focuses on the subject matter or field of discourse, while the interpersonal metafunction refers to the tenor of discourse i.e. the social relationship that exists among participants in a given discourse situation, which has the potentials to influence or shape language use. The textual metafunction is particularly relevant to our study, as it focuses on the internal organization and communicative nature of a text. The pre-occupation of this study is to show how figurative language is organized in J.P. Clark-Bekederemo's poetry, to foreground aspects of meaning and aesthetics in the texts.

The language of African literature has its socio-cultural peculiarities. The historical fact of colonialism, which made countries in the continent either Anglophone or Francophone, etc, has made the imperialist languages the media of literary expression. However, African writers have devised various strategies to contextualize indigenous meaning in these imperialist languages. Adejare (1992) avers that traces of African mother tongue are most pronounced in the works of African writers. Alo (1998) summarized these "traces" or peculiar linguistic characteristics of the literature viz: coinages, borrowings, native similes and metaphors, native rhetorical devices, transliteration, native proverbs and idioms, etc. As the textual analysis in this study demonstrates, J.P. Clark-Bekederemo's idiolect exhibits aspects of these interlingual features.

The dominant critical focus on African poetry has been on the traditional literary and thematic features of texts. Linguistic/stylistic studies are generally sparse (see Eyoh, 1997). The few works that attempt a linguistic/stylistic appraisal of poetic creations in the continent include: Anozie's (1985) "Equivalent Structures in Soyinka's Poetry: Toward a Linguistic Methodology in African Poetry Criticism," Ofuani's (1987) *A Stylistic Analysis of Okot P'Bitek's Poetry*, Osakwe's (1992) *The Language of Wole Soyinka's Poetry: A Diatype of English*, Adejare's (1992) *Language and Style in Soyinka: A Systemic Textlinguistic Study of a Literary Idiolect*, Eyoh's (1997) *J.P. Clark-Bekederemo's Poetry: A Study in Stylistic Criticism*, Edonmi's (2000) *A Text-Linguistic Enquiry into Osundare's Poetic Idiolect*, and Ushie's (2001) *Many Voices, Many Visions: A Stylistic Study of 'New' Nigerian Poetry*.

Importantly, from the corpus of available literature, J.P. Clark-Bekederemo's poetry has not been given intensive linguistic enquiry like other African poets, such as Soyinka and Osundare. In fact, Eyoh's (1997) *J.P. Clark-Bekederemo's Poetry: A Study in Stylistic Criticism* remains the only full-scale work that applies linguistic insights and methods to the study of the poet. However this work is limited by its triadic focus on phonostylistics, diction, and animal symbolism. Although the scholar explores aspects of figures of sound (i.e. alliteration, rhyme, repetition), it is in relation to the "fast and lively" African musical rhythm. The scholar posits that African musical rhythm in Clark-Bekederemo's poetry is realized principally through these three phonostylistic devices.

III. THE CONCEPTS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE AND STYLISTIC FUNCTION

According to Ogunsiji (2000), Language may be said to work in two broad dimensions namely literal and figurative dimensions. The literal dimension of language use deploys words in their usual and obvious sense without any additional suggestions. On the other hand, the figurative dimension deals with the suggestive or connotative use of language (p.56).

Figuration, therefore, implies extended or associative meanings i.e. the use of language in an imaginative manner, to elaborate a thesis or proposition and also to appeal to the emotions of the reader or listener. Ogbulogo (2005) explains:

Literature as an aspect of communication expresses meaning. Incidentally, the language of literature is coded in a creative way, using figures of speech. The meaning deriving from figures of speech is not the meaning of the different components of the expressions. Thus, figures of speech require special attention and explication (p.73).

As we have earlier observed, figuration is a critical consideration or element to the composition of poetry texts, in the sense that, it helps the poet to economize words and, at the same time, make his works picturesque, concrete and adequate. According to Ogbulogo (2005), in semantics, figures of speech help writers to extend the meaning of concepts or phenomena, resulting in polysemy or transfer of senses. Thus, figurative language is often perceived to be metaphoric. The scholar adds that, figurative language covers different devices which are semantically or grammatically marked or unusual. Balogun (1996) corroborates this view when he averred that, the "... consequence of the poet's imaginative approach to language is that in poetry everyday words and expressions often acquire new meanings" (p.349). Hence Ogunsiji (2000) avers that, "if one writes without using figures of speech, one's speech or writing will be "dry" (p.56). Figurations include: simile, metaphor, personification, alliteration, assonance, paradox, oxymoron, etc.

Stylistic function, on the other hand, is an aspect of language function. According to Alo (1998), language function can be explained in two ways. Firstly, it refers to the specific use to which a writer or speaker puts the language (i.e. description, explanation, argument, persuasion, humour etc). Secondly, in stylistic description it refers to the communicative value or role of specific language categories (i.e. sentence, clause, word group, collocations, word and morpheme), in given social situations. Language function, therefore, implies varieties of language that are defined

according to use. Halliday (1978) labeled language as a “social semiotic” in the sense that it evolves in a context and the environment in which people deploy language to serve communicative needs can shape its form and meaning. The analysis of the texts would demonstrate that J. P. Clark- Bekederemo’s poetry under study is dense with figurations which not only preserve and project the expressive beauty of the works, but also help to capture intentions more vividly and produce desired meanings and effect on the audience or readers.

IV. BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF THE POET

Born December 6, 1933 in Kiagbodo in the Ijaw area of present-day Delta State of Nigeria, to Ijaw and Urhobo parents (His father was Ijaw and mother Urhobo), Johnson Pepper Clark-Bekederemo had his primary school at Okrika (1940-1948) and Jeremi (1948), before proceeding to Government College, Ughelli, for his secondary education (1948-1953). He attended the University of Ibadan between 1955 and 1960. At Ibadan, together with a handful of other writers, he played a prominent role in establishing Nigeria and the continent of Africa as one of the major centres of Literature in English in the twentieth century. Of his Ibadan years, Wren (1984) remarks that Clark-Bekederemo “showed the most precocious talent that West African literary history had yet seen.” The poet has worked as an information officer, journalist, and University professor. Apart from his poetry, Clark-Bekederemo is also a frontline African dramatist and scholar. He has also written a novel (travelogue) *America, their America*(1964) , which is an account of his sojourn in America as a Parvin fellow at Princeton University (1962-63)

V. CONTEXTUAL ISSUES IN THE POETRY

That language and context are two inseparable phenomena is a fact that has been long standing and established (see Leech, 1983:13). Morley (1985: 4) points out that, “context serves to itemize those aspects of the situation which have a bearing on the form used”. The critical point in that, context is an important aspect of language use. As we shall demonstrate in the analysis of the texts, the true meaning of a text can be thought of as a relationship between its linguistic elements and whatever contextual evidence is available for clarifying it. In J. P. Clark-Bekederemo’s poetry, certain variables constitute the context of situation. These include: genre type, background experiences of the poet, socio-political realities, and subject-matter.

VI. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

J.P. Clark-Bekederemo has been writing poetry for over fifty years now (1958-date). Therefore, the writer’s oeuvre is so expansive that a study of this scope can not reflect all the published poems or titles. The analysis is, thus, based on poems that are purposively selected from *A Decade of Tongues* (1981, i.e. poems written between 1958 and 1968), *State of the Union* (1985), *Mandela and other Poems* (1988), *A Lot from Paradise* (1999), and *Once Again a Child* (2004). The titles cut across the three distinct phases of the author’s career viz: early (1958-1968), later (1970-1988), and latest (1999-date), and thus, strike a temporal balance between the writer’s old and new poetry. The analysis focuses on imagery, metaphorization, rhetorical operations, humour, and figures of sound, as these figurative devices are not only recurrent in the texts but are also stylistically strategic.

A. Imagery and Symbolism

According to Eyoh (1997), imagery is “...a mental picture created through words and the imaginative faculty, manifesting itself in various figures of speech” (p.125). The scholar contends that, mental and imaginative faculties, as well as feeling are central to the study and efficacy of imagery in a work of art. Eyoh (1997) adds that, the concept is “... a traditional element of poetry, constituting an important stylistic tool in the hands of poets of all ages” (p.126). In J. P. Clark-Bekederemo’s poetry, this trait manifests abundantly. In “War Effort” (*Once Again a Child*), J.P. Clark-Bekederemo admits that he is a “bush boy”. In extending this submission, many of his poems are laden with rustic ecological imagery, which reflect the geographical, physical or socio-cultural background of the poet. In “My Grandmother Mojiriemu” (*Once Again a Child*), for instance, there is the deployment of plant symbolism in the following expressions: Perfect graft to her tree (line 6), her sap (line 7), climb all over her (line 9), for a fruit I always seemed to need (line 10 & 11). All these describe the poet persona’s relationship with Mojiriemu – a woman with no child of her own but who provided shades and fruits for children of other wives. In other figurative expressions used in many of the other poems in the text, there is recurrent reference to things of rustic origin/background. Consider the objects of similes in the following excerpts from “A Night Act in the Day” (*Once Again a Child*), for instance

(1) A free display one afternoon...

Scattering like a handful
of cowry shells a priest cast
to reach some hidden truth.

(2) Placing her head on the ground
Her palms, her platter Then, like
A cross between bat and owl, her head
Of coven, as if from its depths...

These references reflect the religious/metaphysical worldview of the poet’s African origins.

In further depicting the rustic origin of his poems, it is pertinent to mention the regular aquatic imagery that characterize the poems. For purposes of illustration in this study, a look at “My Sister and Her Fish” (*Once Again a Child*), where the following imagistic word and larger expressions are found, is important:

- (i) it was ebb tide in a creek (line 1)
- (ii) ashore (line 5)
- (iii) water weeds (line 5)

The title itself reminds the reader of the geographical origin of the poet where rivers are predominant and fishing the main occupation of the Ijaw people. The critical stylistics point to note here is that, in addition to the aesthetic qualities of these and some other figurative expressions in the poems, they further serve in indicating that the poems are not just products of imagination but that they are also largely a product of true experience.

B. Metaphorization

In the words of Halliday (1985), metaphor is “the variation in the use of words such that words have transferred meaning” (p.320). In most cases, metaphorical expressions are semantically odd and syntactically incongruent. Michael Short (1982) views semantic deviation as meaning relations which are logically inconsistent or paradoxical in some ways and also classifies metaphor as semantic deviation (see Ayeomoni, 2003). These attributes compel readers to think harder before arriving at their true meaning.

In “Of Sects and Fellowships” (*State of the Union*), there is the use of “tide”, ‘souls’ and “market place” as a metaphor of rottenness characteristic of Christianity in contemporary times, which also describe the tragedy of the people who fall victims of the rottenness and condemn religious merchandising respectively. The first three lines of the poem re-written as follows describe the metaphors:

Original texts	Re-write texts
There is a tide across the land	There is an unstable tide in the
Unstable has turned souls away	Land which has turned souls away from
From cathedrals to the market place	Cathedrals to the market place

The word “tide” suggests turbulence; “cathedral” is a holy place and “market place” is suggestive of a place where all sorts of things take place, mostly evil. The soul is a metaphor of innocent people who often fall victims of false prophecy and religious hypocrisy. The metaphors are reinforced by the mockery expression “... are full of men and women in direct contact with God”. To further enhance the satire, unlikely or unusual matters are associated with the duties of false men of God: Lines 9 – 11 of the poem suggest this and further describe the ignorance of the devotees of these religious sects. The lines are reproduced below:

...On any matters from queries
 At work to sale of rice while pews
 Only fill for weddings and death

Noticeable in the excerpt above is the use of the word “only”. This expression pre-supposes that there are some other things the pews should be filled with. It suggests also that these other things are better than ‘weddings’ and ‘death’. What these other things are depends on individual readers. The use of “figures” in place of people in the second line of the second rhetorical stanza is to reduce (and therefore condemn) false prophets to nothing:

What is there is a flaming candle
 Upheld by figures in flowing gowns...

The indirectness in the use of “a book” in the fourth line of the second stanza is strategic. The choice of the expression instead of “Bible” is for the purpose of describing what the holy book has become in the hand of the devilish men who call themselves men of God. Quite paradoxically, some of these figures in flowing gowns cannot even read the book they are carrying about “cover to cover”. The gullibility or quietude of the people is likened to that of sheep in the expression “Draw flocks to their immolation”. The underlined word “flocks” describes the stupidity and docility (i.e as stupid and docile as sheep) of the clients of these business organizations that their organizers call churches. By using these various metaphors, J.P. Clark-Bekederemo is able to achieve what Soyinka achieves in his play *The Trials of Brother Jero*.

Also, in “Election Report” (*State of the Union*), Clark-Bekederemo uses “shadow” to be suggestive of calamities, evils, unrests, that are often the negative outcomes of the sort of election report, which the poem describes. The following lines drawn from the poem are relevant in this context:

It was not necessary really
 To call on prophet or fortune-teller to see
 The new shadow falling over the land.

In *Once Again a Child*, there is the transferred metaphor of tree and its shade as contained in the poem “My Grandmother Mojiriemu” (p. 7). In this poem, Clark-Bekederemo likens his grandmother to a tree, which offers him shade and provides him fruit he always seemed to need. These are metaphors of protection, love and care. The horticultural images in the choices of the words “Sap”, “Fruit”, “Grafts” accentuate this metaphor. All of them project Mojiriemu (the poet’s grandmother) as a symbol of perfect and natural kindness. This becomes understandable when we

reason, that “She gave birth to no child herself” but still allowed someone else’s children to “climb all over her” and “running to her for shade”. Nothing best describes the woman more than a tree. Ordinarily, trees do not say no to anybody that comes under them for shade.

C. Rhetorical Operations

In many of the poems, under study, J.P. Clark-Bekederemo enlists question strategy to purge certain feelings and impress on readers certain attitudes. Such questions are called rhetorical because they are not congruent types, which demand readers response(s); they are asked based on an implicit common assumption by the poet that readers (because they share his experience and have common socio-cultural background) would be able to read senses into them. An examination of a few instances of the use of this trope will suffice here.

In “Victoria Island” (*State of the Union*), a twelve-line poem, J.P. Clark-Bekederemo expresses dissatisfaction over the scramble for and partitioning of the Victoria Island in Lagos and condemns how people were deceived to believe that the land was taken away from them and was being developed by public money in the interest of all. The poet uses the poem to expose one of the excesses of the rich, particularly, leaders in Nigeria. The land was originally owned by a family before the existence of Nigeria as a country. In the spirit of patriotism, they let it go to the government. Now, it has been turned to a place reserved for few individuals who squander millions of naira among themselves and their mistresses. This story is disheartening. The questions in the last line of the poem-“Why should the country not be sick?” conveys the moral of this poem and is capable of stimulating unpleasant reactions from readers. The question presupposes that as long as the sort of discrimination and cruelty described in the poem remain in our country, the country would continue to suffer ruin. This is certainly the brand of Art which communicates “... a call to battle, a summon to positive change...” (Oha, 1994). While the rhetorical question described in this poem is instigating and expository, the one in “Of Sects and Fellowships” (*State of the Union*) is sarcastic and demeaning. The question is one-stanza:

What is there in a flaming candle
Upheld by figures in flowing gowns,
Draws flocks to their immolation
Upon a bell and a book the best
Of them, shedding incense, cannot
Even read from cover to cover?

The question suggests implicitly that there is nothing in the flaming candle that fake preachers, prophets often burn and the bell they use to draw people and even the “Bible” for they themselves do not understand it (see lines 14 & 15). This kind of question serves to purge the feelings of annoyance and infect readers with such feelings. It can therefore be regarded as an affective strategy in Clark’s poetry (see “An old man on Trial” (*Mandela and Other Poems*), “The Court Beyond” (*A Lot from Paradise*), “A Prayer” (*A Lot from Paradise*), “A Matter of Weight” (*A Lot from Paradise*) etc., for more examples on this strategy).

D. Humour

In many of the poems under study, J.P. Clark-Bekederemo demonstrates that poetry is not entirely a mentally sapping enterprise; it should also relate to life as closely as possible. Life is an admixture of pain and gain, happiness and sadness, laughter and weeping, etc. Though Sweeney (1979) averred that “Literature and art generally are images of life, not life itself” (p.3). genuine art should capture this contrast or essence. This viewpoint is corroborated by Elechi Amadi when he opined that “Man needs aesthetics and relaxation to keep him going.. He must be given the opportunity to look at himself and **laugh** and weep” (emphasis mine). As an art form, the poet knows that his work should not only carry or project the gruelling burdens of society and the attendant pain, but should also generate exciting feelings through the aesthetics of humour and fun. J.P. Clark-Bekederemo achieves this through the incorporation of poems that are amusing or humorous to his readers. As would be shown shortly, though these poems are funny, typical of the inherent wittiness of African humours, they impress on readers the need to do some mental calculation before comprehending their true senses.

In “What Did You Do to Me?” (*A Lot from Paradise*), for instance, readers are delighted by the funny question a woman addresses to a man, probably her husband. It is a funny account of what happens between them, which eventually leads to her pregnancy. The three-line poem is presented below:

What did you do to me that night,
Although we hardly touched?
I was drunk for days after.

Two words have been given meaning extension in the poem above. They include “touched” and “drunk”. These imply “sexual engagement” and ‘pregnant’, respectively.

Similarly, this strategy is found in “You Want Your Man” (*A Lot from Paradise*), “A Man Will Come” (*A Lot from Paradise*), “Other Women” *A Lot from Paradise* etc. In “A Man Will Come”, there is the extension of sexual matter described above. Using the third person narrative style, Clark-Bekederemo describes the sexual tricks of the African man on the woman. The poet personae is probably a woman who understands this tricks very well and deems it necessary to educate fellow women whom she addresses as “You” (i.e. the second person which, in this context includes herself) in the poem reproduced below:

From time to time
 A man will come
 Crying to you with all
 Your gifts about you
 He will lean on your breast
 And you will pat him on the head
 Believing all he wants is milk

The last line of the poem above pre-supposes, "all he wants is not milk but other things". Though these other things are not textually conveyed, mature readers are expected to supply them. With this strategy, readers are involved in the creative task of including, filling in or inserting missing textual ideas. Words and expressions suggestive of humor in the poem include "from time to time", "crying", "lean", "pat", and "milk". They evoke laughter and generate some pleasure in readers (particularly male readers) who realize certainly that they have been "caught" (i.e. their tricks discovered) and would probably feel unruffled, for more tricks lie in their brains undiscovered.

Also, in "Where Do they all Go" (*State of the Union*), the big wigs in Nigerian government, particularly the corrupt ones, are ridiculed through the humorous expression "Ascend to thrones termites dispute". This expression describes the fate of the set of politicians "When by force or choice" (line 2), they leave their various exalted positions. The choice of the imagery of termites here is symbolic. In the Nigerian context, the king of termites is a miniature king. So, when somebody occupies an unimportant position and is proud about it, he is simply regarded as "the king of termites". On an extended level of interpretation, when we consider the fact that termites preserve a very small place for their kings in their mounds, we can imagine how small the thrones they dispute would be.

Through this humor, corrupt leaders (politicians in Nigeria) are warned against using their offices for accumulating wealth for, whether they like it or not, all would end. It also serves to ridicule the Nigerian politicians who are so power-thirsty that they go to any length to occupy (even unimportant) leadership positions.

E. Figures of Sound

According to Balogun (1996), figures of sound are "sound devices used by poets to reinforce meaning in poetry or to create auditory pleasure" (p. 356). The scholar adds that, these devices include alliteration, onomatopoeia, repetition, assonance, consonance, rhyme and retrain. J.P. Clark-Bekederemo is meticulous in the deployment of sounds in many of his poems under study. These sounds are such that generate musical delights in readers and are suggestive of the subject matter of the poems in which they are used. As would be shown shortly, many devices are used in generating musical quality in the poems under study. These include alliteration, pun and onomatopoeia as found, for example, in "The Leaders" (*A Decade of Tongues*), "Lost Rite" (*Once Again a Child*) and "Two Moods of Princeton" (*A Decade of Tongues*), respectively.

In "The Leader", there is the repetition of the voiceless alveolar stop /k/ in line 4. When read aloud, the expression "Cousin the killer of cows" generates a sort of musical pattern that is intriguing. This device is also noticeable in "There, ding dong ding" drawn from "Two Moods of Princeton". The /k/ and /d/ rhythms produced by the repetition of the letters underlined in the excerpts above delight the senses by producing auditory impacts on readers. This device thus serves to make readers "hear" the poem and not just "read" it. This is also the case with repetition of the approximant /w/ in "War Effort" (*Once Again a Child*) referred to earlier. In this poem, the /w/ sound is repeated in thirteen places. This relates systematically with the subject of war, which the poem evokes. The import of this strategy becomes clearer when it is viewed against the background that it is a one-stanza poem with just eleven lines.

In "Lost Rites" (*Once Again a Child*), J.P. Clark-Bekederemo plays on two homophonic words "rites" and "rights". The poem suggests that many rites of passage the poetic personae has gone through as a child, now give him the right to re-enter his hometown after his many years of flight around the world.

Many of the poems, particularly the early ones, are also wrapped in musical beauties through repetitive use of sounds at strategic points. J.P. Clark-Bekederemo targets mostly and explores the end point of his lines as in "Pub-song" (*A Decade of Tongues*), "Tide-wash" (*A Decade of Tongues*), "The water maid" (*A Decade of Tongues*) and "The year's first rain" (*A Decade of Tongues*) to mention just a few, for sound innovation. Our preoccupation shortly, is a practical demonstration of how sounds are used to load or equip the poems with meaning and aesthetic potentials through a thorough examination of some of them.

In "Tide-wash", for instance, we notice the deployment of sound to relate to the excited feelings, which the poem evokes. The poem gives account of a bath in the stream, involving the poet and some other people. This, no doubt, is a delightful experience though there is a sense of disappointment in the second stanza, where the poet indicates that they are "depleted" and 'exposed'. The delightful experience is conveyed by the deployment of voiced sounds at the end of every line of the poem. The eight-line poem has the following word ending:

Line 1: Stream
 Line 2: Sun
 Line 3: Fun
 Line 4: Steam
 Line 5: Never
 Line 6: Sand

Line 7: Stand

Line 8: Ever

It is noticeable that, the eight lines end with the sounds /m/, /n/, /n/, /m/, /ɔ/, /d/, /d/ and /ɔ/ respectively. This pattern is certainly strategic and cannot be taken for granted in interpreting the poem. For instance, they are sounds that are technically called voiced sound. With the exception of lines 5 and 8 which end with vowel /ɔ/, all other sounds are consonant sounds. These consonant sounds are in consonant with the mood of the poem suggesting it as that of firmness. Also, all the consonant sounds are stop consonants whose mechanism of production relates to the sudden end that the voyager's enjoyment suffers as the tide-wash depletes and exposes them (line 7 and 8) on the naked sand.

Similarly in "Pub-song", sounds are deployed for conveying the sort of excited rap and ecstasy typical of pub-songs. The eight-line poem has the following sound ending:

Line 1: /ei/ say

Line 2: /z/ bawds

Line 3: /z/ gourds.

Line 4: /ei/ day

Line 5: /t/ meant

Line 6: /n/ broken

Line 7: /n/ open

Line 8: /t/ repent

As could be noticed, this poem is similarly constructed with the one discussed above. Line 1 of each rhymes with line 4, the same with line 2 and 3, 5 and 8 and 6 and 7, respectively. This design is a pointer to the fact that the poems are deliberately constructed to yield that pattern. Also, in "The water maid", five pairs of sound rhythm are noticeable thus:

Line 1 and 2: /l/ whole and soul.

Line 3 and 4: /t/ blight and night.

Line 5 and 6: /i/ me and me

Line 7 and 8: /ɔ/ thunder and over

Line 9 and 10: /ai/ dry and die

(See also "The Year's First Rain", "Return of the Fishermen", "The Outsider", etc.).

"Agbor Dancer" (*A Decade of Tongues*), a twenty-line poem and "The Imprisonment of Obatala", a sixteen-line poem reflect the following end-sounding patterns respectively:

- (a) /m/ /k/ /t/ /b/
 /m/ /k/ /t/ /b/
 / / /t/ /s/ /l/
 /n/ /t/ /ŋ/ /s/
 /n/ /t/ /ŋ/ / /
- (b) /s/ /t/ /s/
 /s/ /m/ /n/
 /s/ /t/ /s/
 /s/ /m/ /ŋ/
 /θ/ /k/ /t/
 /θ/ /k/ /t/

These poems are products of a creative mind, desperately questing for aesthetic pleasure in his art and having sufficient time, energy and drive (being a youth) to achieve this aim, as the poems are from his early works. We are convinced that the poet certainly spends much time before achieving the sort of artistic patterning shown in the analysis of the poems above.

Perhaps, it is expedient to mention that, this kind of deliberate and exquisite sound patterning noticeable in the early poems of J.P. Clark-Bekederemo is conspicuously missing in the later poems under study. Except in "War Effort" from *Once Again a Child* where the sound /w/ is repeated in 13 places, to relate to the subject of war which the poem discusses, the poems in *A Lot from Paradise* and *Of Sleep and Old Age* are certainly not as musical.

VII. CONCLUSION

In this study, we have examined the use of figurative language to foreground aspects of meaning and achieve auditory pleasure in J.P. Clark-Bekederemo's poetry. The study reveals that figuration is a significant feature of poetry, and that the author has deliberately deployed this device to effectively encode the meaning of the texts under study and also achieve aesthetic value, in relation to context of situation and textual function. This implies that, the linguistic analyst of J.P. Clark-Bekederemo's poetry, and poetry in general, should not take figurative locutions for granted when interpreting the texts.

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The Effects of Explicit/Implicit Instruction and Feedback on the Development of Persian EFL Learners' Pragmatic Competence in Suggestion Structures

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Abstract—To date, a number of studies have investigated the speech act of suggestion. However, most of these studies have focused on the production – a sociolinguistic perspective – rather than the acquisition of this speech act. The study reported in this article aimed to compare the effects of implicit versus explicit instruction and feedback in the development of pragmatic competence of Iranian EFL learners of English in terms of the speech act of suggestion. The participants of this study consisted of 100 intermediate EFL learners of English who were randomly assigned to four experimental groups and a control group. Each experimental group participated in two twenty-minute successive sessions. The first experimental group received explicit instruction and explicit feedbacks, the second experimental group received explicit instruction and implicit feedbacks and the remaining two experimental groups were taught using implicit-explicit and implicit-implicit instruction and feedbacks, respectively. Data were collected using an immediate post-test as well as a delayed post-test which was administered a month after the post-test. Results of the study showed that the explicit-explicit method of instruction has a much better influence on Persian EFL learners. However, the results also demonstrated that the students tend to forget the instructed materials after four weeks. It follows from the results of this study that the development of pragmatic competence in terms of suggestion speech act is a complex process which proceeds in a non-linear fashion.

Index Terms—interlanguage pragmatics, explicit instruction, implicit instruction, explicit feedback, implicit feedback, focus on form, focus on forms, suggestion

I. INTRODUCTION

The study of pragmatics involves exploring the ability of language users to produce or comprehend language in a particular context. Stalnaker (1972) believes that pragmatics is "the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed" (p. 383). The teaching of pragmatics, therefore, aims to facilitate "the learners' sense of being able to find socially appropriate language for the situations that they encounter" (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003). According to Bardovi-Harlig (2001) and Kasper (1997), second language (L2) learners, regardless of their proficiency level, display a remarkably different pragmatic system than that of native speakers of that language – in terms of both production and comprehension of the language.

A number of studies (e.g., Boxer & Pickering, 1995; Bouton, 1994; Kasper 1997; Bardovi-Harlig, 2001) have shown that EFL learners with high grammatical proficiency are not necessarily competent in pragmatic aspects of the FL. As Boxer & Pickering (1995) rightly point out:

Grammatically advanced learners may not know how to use appropriate language in different situations and deviate from pragmatic norms of the target-language. One can find examples of pragmatic failure regarding L2 learners when they are involved in the communication acts. They may directly translate speech acts from their mother tongues into the FL when they are trying to get the intended meaning across. Unlike grammatical errors, pragmatic failures are often neglected by the teacher and sometimes are ascribed to some other causes, such as insolence. (p. 47)

Along the same line, Kasper (1997) and Bardovi-Harlig (2001) maintain that there are significant differences between FL learners and native-speakers with regards to their understanding as well as production of a given speech act. Taking this problem into account, they emphasize the need for teaching pragmatics in both second and foreign language classrooms. Following this call for more investigative attempts, recent years have witnessed an enormous interest in the

instruction of pragmatics to EFL and ESL learners (Kasper, 2001; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Martinez-Flor, Usó & Fernández, 2003; Rose & Kasper, 2001). So far, a number of empirical studies have confirmed the positive effects of teaching various pragmatic features, such as discourse strategies, pragmatic routines, conversational implicature, politeness in requests, interactional norms, and various speech acts (e.g., Billmyer, 1990; Bouton, 1994; Eslami-Rasekh, Eslami-Rasekh, & Fatahi, 2004; Kondo, 2001, 2004; Kubota, 1995; Liddicoat & Crozet, 2001; Lyster, 1994; Olshtain & Cohen, 1990; Rose & Ng, 2001; Safont, 2003, 2004, 2005; Salazar, 2003; Trosborg, 2003; Wildner-Bassett, 1994; Wishnoff, 2000). The explicit treatment in such investigations has offered metapragmatic information by describing, explaining and discussing a target linguistic form, in comparison with no-instruction conditions or as compared to native-speaker baseline data. Some other studies have examined the influences of educational approaches to pragmatic enhancement, usually making comparisons between explicit and implicit types of instruction (House, 1996; Takahashi, 2001; Tateyama et al., 1997). In the majority of these studies, explicit instruction has proven more useful than implicit instruction.

Several studies have compared the way people understand and produce speech acts in their first and second languages (e.g., Koike, 1989, 1995 & LePair, 1996). According to Kasper (2001) while there are many observational studies that document what learners produce without any particular intervention by the instructor, there are relatively few studies on the effect of teacher intervention in the acquisition of L2 pragmatic features – a lacuna that the present study is to cover.

Koike and Pearson (2005) claimed that raising learners' awareness of target language functions, or of speech acts and instructing learners how these features can change across different contexts can be accomplished without detailed explanations. In fact, as Koike and Pearson (2005) argue, by virtue of the many similarities among languages in terms of different speech acts, perhaps the only thing that requires careful attention are the ways in which native speakers of a language (in this case English) differ from those of other languages in terms of the realizations of those functions.

Closely related to our discussion is the notion of focus on form (and also focus on forms). According to Long (1991), whereas focus on forms aims to foster the acquisition of individual language items focus on form involves a meaning-focused activity in which attention to form is implicitly accomplished. In other words, as Long states, "focus on form overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication" (pp. 45-46). One may extend this line of argument and suggest that in order for pragmatic functions to be acquired learners' attention need to be directed to them either implicitly or explicitly.

Following Schmidt (1993) argument, in which the "noticing" and "focus on form" concepts are discussed in relation to processing pragmatic input, this study attempts to examine whether instructors can explicitly help learners to focus on pragmatic form through explanation, lists, and rules, or whether learners learn pragmatics more effectively through simple observation and experimenting with language in a communicative context. It also aims to investigate whether instructors can help learners to focus on pragmatic form through explicit or implicit feedback. Tolli and Schmidt's (2008) study examined feedback and concluded that it has an overall positive influence on self-efficacy and goal revision on the part of the students. Also, in previous studies (e.g., Takahashi, 2001 and Tateyama, 2001), it wasn't clear that to what extent, this knowledge is retained over time. Therefore, the current study contributes to the available body of research by comparing the effects of implicit versus explicit instruction and feedback on the development of pragmatic competence of Iranian EFL learners of English in terms of the speech act of suggestion.

Prior to introducing the research questions it is necessary to discuss the speech act of suggestion. Speech act research continues to show that using speech acts is a complex process. This complexity, however, "has not always been recognized in the teaching of speech acts or functions" (Koester, 2002, p. 168). According to McCarthy (1998), textbooks typically try to make real language simple to use and simplify complexity by providing a list of phrase-level options. For example, when learners are working on how to give advice, they may only be practicing a list of phrases such as: 'You should...!', 'Why don't you...?', 'If I were you, I'd...!', and 'You ought to...!'. The basic problem with such lists of phrases, as Koester (2002) claims, is that they tend to disclaim the fact that they are appropriate in certain context.

Kasper (1996b) maintains that "one of the causes of learners' non-target-like pragmatic performance is the incomplete or misleading input provided by pedagogical materials" (p. 18). Presenting real, representative language to learners should be the basic concern of classroom instruction. However, classroom communications often "produce a limited range of speech acts, simplified openings and closings, a lack of politeness marking, and a limited range of discourse markers in the classroom discourse" (pp. 149-169). Therefore, appropriate and adequate input from teaching materials, especially ESL textbooks, becomes crucial in the development of ESL learners' pragmatic competence.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Considering the theoretical and empirical issues discussed so far, the following questions and their corresponding hypotheses were addressed in the present study. Note that, since in the literature there were no study in support or against the research questions posed in this study, null hypotheses were formulated:

1. How is speech act of suggestion learned more effectively by Iranian EFL learners? Using explicit or implicit instruction?

It was predicted that there is no statistically significant difference between explicit and implicit types of instruction

regarding their effects on the use of English suggestions by Iranian EFL learners.

2. How is pragmatic information learned more effectively? Through explicit or implicit feedback, concerning Persian EFL learners' use of suggestions and suggestion responses?

It was predicted that there is no statistically significant difference between explicit and implicit feedback regarding the use of English suggestions by Persian EFL learners.

3. Can any effects from this pragmatic instruction be sustained in Persian EFL learners after four weeks?

There is no evidence that effects of pragmatic instructions could be sustained in Persian EFL learners after a four-week no-instruction period.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

A group of 130 female students of a language institute in Esfahan studying at intermediate level were randomly selected. To make sure that their knowledge of English in terms of grammar, vocabulary and communication skills was relatively the same, an OPT (Oxford Placement Test) was administered and as a result 100 students were chosen as the participants of the study – four experimental groups and one control group with each group comprising twenty students. Those whose scores were 1 SD above and below the mean were selected as the intermediate level. The students' age ranged between 17 and 25. All the students were divided into four experimental groups and a control group.

B. Materials

In this section we will describe (a) the teaching materials used; (b) the way conversations were chosen for the participants; and (c) the ways in which they helped the participants of the study. Teaching materials that were used in this study generally fall into three major categories:

1. Pre-instruction materials (i.e. Oxford Placement Test)
2. While-instruction materials (i.e. Handouts, Conversation Practice, Role-play)
3. Post-instruction materials (i.e. Immediate Post-test, Delayed Post-test)

1. Pre-instruction Materials

Pre-instruction materials, as the name suggests, are those materials that were introduced to the participants prior to getting any kind of instruction. The purpose of using such material was to measure learners' overall knowledge of English. For this part, an Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was used to select the students that best suited the purpose of this study.

Oxford Placement Test is one of the most frequently used placement tests in the field of language teaching, as it encompasses almost every aspect and all levels of language proficiency, ranging from elementary stages of language learning to intermediate levels. It was first designed by Dave Allan (1994) and several revised editions were published since after. This test has proven a useful tool for teachers, researchers and academic institutes to evaluate students' proficiency level in English. This test includes everything needed for grading and placing the students into classes in the most reliable and efficient way possible.

2. While-instruction Materials

While-instruction materials are those that were presented by the teacher during the course of teaching and include mostly classroom activities like classroom drills and role-plays. Firstly, the students were given a handout including a single situational conversation followed by five awareness-raising questions that they had to practice with their teacher in order to choose the best answers possible. This conversation as well as all the other conversations in the present study took place in specific contexts that required the students to fully understand the situation before answering any of the complimentary questions. In other words, our participants had to understand how the interlocutors related to each other, status and also the place where the conversations had taken place, to mark the best answers possible. At the first level of complexity the students were asked about the place of conversations. However, as they moved forward to more complex levels, they were asked to choose the most appropriate relationship, status, etc., between the interlocutors, with regard to the context they were presented with. This was followed by two comprehension questions.

Secondly, students were asked to practice the conversation presented in their handouts with a fellow partner with each student taking the exchangeable role of the higher- or lower-status interlocutor in the conversation. This activity helped the learners to notice certain qualities of the speech act of suggestion like formality and politeness, and provide them with an opportunity to practice different types of suggestions.

Table 1. shows different types of suggestions with corresponding expressions that were used during this activity.

TABLE 1.
DIFFERENT TYPES OF SUGGESTIONS USED FOR CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

TYPE	STRATEGY	EXAMPLE
DIRECT	Performative verb	I suggest that you ... I advise you to ... I recommend that you ...
	Noun of suggestion	My suggestion would be ...
	Imperative	Try using ...
	Negative imperative	Don't try to ...
CONVENTIONALISED FORMS	Specific formulae (interrogative forms)	Why don't you...? How about...? What about...? Have you thought about...?
	Possibility/probability	You can ... You could ... You may ... You might ...
	Should	You should ...
	Need	You need to ...
	Conditional	If I were you, I would ...
INDIRECT	Impersonal	One thing (that you can do) would be Here's one possibility: ... There are a number of options that You ... It would be helpful if you ... It might be better to ... A good idea would be " " It would be nice if ...
	Hints	I've heard that ...

The last classroom activity introduced to the students during the teaching sessions was the role-play activity which was actually a more enhanced version of previous activity by engaging students more interactively and directing their attention on how to put their learning experience into a life-like situation.

3. Post-instruction Materials

The last part of this section is devoted to our post-instruction materials or the immediate and the delayed post-test that the students had to take to complete each of the two successive sessions. We will discuss the arrangement of teaching sessions in the next section.

Having the students complete all the tasks and participate in classroom activities is meaningless unless we measure the effectiveness of those methods at the end. For this purpose, two tests (immediate post-test and delayed post-test) were designed. They were basically the same in construction but different in terms of conversations involved and the multiple choice items. They were both designed in a way to concentrate on three situational conversations containing the speech act of suggestion followed by three awareness raising and two comprehension questions.

The students took the first test (immediate post-test) after completion of the second instructional session and the second test (delayed post-test) was administered four weeks later to see if they could recall any of the instructed materials; in other words, to measure the variable of retention. In the next section these materials will be reviewed in more detail.

C. Procedure

1. General Procedure for all Groups

This section focuses on describing how four different combinations of instruction and feedback could be implemented in a Persian EFL classroom in order to foster learners' pragmatic competence when making suggestions. Particularly, we used these four different methods to see to what extent every method could help the learners improve their knowledge of L2 pragmatic competence or specifically the speech act of suggestion.

As mentioned before, the participants were divided into four experimental groups and a control. Each group received different types of instruction and feedback called respectively as:

1. EG1: Explicit Teaching - Explicit Feedback Group (ETEFG)
2. EG2: Explicit Teaching - Implicit Feedback Group (ETIFG)
3. EG3: Implicit Teaching - Explicit Feedback Group (ITEFG)
4. EG4: Implicit Teaching - Implicit Feedback Group (ITIFG)
5. CG: Control Group

Generally speaking, there are three steps involved in each session namely, introductory, practicing and the interactive phases. At the beginning of each session students were introduced to the new materials using the explicit or implicit method (Introductory phase). Following that, they were asked to do various drills to help them have a better understanding of the instructed materials (Practicing Phase). And finally, they would have to practice what they had learned with their friends that made them even more comfortable using the pragmatically correct language (Interactive phase). The following section will have a closer look at each of these phases.

2. Specific Procedure for each Group

2.1. EG1: Explicit Teaching - Explicit Feedback Group (ETEFG)

The first session started with (EG1: Explicit Teaching - Explicit Feedback Group) a five-minute warm up along with an explanation to the students that their scores in these two sessions would not be counted in their final exam. It was made clear that there was no reason for anxiety.

After this short warm-up, a printed copy of a conversation between two friends was given to each student so that they could follow the instructor more easily. The related grammar rules were also written on the blackboard for their reference.

This conversation was read by the instructor a few times by putting the emphasis on suggestion speech acts and was followed by an explicit explanation of the grammar rules involved. Then, the students were presented with awareness-raising questions to make sure that they had learned how to make suggestions in a friendly environment. They were also provided with different options for answering these questions in their handouts.

An explicit feedback was made whenever they were making mistakes and they received correction in no time. An example of this kind of corrective feedback is brought here for further clarification:

Teacher: Hear me out and make suggestions according to the stated problem.

Teacher: I'm so bored. I couldn't get enough sleep last night.

Student: why do you take a nap?

Teacher interrupts and immediately corrects the student's mistake by saying:

You should always use the negative form of do with this expression. So the correct form is:

Teacher: Why don't you take a nap?

Next, the students were given a chance to read the dialogues and practice it with their fellow partners.

After they were ready, a role-play activity was given and they were helped by the instructor whenever needed. The whole session took about twenty minutes to be completed.

The following session started with a slightly different warm up since all the students were familiar with what they would be presented with. The instructor started teaching as soon as all the students had a copy of the new dialogue. Everything in their handouts was almost the same except the social status of the interlocutors. This time students were put in a more formal situation than what they had been placed before. More formal expressions and linguistic forms of suggestion were written on the blackboard and the teacher started reading the dialogue several times while the students were listening and the instructor explicitly explained how to make suggestions in a more formal situation.

After that, the students were given some time to read the dialogue, they did the complimentary awareness raising activities and practiced it with a fellow partner. When ready, they were asked to come to the board and take the role of the characters in the dialogue. This session lasted about twenty minutes and the score of each student was collected by means of an immediate post-test. The same procedure was used for the remaining EGs except the treatment that was different for each group.

2.2. EG2: Explicit Teaching - Implicit Feedback Group (ETIFG)

For EG2: Explicit Teaching - Implicit Feedback Group, the instructor started teaching the same as EG1 (ETEF). A brief warm up was given and the handouts were distributed among the students. Different patterns of suggestion were written on the blackboard and the students were explicitly taught how to make suggestions. After listening to the conversation read by the teacher, the students could get the chance to practice it with their friends and participate in awareness raising activities. Then, a number of volunteer students were asked to come to the board and role-play the conversation for their classmates. However, during this session and the next session the instructor did not explicitly comment on the students' performance and their mistakes were implicitly corrected just by repeating the correct form of the speech act of suggestion. An example of this kind of feedback is given below to further clarify the point:

Teacher: What would you say if you were to help Mona with her problem?

Student: I would say, you should talk to your mother before consulting a psychologist.

The teacher repeated the student's sentence using the correct form of suggestion:

Teacher: Why don't you talk to your mother before consulting a psychologist?

As you see the type of feedback that the students received was of implicit rather than explicit. For the second session, the students went through the same while-instruction practices using a more socially distant conversation and their scores were collected by means of an immediate post-test.

2.3. EG3: Implicit Teaching - Explicit Feedback Group (ITEFG)

For EG3: Implicit Teaching - Explicit Feedback Group different kind of treatment was used, that is to say, Implicit Teaching – Explicit Feedback.

The first session started with a quick warm up. As soon as the student got their handouts, the instructor started reading while the students were all ears but this time, no explicit grammar was written on the blackboard and it was tried to convey the grammar rules by means of more repetitions and changing tone of the instructor. Then, the students were asked to participate in awareness-raising activities and role-plays while their mistakes were explicitly corrected by the teacher. This session lasted about twenty minutes.

The next session was the same as the previous session, aside from using a more socially distant conversation as the instructional material and went on for twenty minutes the same as previous session. Afterwards, the students' scores

were collected using an immediate post-test.

2.4. EG4: Implicit Teaching - Implicit Feedback Group (ITIFG)

For the last part of this research's data collection, a complete implicit method was used. This experimental group received no overt explanation of the grammar rules and the feedbacks were made by mere repetitions. And finally, the student's scores were again collected by means of an immediate and a delayed post-test.

2.5. CG: Control Group

The twenty students that were assigned to this group received no treatments. However, this group took the same immediate and delayed post-tests and its scores were used as a means to learn about the other experimental groups' progress.

In the next two sections we will wrap up this chapter by giving much more attention to data collection and statistical methods used to analyze the collected data.

IV. DATA COLLECTION

In this research a five-part data collection procedure was used through using four immediate post-tests and a delayed post-test, and each of which contributed to the result of this study in its own way.

Immediate post-tests comprised of fifteen multiple-choice questions which were given at the end of the second session for each experimental group after their exposure to a specific treatment. Students were left on their own for a four-week period. Then, a delayed post-test was given to see if the students had retained any of the instructed materials.

In the next section, the statistical methods involved in this study will be briefly discussed.

V. RESULTS

A. The Investigation of the First Null Hypothesis

The first hypothesis stated that there is no difference between explicit and implicit instruction regarding English suggestions used by Persian EFL learners. After administering the immediate post-test and collecting the data the results were analyzed. Table 2. indicates the descriptive statistics for the immediate post-test and Figure 4.1 depicts the graphical representation of the means.

TABLE 2.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE IMMEDIATE POST-TEST REGARDING INSTRUCTION

Group	No.	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Explicit Teaching	20	11.40	1.774	8.00	14.50
Implicit Teaching	20	9.00	1.784	6.00	13.00
Control	20	7.40	2.393	4	12

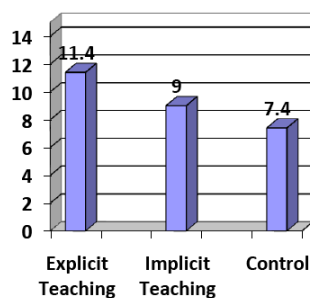


Figure 1. Graphical Representation of the Means for the Immediate Post-test

As it can be seen in the above table, the means of all three groups are different. In order to understand whether or not these differences are statistically significant, a one-way ANOVA was employed. Table 3. reveals the results of this ANOVA.

TABLE 3.
THE RESULTS OF THE ONE-WAY ANOVA FOR THE IMMEDIATE POST-TEST

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	162.133	2	81.067	20.169	.000
Within Groups	229.100	57	4.019		
Total	391.233	59			

As shown in Table 3., the result of the ANOVA analysis is significant (F= 20.169, p< .000). In other words, our three groups did perform differently from each other. In order to find out where the exact place(s) of difference(s) is/are, a Scheffe post hoc test was run. Table 4.3 shows the results of this test.

TABLE 4.
THE RESULTS OF SCHEFFE POST HOC TEST

groups	groups	Mean Difference	Sig.
ETG	ITG	2.400*	.002
	CG	4.000*	.000
ITG	ETG	-2.400*	.002
	CG	1.600*	.049
CG	ETG	-4.000*	.000
	ITG	-1.600*	.049

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

ETG= Explicit Teaching Group

ITG= Implicit Teaching Group

CG = Control Group

The results of the post hoc test indicate the following significant differences: a) between explicit teaching and the other two groups, b) between implicit teaching and the other two groups, and c) between the control group and the other two groups. In other words, explicit teaching group outperformed the other two groups, namely, implicit teaching group and the control group. Therefore, regarding what has been said in this section, the first hypothesis (differences between explicit teaching and implicit teaching) can safely be rejected, and it can be claimed that the type of teaching is effective in students' pragmatic performance regarding suggestions.

B. The Investigation of the Second Null Hypothesis

The second hypothesis stated that there is no difference between explicit and implicit feedback regarding English suggestion by Persian EFL learners. Here, once again, the results of the immediate post-test were analyzed with regard to explicit and implicit feedback. Table 5. shows the descriptive statistics of the results and Figure 2. shows the means graphically.

TABLE 5.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE IMMEDIATE POST-TEST REGARDING FEEDBACK

Group	No.	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Explicit Feedback	20	10.88	1.669	7.50	14.00
Implicit Feedback	20	9.53	1.888	6.50	13.50
Control	20	7.40	2.393	4	12

Explicit Feedback: ETEFG + ITEFG

Implicit Feedback: ETIFG + ITIFG

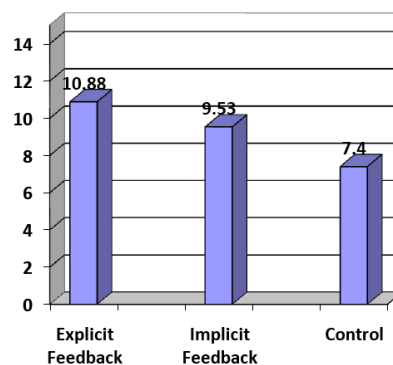


Figure 3. Graphical Representation of the Means for the Immediate Post-test

As it can be seen in the above table, the means of all three groups are different. In order to understand if these differences are statistically significant, another one-way ANOVA was employed. Table 6. depicts the results of this ANOVA.

TABLE 6.
THE RESULTS OF THE ONE-WAY ANOVA FOR THE IMMEDIATE POST-TEST

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	122.758	2	61.379	15.246	.000
Within Groups	229.475	57	4.026		
Total	352.233	59			

By referring to Table 6, one can understand that the three groups' performances were statistically significant. In order to locate the exact place(s) of difference(s), another Scheffe post hoc test was run. Table 4.6 presents the results of this

test.

TABLE 7.
THE RESULTS OF SCHEFFE POST HOC TEST

Groups	groups	Mean Difference	Sig.
ETG	ITG	1.35	.113
	CG	3.48*	.000
ITG	ETG	-1.35	.113
	CG	2.13*	.006
CG	ETG	-3.48*	.000
	ITG	-2.13*	.006

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

ETG= Explicit Feedback Group

ITG= Implicit Feedback Group

CG= Control Group

According to Table 7, the difference between the two experimental groups, namely, explicit feedback and implicit feedback, is not statistically significant ($p= .113$), but both of them performed better than the control group. Therefore, the second hypothesis retained; in other words, there is no difference between the performance of those who received the feedback explicitly and those who received it implicitly.

C. The Investigation of the Third Null Hypothesis

The third hypothesis stated that, “there is no evidence that effects of pragmatic instructions will be sustained in Persian EFL learners for four weeks”. To test the validity of this hypothesis, a delayed post-test was administered four weeks after the last session. Table 8 reveals the descriptive statistics for this test and Figure 4. shows the graphical representation of the same means.

TABLE 8.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE DELAYED POST-TEST

Group	No.	Mean	SD	Min	Max
ETEFG	20	8.85	1.387	5	11
ETIFG	20	8.70	1.490	5	11
ITEFG	20	8.45	1.504	5	10
ITIFG	20	8.20	1.508	4	10
CG	20	7.40	2.186	4	11

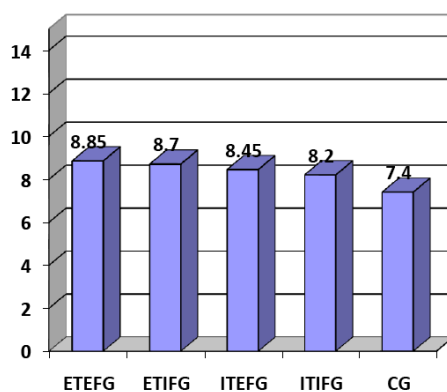
Note: ETEFG= Explicit Teaching Explicit Feedback Group

ETIFG= Explicit Teaching Implicit Feedback Group

ITEFG= Implicit Teaching Explicit Feedback Group

ITIFG= Implicit Teaching Implicit Feedback Group

CG=Control Group



Note: ETEFG= Explicit Teaching Explicit Feedback Group

ETIFG= Explicit Teaching Implicit Feedback Group

ITEFG= Implicit Teaching Explicit Feedback Group

ITIFG= Implicit Teaching Implicit Feedback Group

CG= Control Group

Figure 4. Graphical Representation of the Means for the Delayed Post-test

By looking at Table 8. and Figure 4., one can see some differences between the means of the five groups. To find out to what extent these differences are statistically significant, another one-way ANOVA was applied. Table 4.8 presents the results of this ANOVA.

TABLE 9.
THE RESULTS OF THE ONE-WAY ANOVA FOR THE DELAYED POST-TEST

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between Groups	26.060	4	6.515	2.421	.054
Within Groups	255.700	95	2.692		
Total	281.760	99			

The results of the one-way ANOVA, as can be seen in Table 9, shows a non-significant amount of F ($F = .421, p < .54$); therefore, the third hypothesis is retained. In other words, the learners in all four experimental groups and those in the control group performed almost the same, which means the effect of instruction almost faded away after a four-week no-instruction period. Next chapter will discuss the results in details.

VI. DISCUSSION

For the purpose of evaluating the students' ability to produce appropriate suggestion speech acts in a conversational context, three null hypotheses were assumed at the very beginning of this study that are discussed here:

First Hypothesis: There is no difference between explicit and implicit instruction regarding English suggestion by Persian EFL learners.

Second Hypothesis: There is no difference between explicit and implicit feedback regarding English suggestion by Persian EFL learners.

Third Hypothesis: There is no evidence that effects of pragmatic instructions will be sustained in Persian EFL learners for four weeks.

A. Addressing the First Hypothesis

The first hypothesis stated that there is no difference between implicit and explicit instruction when we are dealing with teaching pragmatics to Persian EFL learners. To test this hypothesis, a descriptive analysis on the scores of immediate post-test taken by experimental groups was done. It showed that the mean of each experimental group regarding explicit/implicit instruction was different (Explicit Teaching=11.40, Implicit Teaching=9, Control Group=7.40) so our experimental groups actually performed differently from each other and from the control group. Furthermore, the result of the ANOVA test ($F = 20.169, p < .000$) followed by the Scheffe Post hoc test supported the fact that implicit and explicit instructions have different effects on Persian EFL learners.

The results from the multiple choice sections suggest that the instruction in general had an effect on improvement of the learner's pragmatic knowledge to produce the suggestion speech acts. The explicit instruction appears to induce the best results for recognition of suggestion strategies on the multiple choice sections, making them more aware of pragmatic strategies and concepts. These findings support previous studies that indicate the benefits of explicit instruction for the acquisition of L2 pragmatics (Koike, 2003; Billmyer, 1990; Rose & Ng Kwai-fun, 2001; Takahashi, 2001; Tateyama, 2001; Tateyama et al., 1997). However, it is worth mentioning that in the case of Koike's study there were also open-ended questions involved that we couldn't benefit from, considering the limited time of the present study. Koike (2003) believed that the implicit instruction along with negative feedbacks seems to be the most effective treatment when open-ended tasks are implemented.

On the other hand, explicit instruction in previous studies consisted of a wide range of activities that provided learners with meta-pragmatic information and/or raised their awareness of metapragmatic rules. Among them, an explanation and discussion of rules have prevailed (Bouton, 1994; Kubota, 1995; LoCastro, 1997; Olshtain & Cohen, 1990; Safont, 2003, 2004, 2005; Trosborg, 2003; Yoshimi, 2001; Wishnoff, 2000). Following these approaches, the instructor of the present study dedicated two sessions teaching the appropriate usage of the target forms to each experimental group by explaining the relationships among the linguistic forms, function (i.e., suggestion), situations, and a factor of social distance. The outcome was that this study widened the scope of teachable speech acts by covering suggestions, since earlier studies have mostly demonstrated the positive effects of explicit instruction on requests, refusals, apologies, complaints, and compliments.

B. Addressing the Second Hypothesis

For the second hypothesis, another descriptive analysis was done on the immediate post-test scores of the participants. It was revealed that each experimental group performed differently from each other. In other words, the means were significantly different (Explicit Feedback=10.88, Implicit Feedback=9.53, Control Group=7.40). Similar to the first hypothesis, the same ANOVA and Scheffe Post hoc test was run to see if they confirmed the result of the descriptive analysis. However, it was shown that, despite the significant mean difference obtained from the descriptive analysis, this difference was not statistically acceptable ($p = .113$); therefore, the second hypothesis was clearly retained. In other words, there was no difference between the performance of those who received the feedback explicitly and those who received it implicitly.

However, these findings are in contrast with previous studies (Fukuya, Reeve, Gisi & Christianson, 1998; Yoshimi 2001; Koike 2003) that gave extra credit to implicit corrective feedback over its explicit counterpart. Corrective

feedback is an important condition that informs learners about their own output. This negative input may cause changes in learners' production leading them to develop their pragmatic competence. In spite of the minor difference regarding implicit and explicit feedbacks in the present study and the overall improvement of the students after receiving treatment, it is believed that incorporating feedback whether it be explicit or implicit in the EFL classroom is as essential as the input itself, to help learners develop their pragmatic competence.

C. Addressing the Third Hypothesis

To test the third hypothesis, as stated earlier, a delayed post-test was administered questioning the students the same suggestion rules they had already been introduced to. The descriptive analysis of the delayed post-test manifested that there was a slight alteration between means of each group. To see if this difference was significant statistically an ANOVA test was run similar to what had been done for testing other hypotheses. However, this time, the result showed that this difference was not significant ($F = .421, p < .54$) and the third hypothesis remained in force. In other words, the students had not retained the instructed material over a four-week period.

The result of the third hypothesis is in harmony with two major studies (Koike, 2003; Martinez Flor, 2004) on suggestions. Their findings proved the non-effectiveness of either of the two types of instruction to maintain learners' long-term retention of their pragmatic knowledge. These findings and the results obtained from the delayed post-test of the present study could be attributable to the lack of proper input during the time spans. Further research seems necessary to look into the problem of retention when dealing with the acquisition of L2 pragmatic knowledge.

As mentioned before, one has to notice that the results of this study have indicated that learners learn pragmatic material, in this case, the complex speech act of suggestion, and develop their pragmatic competence more effectively when they get explicit instruction on the speech act of suggestion before doing exercises. The explicit instruction and feedback, more effectively, helped the learners read, understand, interpret, and select the most appropriate pragmatic choices of the immediate post-test.

These findings must be corroborated by further research. However, It appears that explicit instruction and feedback are effective in helping learners understand pragmatic elements and contexts by calling their attention to linguistic forms.

Thus, the explicit/implicit instruction and feedback may have varying effects on different areas of learners' competence. However, these findings should be interpreted by taking into account the limitations of the methodology employed in this study.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

According to Alcon (2001), the foreign language classroom has been regarded as a suitable environment for the acquisition of pragmatic competence; it is believed that employing similar methodologies in Persian EFL environments would be of benefit to foster learners' ability to make suggestions.

For this reason, four different combinations of instruction and feedback have been proposed, showing how such a methodology could be presented to learners and practiced through a series of awareness raising activities and opportunities for communicative practice. By means of such approaches, learners could be made aware of the fact that, in order to make an appropriate use of the different linguistic forms available for suggestions, several factors need to be considered, such as the situations where the suggestion is elicited, the contextual features involved in those situations, and the relationship between different participants that may appear in them.

It was shown that Persian EFL learners prefer explicit methods of instruction and feedback over other methods after receiving instruction and feedback in four different combinations. This might be due to the dominance of Persian language in Iran and not having English as a second way of communication in the actual community. So, the students are not in contact with English a lot. Most of the Asian countries like China or India prefer to be told the rights and wrongs of the second language they are learning, in this case English. And again for this reason, Persian EFL learners tend to forget instructed materials by the passage of time.

Having the illocutionary speech act of suggestion as a part of speech act theory at the center of attention, this study provided the learners with enough input to learn the proper usage of different types of suggestions in a variety of contexts. Additionally, this study sought to help the learners to better understand the status of each interlocutor within a context. It is believed that the students could make much better native-like responses when they were exposed to people with differing social statuses after getting explicit instruction and feedback; and for sure this is in support of the ideas behind the politeness and cultural adaptation theories.

This study investigated two types of instruction of speech act of suggestion which are explicit and implicit, demonstrating higher gains after the explicit instruction in comparison to implicit instruction. The results of this study, point to a positive improvement of the learner pragmatic competence after the planned instructional process. Moreover, the findings also showed that the instruction on L2 pragmatics is necessary even for learners of high language proficiency.

On the other hand, it was investigated that the pragmatic aspects of language are teachable, thus textbook writers and curriculum developers should pay more attention to this aspect of language which has been ignored so far and the instructors need to be familiarized with the importance of the instruction of pragmatic aspects of language especially

explicit instruction. Moreover, it is useful for the instructors to go over previous SLA researches before choosing any specific methodology. They should also be aware of the fact that students in Persian environments tend to forget instructed materials in the long run. So, providing opportunities for better and more practices might be of a benefit to them.

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Validity of the Principle of Dynamic Equivalence

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Abstract—The principle of dynamic equivalence aims at arousing similar response between the source text readers and the target text readers. To achieve this goal, a D-E translation should strive for the "closest natural equivalent" of the source text. This approach toward translation is of great validity which is based on linguistic commonness of all languages and cultural and psychological similarities of all human beings. The former enables the possibility of faithful reproduction of the original message, namely, the "closest natural equivalent of the source- language message" while the latter guarantee the possibility of "similar response."

Index Terms—validity, principle of dynamic equivalence, linguistic bases, cultural and psychological bases

I. INTRODUCTION

Translation in essence is a kind of cross-linguistic, cross-cultural and cross-social communication. As a kind of communication, the basic requirement of translation is nothing but to establish equivalence between the source text and the target text. In other words, as the receiver of the source message and the sender of the target message, the translator should try his best to convey all the contents of the source text into the target text and arrange them in the way that the readers of the target text comprehend adequately the intent of the original author; otherwise, translation as a kind of communication would end in failure. However, as the basic requirement of translation, translation equivalence cannot be approached as a kind of absolute identity, but only as a kind of similarity or approximation. Such being the case, different types of translation equivalence may be established between the source text and the target text, and so far, different principles of translation equivalence have been put forward, such as lexical equivalence, syntactical equivalence, semantic equivalence and dynamic equivalence, etc. In a sense, some of these principles focus on formal equivalence, which can be described as "source-oriented", while others lay emphasis on equivalence of effect, which can be described as "receptor- oriented". The latter is represented by the principle of dynamic equivalence put forward by Eugene A. Nida, a dominant figure as a linguist and as a Bible translator among the modern translation theorists. The principle of dynamic equivalence aims at arousing "similar response" between the source text readers and the target text readers. To achieve this goal, a D-E translation should strive for the "closest natural equivalent" of the source text. Obviously, two basic requirements are involved here: on the one hand, the message of the source text must be faithfully reproduced; on the one other hand, the message must be so arranged in the target text as to have more or less the same effect on the target text readers as it did on the source text readers. This approach toward translation is of great validity and the present paper intends to discuss it from the following two aspects: 1. Linguistic bases, which enable the possibility of faithful reproduction of the original message, namely, the "closest natural equivalent of the source-language message." 2. Cultural and psychological bases, which guarantee the possibility of "similar response" between the source text readers and the target text readers.

II. LINGUISTIC BASES

Languages are different from each other, but they share many similarities, which make it possible to produce the "closest natural equivalent of the source -language message." This may be discussed as follows:

A. *Similarity of Kernel Sentences among All Languages*

It is known to all that Nida's theory is mainly based on the development of modern linguistics, especially on transformal-generative grammar. Seen in a generative perspective, all the sentences of a language consist of a surface structure and a deep structure. The "deep structure" refers to the basic abstract constructions from which all the sentences are generated by means of transformational rules. The basic abstract constructions determine the relationship of the fundamental elements of each sentence, thus determining the basic meaning. Each basic construction may be transformed into different kinds of surface presentations. For example, the simple sentence "Jesus rebuked Peter" has the following nine variations:

- (1) Jesus rebuked Peter.
- (2) Peter was rebuked by Jesus.
- (3) Jesus' rebuking of Peter
- (4) Peter's being rebuked by Jesus.
- (5) the rebuke of Peter by Jesus
- (6) Peter's rebuke by Jesus

- (7) the rebuking of Peter by Jesus
- (8) It was Jesus who rebuked Peter.
- (9) It was Peter who was rebuked by Jesus (Nida & Taber, 1982).

Inversely, a similar surface construction may involve different deep structures. For example, the phrases "his house", "his kindness", "his imprisonment" and "his failure" are made up of the same patterns of words: his + a noun. However, their basic relations are not the same, therefore the semantic relationships between "his" and the following nouns are different from each other, which can be described as follows:

- His house: A possesses B
- His kindness: B is the quality of A
- His imprisonment: A is the goal of B.
- His failure: A performs B.

What is more important to translation is that the basic abstract constructions of different languages are very similar, though, not identical. Nida remarks:

In comparison with the theoretical possibilities for diversities of structures, languages show certain amazing similarities, including especially (1) remarkably similar kernel structures from which all other structures are developed by permutations, replacements, additions, and deletions, and (2) on their simplest structural levels a high degree of parallelism between formal classes of words (e.g., nouns, verbs, adjective, etc) and the basic function class in transforms: objects,, events, abstracts, and relationals (Nida, 1964).

Since it is the basic construction that determines the meaning, and since all languages have more or less the same basic constructions, it is quite possible to reproduce the "closest natural equivalent" of the original text, and it is quite reasonable for Nida to put forward the approach of "back- transformation" which is just the reversion of Chomsky's transformation. He proposes:

Instead of attempting to set up transfers from one language to another by working out long series of equivalent structures which are presumably adequate to translate from one language into another, it is both scientifically and practically more efficient (1) to reduce the source text to its structurally simplest and most semantically evident kernels, (2) to transfer the meaning from source language to receptor language on a structurally simple level, and (3) to generate the stylistically and semantically equivalent expressions in the receptor language (Nida, 1964).

Translation is actually a language activity which, in a sense, involves a process of generating language (sentences); therefore the approach of back transformation is a reasonable and valid means to reduce the loss of meaning to the minimum in translation and at the same time makes the translation natural. As can be seen in the above quotation, the approach of back transformation involves the following three steps:

- (1). The translator analyzes the source-language expression in terms of the basic kernel sentences and this enables him to have an adequate interpretation of the source text, which is the fundamental condition of transferring.
- (2). The translator transfers the kernel forms of the source language to the equivalent forms of the receptor language, which helps to reduce the loss of message and makes it more likely to establish semantic equivalence between the source language and the target language.
- (3). The kernel constructions of the receptor language are transformed into stylistically appropriate surface expression according to the transformation rules of the receptor language, so as to produce the closest natural equivalent. For example:

- The motor was damaged by wrong power-line connection.
- 电动机被错误的电线连接损坏。

The Chinese version sounds quite awkward, for it is made just at the surface level. If we employ the approach of back-transformation, we can get a much better version.

First, by analyzing the original sentence, we get two kernel sentences:

- (1) The power-line connection was wrong.
- (2) (X) damaged the motor.

Besides, by analyzing, we know that (1) is the cause of (2).

Secondly, we transfer the two kernel sentences into similar Chinese kernel sentences.

- (1) 电源连接是错误的。
- (2) (X)损坏了电动机。

Thirdly, in accordance with the transformational rules of Chinese, we transform the two Chinese kernel sentences into the following surface presentation:

- B: 电源接错, 致使电动机损坏。

As indicated in the above discussion, Chomsky's transformational grammar provides linguistic bases for the principle of dynamic equivalence. However, a few points deserve clearing up here.

As can be clearly seen, there are some differences between Chomsky's "deep structures" and Nida's "kernel sentences", for Chomsky's "deep structures" are at "a much deeper, more abstract (and less understood) level than Nida's kernels" (Gentzler, 1993, p.59). As a result some people argue against the principle of dynamic equivalence by saying that Nida has not interpreted Chomsky's theory adequately. Others argue against it by saying that Chomsky's theory itself, especially, his "deep structure" is not originally intended for translation. However, these oppositions are not

reasonable. On the one hand, though translation theory itself is an independent subject, it certainly needs to make use of the development of other subjects, especially that of linguistics. On the other hand, since it is an independent subject itself, it should not become completely dependent on other subjects. Therefore, it is quite reasonable for Nida to make some adjustments when he adopted Chomsky's theory into his translation theory. Moreover, the fact that Chomsky's theory is not originally intended for translation does not necessarily mean that it is not applicable to translation. There are many instances that indicate that a theory aiming at one subject functions well in other ones.

B. Similarities of Languages on Surface Presentations

Besides the similarities on the level of the kernels, languages display some similarities on the surface presentations. For example, almost all languages have the subject-predicate structure and most languages share the same types of sentences, namely, declarative sentences, interrogative sentences, imperative sentences and exclamatory sentences. Similarities can be found even between languages of different families, like English, which belongs to Indo-European family, and Chinese, which belongs to Sino-Tibetan family. For example, they both share such sentence members as subject, predicate, object, adverbial and attribute. Furthermore, they are both SVO type of languages and possess the seven basic sentence patterns, that is, SV, SVO, SVOO, SVOA, SVC, SVA, SVOC. This indicates that most of the English sentence patterns can be potentially transferred into their corresponding sentence patterns in Chinese. For example:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| (1) SV: He walks. | 他散步。 |
| (2) SVO: He plays basketball. | 他打篮球。 |
| (3) SVOO: He gave me this book. | 他给了我这本书。 |
| (4) SVOA: He put it there. | 他把它放在那里。 |
| (5) SVC: He is a teacher. | 他是老师。 |
| (6) SVA: He stands there. | 他站在那儿。 |
| (7) SVOC: He proved her wrong. | 他证明他错了。 |

Additionally, all languages are open systems in which new expressions are constantly being added to the lexical items to describe new ideas, inventions, etc., by means of borrowing from another language, inventing new expressions, or modifying the range of an expression of its own. All languages are basically the same in function, that is to say, "they can all express thoughts, reflect life, describe surrounding, portray images, create new words and produce literary works of various styles" (Liu Zhongde, 1991, p.107). Therefore, we can say that anything that is said in one language can be said in another.

The translation of the expression "white as snow", discussed by Nida, well illustrates this point. As he has noted, the translation of this expression for the readers who have no snow is possible, so long as "snow" as an object is not crucial to the message. Firstly, many people have a word for snow, even though they have not experienced it themselves, for they may have heard about the phenomenon. Secondly, in other instances, people do not know snow, but they do have "frost" and they speak about the two with the same term. Thirdly, many languages have quite equivalent idioms, such as "white as egret feathers" or "white as fungus", or they may use a nonmetaphor to express the concept "white as snow", such as "very white" (Nida & Taber, 1982, p.4).

III. CULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL BASES

Translation is in fact a linguistic activity, but language and culture are inseparably intertwined. Thus, translation from one language to another actually involves going from one culture to another. Besides, Nida's principle of dynamic equivalence aims at producing similar response between source text readers and target text readers, which has much to do with people's mentality. So, discussing the validity of this principle cannot stop at linguistic level; it should also be discussed from the aspects of culture and mentality.

Generally speaking, similarities among human cultures and mentalities provide bases for achieving "similar response" between source text readers and target text readers.

Human beings, though living in different parts of the world, have a lot in common in culture and human experience is very much similar all over the world. For example, every one eats, sleeps, works; all men undergo the same life experiences such as birth, helplessness, illness, old age and death. Besides, all human beings are similar in the mental activities, for all the members of mankind have about the same biological equipment, or physiological structure. As an old Chinese saying goes, human beings, whatever their race or color, have at least seven emotions in common, that is, joy, anger, sorrow, fear, love, hate and desire. In short, all members of mankind share primal activities and thoughts, and the similarities between men are much more than the differences. Therefore, it is quite possible to arouse similar response between source text readers and target text readers.

Nida makes a more penetrating analysis of this issue from the following aspects:

(1) All peoples share essentially the same fundamental mental process no matter what race or culture they belong to. Besides, even some tendencies to generalization appear to be very similar between peoples of widely different cultural background.

(2) There is a high degree of similarity of somatic reactions among peoples all over the world. Certain automatic

responses are universal. For example, people of all cultures may blush and their blood pressure becomes higher when they are in anger. Of course, the causes for somatic reactions may sometimes differ from culture to culture, but the form of the somatic response is remarkably similar, which provides a basis for producing similar response between the two groups of readers.

(3) Of the major elements of culture, namely, material, social, religious, linguistic, and esthetic, all societies participate in all phases and in rather analogous ways. Though specific behavior within any one area of life may differ, the range of common human experience is sufficiently similar which provides a basis for mutual understanding.

(4) People all possess capacity for adjustment to the behavioral patterns of others. They not only have capacity of recognizing other "tokens" of behavior, but are also able to adjust to such tokens as an organized system. It seems people in the world have a kind of grid, which they can use to reinterpret experience in terms of some other conceptual framework so long as there is a measure of willingness to do so, and a degree of good will inherent in the activity (Nida, 1964).

Through the above analysis and illustration, Nida draws the following conclusion:

Despite the fact that absolute communication is impossible between persons, whether within the same speech community or in different communities, a high degree of effective communication is possible among all peoples because of the similarity of mental processes, somatic responses, range of cultural experience, and capacity for adjustment to behavior patterns of others (Nida, 1964).

So, it might be safe to say that the similarities among human cultures and physical and mental activities lay bases for arousing similar response between source text readers and target text readers.

However, some people deny the possibility of arousing similar response in translation. They argue that different people may have different interpretations of the same message. This is correct to some degree, but we cannot deny that there is something in common in their interpretation. If there is no similarity in people's understanding of a certain message, no effective communication is possible even within the same speech community, let alone communication between different speech communities. Let's take a toy model plane for example. On the one hand, it does have different meaning to different people, for instance, to the producer, it may stand for "profit"; to a child, it is "a good toy"; and to a thrifty mother, it may imply "waste of money". They are really different. On the other hand, it surely means something that is shared by them all, that is, it is a "toy model plane". Similarly, although different people may have different impressions of Lin Daiyu (the heroin of Cao Xueqin's masterpiece *A Dream of Red Mansions*), they surely have some common impressions of her, such as "She is beautiful." "She is sentimental", etc. At least, few people might think that she is ugly.

Examples of "similar response" can also be found in actual life. When people see a moving film, most of them will be moved, some of them even to tears; and at least, no one laugh. On the contrary, when seeing humorous films, hearing or reading jokes, most people would be amused or laugh (so long as they get the point); at least no one feels sad in this situation. All these suggest that there does exist "similar response", which can be elicited in translation.

IV. CONCLUSION

As is known to all, translation in essence is a kind of communication; therefore, the basic requirement of it should be to establish equivalence between the source text and the target text. However, as the basic requirement of translation, translation equivalence can never be identity but just a kind of approximation. Likewise, the response that a D-E translation strives for can only be "substantially the same" between the two groups of readers, but never identical. We know that any kind of intralingual communication is subject to a loss of message. In translation, which in fact is an interlingual and inter-cultural communication, the loss of message is naturally more. Because of this, some people deny the validity of the principle of dynamic equivalence. However, the fact that it is impossible to arouse absolutely identical response between the source language readers and the target language readers does not mean that the principle of dynamic equivalence is invalid. Professor Jin Di assimilates this to the case of seeking pure gold by saying that one hundred percent pure gold is just an ideal that no one has ever obtained so far; however, if we "give it up and do not refine it at all, perhaps it is impossible for us to get ninety-nine percent pure gold (Jin Di, 1988, p.40).

So, we can draw the conclusion that the principle of dynamic equivalence has both linguistic bases and cultural and psychological bases. The former enable the possibility of faithful reproduction of the original message, namely, the "closest natural equivalent of the source- language message" while the latter guarantee the possibility of "similar response." It is of validity and feasibility in practical translation.

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A Debate on Literature as a Teaching Material in FLT

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Abstract—Teaching materials play an important role in most foreign language teaching programs. The number of studies on this subject bears ample testimony to the significance given by scholars in this regard. This article is a review on some reasons that scholars propose for the use of literature as a language teaching material in foreign language (FL) classes and compares favors and disfavours ideas in this regard. Among a welter of reasons which have been proffered by a variety of authors and can be considered as the merits of literature in FLT, this study focuses on authenticity, cultural/incultural understanding, critical thinking and language skills and expand them further. This paper argues that teaching literature enhances students' cultural understanding, facilitates critical thinking and improves language skills and all of these advantages caused by the authentic nature of literature.

Index Terms—literature, FLT, authenticity, critical thinking, cultural awareness, language skills

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching materials play an important role in FL teaching programs. For this reason, teachers rely on a different range of materials to support their teaching and their students learning. In this regard, Seniro (2005) says “we need to have a clear pedagogic goal in mind: what precisely we want our students to learn from these materials” (p.71). It is one of the self-evident things that as a teacher of a Foreign Language, our main concern is to help learners acquire communicative competence. Savvidou (2004) points that communicative competence is more than acquiring mastery of structure and form, it also involves acquiring the ability to interpret discourse in all its social and cultural contexts. In this direction and in order to reach this lofty goal, Howard & Major (2004) propose ten guidelines for preparing teaching materials. They argue that these materials should:

- 1- Be contextualized
- 2- Stimulate interaction and be generative in terms of language.
- 3- Encourage learners to develop learning skills and strategies.
- 4- Allow for a focus on form as well as function.
- 5- Offer opportunities for integrated language use.
- 6- Be authentic.
- 7- Link to each other to develop a progression of skills, understanding and language items
- 8- Be attractive
- 9- Have appropriate instruction
- 10- Be flexible

According to these different criteria, the main question is that if literature can be used as an appropriate material and if it can satisfy these factors? In this paper we try to show that literature is in agreement with these yardsticks.

II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

From time to time the need or value of teaching literature in the language class, as a teaching material, has been questioned. Using of literature to teach second/foreign languages can be traced back to over one century ago, but in recent times (the middle of the 1980s) a renewed interest has emerged in the teaching of literature in the language class. This can be confirmed by seeing so many publications heralding the coming back of literature in language classes. Maley (2001) (cited in Khatib et al., 2011) argues that this attitude toward literature is due to a paucity of empirical research confirming the significance of literary input for language class. Notwithstanding the few controversial points regarding whether literature can be used to enhance the efficiency of language learning programs, the relevant literature abounds with the reasons why literary exploration can be beneficial in the language classroom. Researchers who advocate the use of literature to teach SL/FL list several benefits of it. For example, Lazar (1993) (cited in Ubukawa & Miyazaki, 2003) proposes six purposes or reasons for using literature in the language classroom as motivating material,

access to cultural background, encouraging language acquisition, expanding students' language awareness, developing students' interpretative abilities, and educating the whole person. Van (2009) also (cited in Bagherkazemi & Alemi, 2010) counts some advantages of using literature in the FL classroom as below:

- 1- It provides meaningful contexts;
- 2- It involves a profound range of vocabulary, dialogues and prose;
- 3- It appeals to imagination and enhances creativity;
- 4- It develops cultural awareness;
- 5- It encourages critical thinking;
- 6- It is in line with CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) principles.

In sum, motivation, authenticity, cultural/ intercultural awareness and globalization, intensive/ extensive reading practice, sociolinguistic/pragmatic knowledge, grammar and vocabulary knowledge, language skills, emotional intelligence and critical thinking are the payoffs' list of using literature in FL/SL classes (Khatib et al., 2011). However, some of these justifications or benefits are the subject of debate among scholars and some experts have posited the possible potholes literature might cause in language class. However, Savvidou (2004) believes that the reasons why few experts often consider literature inappropriate to the language classroom may be found in the common beliefs held about literature and literary language and these views reflect the historic separation between the study of language and the study of literature, which has led to the limited role of literature in the language classroom. Since scholars are not unanimous about this subject, so the purpose of this paper is to compare the different viewpoints (favors and disfavours), to reach a rational conclusion about using literature as an appropriate teaching material in FL class.

III. IDEAS AND DISCUSSION

Among a welter of reasons which have been proffered by a variety of authors, this study focuses on authenticity, cultural/incultural understanding, critical thinking and language skills and attempts to expand them further.

A. *Authenticity*

Authenticity is a criterion considered highly essential in the current literature in FLT (Khatib, et.al., 2011). A brief look at FL textbook topic contents, reveal that they are fictions in a variety of ways. In other words, they are often unreal in the sense of irrelevant to the learners. The artificial nature of the language and structures used, make them very alike anything that the learner will encounter in the real world and very often they don't reflect how the language is really used. Berado (2006) states: "one of the main reason for using authentic materials in the classroom is once outside the safe, controlled language learning environment, the learner will not encounter the artificial language of classroom but the real world and language how it is really used". According to Wallace (1992), authentic texts are "real-life texts, not written for pedagogic purposes" (p.145). Peacock (1997) says the purpose of producing this material is to fulfill some social purpose in the language community. Berado (2006) writes the sources of authentic materials that can be used in the FL class are infinite and proposes four factors worth taking into consideration when choosing authentic material for the classroom. These factors are: suitability of content, exploitability, readability and presentation. He believes that the main advantages of using authentic materials in the classroom include:

- 1- Having a positive effect on student motivation;
- 2- Giving authentic cultural information;
- 3- Exposing students to real language;
- 4- Relating more closely to students' needs;
- 5- Supporting a more creative approach to teaching.

Cruz (2010) believe that literature as aesthetic recreation can be considered a much more "authentic" source and can inspire more authority in the use and enrichment of language. He says "literature can be regarded as a rich source of authentic material, because it conveys two features in its written text: one is 'language in use', that is, the employment of linguistics by those who have mastered it into a fashion intended for native speakers; the second is an aesthetic representation of the spoken language, which is meant to recover or represent language within a certain cultural context". Literature as the authentic material, imparts the diverse forms and functions of written language (Hadaway, 2002). These are what make us excited and willing to use authentic materials in EFL class, but opponents believe that while using them, it is inevitable that we face some problems. Martinez (2002) (cited in Berardo, 2006) writes the negative aspects of authentic materials are that they can be too culturally biased, often a good knowledge of cultural background is required when reading, as well as too many structures being mixed, causing lower levels problems when decoding the texts.

If we summarize the focal points of this discussion, we can say that arguably more important than the provision of authentic texts, is authenticity in terms of the tasks which learners are required to perform with them. From what was said we can conclude that the use of literary text as an authentic material, from language teaching point of view, will be useful because these texts show how language works in contexts. Furthermore, they show how language should be used in which condition and situation.

B. *Cultural/Incultural Understanding*

The debate about whether or not to include culture in a language class is long past. A few words are necessary concerning what we mean by ‘culture’. This is the same sense as in Goodenough’s well-known definition: ‘a society’s culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and to do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves’ (Wardhaugh, 1990, p.211). Sapir in his book *Language*, acknowledged the close relationship between language and culture, maintaining that they were inextricably related so that you could not understand or appreciate the one without knowledge of the other (ibid. 212). Cruz (2010) quotes from Kramersch (1998) that it is important to be aware that culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill; it is present within writing, reading, listening and speaking. In order to teach culture systematically, teachers should set clear and achievable goals. The main aim of cultural teaching, as recognized by most scholars today, is to develop student’s intercultural understanding and help them with intercultural communication. For the latter, learners need cultural knowledge, cultural awareness and a set of skills, which constitute the learner’s intercultural competence. Despite the recognition of the importance of culture in language class, the teaching of it has still remained limited. One of the main reasons for that is the issue of designing a cultural syllabus and choosing appropriate materials. If we accept that language production always occurs within a broad or narrow context of culture, then all subject content and associated learning materials must also have a cultural base that encompasses elements of an affective, linguistic spectrum. Most of researchers (Kramersch, 1998, Parkinson & Reid Thomas, 2000, Lazar, 2005, Van, 2009, Tayebipour, 2009) argue that literature is a good material for this purpose and teaching literature can help learners to increase their knowledge of another (target) culture. Sell (2005) writes: “in an age when multiculturalism has installed itself as the shibboleth of societies and the words interculturality and transculturality circulate as buzzwords in academia, it is unsurprising that perhaps the foremost defense of literature teaching in the FL class is that it fosters awareness of cultural, ethnic, religious, racial etc. diversity and sensitizes the young to contrasting perspectives, concepts and world views, such sensitivity being vital to life in community in the global village.” According to Maley(1989)(quoted by Khatib, et.al., 2011), literature deals with universal concepts such as love, hatred, death, nature, etc. that are common to all languages and cultures. The similarity and even differences between cultures and languages can further our understanding of the whole world. Sell (2005) argues that “teaching literature provides learners with a truly cultural competence, equipping them with culturally-apposite pragmatic and socio-psychological components around which to build effective identities which will enable their socialization in the target culture and enhance the effectiveness with which they participate in that culture”. So it is hard to ignore the cultural benefits of studying literature, since literature mirrors national culture. However, there are some arguments against this view. For example, McKay (1982) contends “it is easy to view any attention to literature as unnecessary” (p.529). He states that literature is highly culturally charged, hence its conceptual difficulty and its hindrance, rather than facilitation, of learning the target language (cited in Bagherkazemi and Alemi, 2010).

C. Critical Thinking Skill

The importance being accorded to *critical thinking* is now a worldwide phenomenon. Critical thinking has been given importance and discussed in educational settings in particular for the last two decades. The intellectual roots of *critical thinking* are as ancient as its etymology, traceable, ultimately, to the teaching practice and vision of Socrates 2500 years ago. Glaser defines critical thinking as “(1) an attitude of being disposed to consider in a thoughtful way the problems and subjects that come within the range of one’s experience; (2) knowledge of the methods of local inquiry and reasoning; and (3) some skills in applying those methods” (Fisher, 2001:3). Haskins (2006) defines as “critical thinking is more than thinking logically or analytically; it also means thinking rationally or objectively” (p.2). Then he (ibid. p.3) listed 5 steps of the features that would be present in those thinking critically (Fig.1).

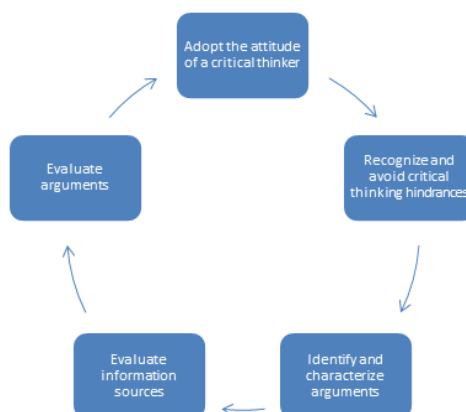


Fig. 1: Haskins’ model for critical thinking

Lipman (cited in Juuso, 2007, p.70) also count four features for critical thinking. He believes that critical thinking is a kind of thinking that (1) facilitates judgment because it (2) relies on criteria, (3) is selfcorrective, and (4) is sensitive to context.

The tools and resources of the critical thinking have been vastly increased in virtue of the history of critical thought. One important thing that can trigger critical thinking is an authentic text. As noted before literature is inherently authentic so it can enhance critical thinking among language learners (Gajdusek & van Dommelen, 1993; Ghosn, 2002; Hadaway, 2002; Lazar, 2005; Van, 2009). Ghosn (2002) says that literature can change the attitudes of the learners. Nafisah (2006) writes: “as literary texts are often rich in multiple levels of meanings, the readers, in this case FL learners should be able to uncover the implied meanings of a particular text. For example, in a poem, a word may have figurative meanings that should be interpreted by the readers. The attempt to disclose the real meaning of the word gives the students the opportunity to see the meaning from different angles. This activity helps students to develop their critical thinking skills because they have to be able to produce sound argument on their choice of interpretation”. Langer (1997) noted that “literature permits students to reflect on their lives, learning, and language. Literature can open horizons of possibility, allowing students to question, interpret, connect, and explore” (p.607). Today, critical thinking is the cornerstone of education particularly at advanced levels of education, in fact literature offers a natural medium through which students can be introduced to the type of thinking and reasoning expected in academic classes (Khatib, et.al., 2011). These include looking for main points and supporting details; comparing and contrasting; looking for cause-effect relationships; evaluating evidence, and becoming familiar with the type of language needed to express the thinking (Ghosn, 2002). Ultimately, unlike textbook readers, literature readers are able to choose and judge any reading materials to function them better. In fact since literature presents problems faced by human beings, it evokes critical discussion. In doing so, students are expected to be aware of not only how to use FL correctly and appropriately, but also engage their mind critically (Nafisah, 2006).

D. Language Skills

Today, language skills (reading, writing, speaking & listening) are high priorities. Some scholars (Stern, 1991; Belcher & Hirvela, 2000; Erkaya, 2005; Van, 2009) believe that literature can provide a medium through which these needs can be addressed and literature can improve language skills. Povey (1972) argues that “literature will increase all language skills because literature will extend linguistic knowledge” (p.18). Turker (1991) thinks that literature with its extensive and connotative vocabulary and also its complex syntax, can expand all language skills. Oster (1989) writes “literature helps students to write more creatively” (p.85). Murdoch (2002) believe that if literature text selected and exploited appropriately, it can provide quality text content which will greatly enhance ELT courses for learners. Ghosn (2002) also says that through the medium of literature we can provide FL learners with language experiences that will not only motivate and foster oral language, but also deepen their awareness of the target language in its written form. In other words, it provides models for their own writing. He also argues that because literature presents natural language, language at its finest, thus can foster vocabulary development in context. Cruz (2010) conveys that a literary text provides students with a much clearer idea about the syntactic structure of a written text and to what extent written language differs from spoken language. He continues that by getting used to the formation and function of sentences, to the structure of a paragraph, a section or a chapter, their writing skill improve and their speech skill can gain eloquence. Berardo (2006) also believes that literature as an authentic material can improve language skills especially reading. From his point of view, reading is considered to be an ongoing interaction, going beyond the physical context of the text, looking for meaning as well as processing information.

The above subject is another point of controversy which has been pointed out by some experts. McKay (1982) believes literature’s structural complexity, and unique and sometimes nonstandard use of language precludes the teaching of grammar which is one of the main goals of language teachers (cited in Bagherkazemi and Alemi, 2010). Difficult language, complex language structure and unneeded vocabulary are the problems that Richards (2001) counts for authentic material like literature. Berardo (2006) notes that the biggest problem with authentic material is that if the wrong type of text is chosen, the vocabulary may not be relevant to the learner’s needs and too many structures can create difficulty.

In sum, Savvidou (2004) summarizes the reasons that few experts argues against teaching literature as below:

- 1- literature is particularly complex and inaccessible for the foreign language learner and can even be detrimental to the process of language learning.
- 2- It is difficult to imagine teaching the stylistic features of literary discourse to learners who have a less than sophisticated grasp of the basic mechanics of foreign language.
- 3- The creative use of language in poetry and prose often deviates from the conventions and rules which govern standard, non-literary discourse, as in the case of poetry where grammar and lexis may be manipulated to serve orthographic or phonological features of the language.
- 4- The reader requires greater effort to interpret literary texts since meaning is detached from the reader’s immediate social context. The result is that the reader’s “interpretative procedures” may become confused and overloaded.

To bring to a conclusion, we can say that comparison more arguments support the relevance of using literature to the teaching of a foreign language and use of literary texts can be a powerful pedagogic tool. It seems that all advantaged mentioned above, result from authentic character of literature because both opponents and those in favour refer to this factor to prove their claim.

IV. RESULTS

Taking heed of all disfavours, in conclusion, we would defend the use of literature in the FL class on the basis of arguments set out above. Integrating literature in FLT paves the way for equipping students with a number of skills. Most important of these skills include: cultural awareness; development of critical thinking; analytical skills; language skills. In other words, an integrated approach to the use of literature in the language classroom offers foreign language learners the opportunity to develop not only their linguistic and communicative skills but their knowledge about language in all its discourse types. It must be taken into consideration that those features which are addressed as literature's disadvantages in the EFL, i.e. its cultural load, structural complexity and non-normative use of language, are exactly what can be employed to enrich language teaching and learning experiences. Although, it needs to be reiterated that the current consensus of opinion regarding the integration of literature in language programs, is overwhelming, and by far exceeds the points of controversy.

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A Brief Analysis of the Hero's Withdrawing from the Business of the World in *1900*

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Abstract—*1900* is adopted from a monologue novel that written by an Italian writer Alessandro Baricco in 1994. This paper mainly focuses on the spirit of withdrawing from the business of the world of 1900. His rejecting secular life, love and life manifests this, he chooses to withdraw from the business of the world due to the following reasons: he has a different value orientation; he has a unique love with the sea, ship and the piano; he fears about the uncertainty of the land and he sticks to the border in his heart. His spirit can inspire people to lead a free and happy life.

Index Terms—withdrawing from the business of the world, participating in the social life, 1900

I. INTRODUCTION

1900 was written in 1994, its background was the industrial revolution and European tide of immigration to America, in that time, everyone had an American dream, it mainly rethinks about the sense of worth in new time, it is an irony to the money worship, it is a masterpiece of critical realism.

1900 was found abandoned on the four stacker SS *Virginian*, a mere baby in a hand basket, and likely the son of poor immigrants from steerage. Danny, a coal-man from the boiler room, is determined to raise the boy as his own. He names the boy Danny Boodman T. D. Lemon *1900* (a combination of his own name, the year, and an advertisement found in the basket) and hides him from the ship's officers. During the early years of his life, *1900* comes across an advertisement for a man with the initials of T.D; however, on seeing the advertisement and possibly *1900*'s biological father, Danny decides not to tell *1900* the truth. Sadly, a few years later, Danny is killed in a workplace accident, and *1900* is forced to survive aboard the *Virginian* as an orphan. For many years, he travels back and forth across the Atlantic, keeping a low profile and apparently learning the languages spoken by the immigrants in Third Class.

The boy shows a particular gift for music and eventually grows up and joins the ship's orchestra. He befriends Max in 1926, but never leaves the vessel, even when presented with the opportunity to fashion a new life with a pretty immigrant girl. Apparently, the outside world is too "big" for his imagination at this point.

1900 is the hero of this novel; his life is a typical life of withdrawing from the business of the world. He is an orphan that abandoned by his parents and adopted by a kind coal burner in the steam ship, however the coal burner was dead in an accident when he was only a few years old, he becomes an orphan once again. *1900*'s extraordinary gift makes him become a self-taught piano master, but fate also let him have a deep-seated natural alert to the world of mortals, he dares not get off the ship to set foot on land, because New York's stretch of buildings and flowing crowd makes him lose himself; even if he meets a girl that love at first sight, he considers repeatedly, finally he restrains the impulse to set foot on land to find his first love, he stays in the ship forever. Until his only friend warns him that the ship will be blown, he still doesn't want to leave. With an explosion, he is buried into the sea.

There are two clues distinctly running through the novel: one is the *1900* in Max's memory, the other is that Max searches for *1900* in reality, in other words, it is the choice of withdrawing from the business of the world or participating in the social life. The author intends to make people rethink about what should people do in this world. This paper mainly discusses the choice of withdrawing from the business of the world of *1900* and his reasons, how to use it to deal with our business, work and life, makes people lead a brilliant, free and easy life.

II. THE PERFORMANCES OF *1900*'S WITHDRAWING FROM THE BUSINESS OF THE WORLD

There are some performances of the hero who withdraws from the business of the world; he rejects something that people can't give up, such as the secular life, love, even life.

A. *Rejecting Secular Life*

Feng (2009) holds the opinion that in his article People love secular life, because it has a lot of things that people can't reject, for example, family, fame and money, friendship, love, these make people live happy, in other words, these are the reasons that people live for. Secular life is colorful, but when you are enjoying it, you also need to follow the secular life's rules.

He says no to the rules. When he is playing in an orchestra, he often play some melody in his mind, this make the

band can't cooperate with him, when he is asked why not keep the regulations, he said rude words: Fuck the regulations!

He gives up money and fame. His good friend Max appreciates his music talent, he persuades him several times to set foot on land, he is also puzzled that why he refuses to get out of ship stubbornly. He hopes 1900 shows the talent to the world and gets admitted by the people, to get fame and live a good life. But to 1900, it is too far away, he can't understand the people's yearning life, therefore it doesn't attract him. Later, the talent of 1900 is praised by the people, the father of jazz Jelly Morton believes his talent is the first; therefore he takes a challenge to 1900. Finally, 1900 wins the game and earns a great reputation. A record publisher hopes to record his music and guarantees that he will win fame and money, but his heart still calm, at last, he crashes the record, he settles the happiness that the music brings to him.

People live for the friends and family, sometimes 1900 is also yearning for this kind of life, but finally, he gives them up. He is alone, he has only one friend Max, he thinks that a friend is enough, Max often persuades him to get off the ship, and describes a very sweet family picture that everyone will admire, but he scares of that life, even at last, his friend Max takes a lot of work to find him, tells him that the ship will be blown up, he says "I will not get off, anyway, there is no one remember my name in the world, perhaps, you belong to that minority, you'd better get used to it, don't cry like a child".

B. *Rejecting Love*

1900 meets a girl who is simple but attractive. The day he is recording, the girl looks into through the window, when he looks into her eyes, he immediately falls in love with her, and he plays a feminine tune spontaneously, when the record finishes, he doesn't give the record to the publisher, because he doesn't allow others to put his music away from him. He hesitates repeatedly, wants to give the record to that girl, but not being fulfilled finally, he could not hide his sorrow, he is disappointed to ruin the record and throws the debris into the trash, he misses love. After the girl leaves, Max and 1900 never mention the girl again, 1900 still plays his piano but he always misses the girl in heart. Max's persuasion and the longing for love touches him, after at least twelve voyage, he finally decides to set foot on the strange land in a spring. On that day, the entire crew wave to say goodbye, he wears an overcoat Max gives him, walks off ladder slowly. But when he walks to the half of ladder, he stares at the New York City blankly; he suddenly picks his hat off and throws it out, the hat falls on the ocean between the ship and the mainland, then 1900 returns to the boat. He says to Max, "I won't get out forever. He rejects love.

C. *Rejecting Life*

Life is the most precious thing, everyone just has once, but 1900 rejects it too. At the end of the novel, Virginia is to be blown up, Max believes 1900 must be in the boat, he finds him and advises him down again "Life is immense, change life, start again" 1900 explains: land is a ship too big for me. It's a woman too beautiful; it's a voyage too long, a perfume too strong. It's a music I don't know how to make, take a piano, the keys begin, the keys end. You know there are eighty-eight of them, nobody can tell you any different, they are not infinite, and you are infinite. And on these keys the music that you can make is infinite (Jiang, 2009). I like that, that I can live by. He thinks that get off the boat just like rolling out in a keyboard of millions of keys, millions and billions of keys that never end, that keyboard is infinite. And if that keyboard is infinite, that's God's piano. Max respects the choice of his friend, 1900 dies together with the boat, he rejects life. It reflects his love and passion for music. Meanwhile, it shows his fear towards life and depression about the reality. He prefers to die rather to live meaninglessly.

III. SOME REASONS THAT 1900 WITHDRAWS FROM THE BUSINESS OF THE WORLD

Firstly, he has a different value orientation. 1900 has a different value orientation, this different value formation often come from different living environments. 1900 is born and lives in a floating boat, the boat is limited, there is only 2000 passengers in one trip, despite there are the rich, the poor, the smugglers and so on, but compared with the urban population, especially like New York, 2000 people is very limited. His experiences in the boat, including his seeing, his hearing becomes limited. Thus, he has a limited demand and value evaluation, it performed that people give the object a positive or negative judgment through whether it meets the need or not. In other words, if a thing or phenomenon has certain properties or performance can meet some need (material needs and spiritual needs) of people, it has a positive meaning, and is considered useful and valuable, thus people often evaluate something from the need, the people's need is the value evaluation and inner basis. Different people have different needs, the same people have different need at different times, and thus, its value evaluation will change with the person and time. When an object can meet the need that people will give a positive evaluation; when it can't, it will be given a negative evaluation. 1900 gives up the ideal life in other people's eyes, precisely because they have different value evaluation and needs. Just as Fan(2010) described that people are bound up in the material civilization of city life, they yearn for fame, status, money, but 1900 enjoys the infinite heartfelt happy that playing piano brings to him, happy or not happy, this is his value orientation.

Secondly, he has a unique love with the sea, ship and the piano. People often lose themselves in the endless pursuit of material, but 1900 knows what is his needs exactly, sea, piano, ship are all of his need, they are just like his hometown, lover and home. He is abandoned in Virginia, this may suggest that his fate will connect with the sea, they have a lot of

things in common, and only the sea can understand his loneliness. 1900 is autistic, the sea is like a concert hall with tide applause, a sound box with echo, a considerate audience, a silent sound field, it's like a hometown in his heart. The God gives him the talents to play piano, he knows everything of it, he can play it in his own mind, he can describe everything through the music and he looks the piano just like his lover. The ship is not only a vehicle, it loads millions of dream of people go to the other side of the ocean, he is the king of the ship, he doesn't have identity card or any other things that can certify his existence, the ship can protect him forever, it just likes his home.

Thirdly, he fears about the uncertainty of the land. The sea, piano, and ship are what he loves; the land and city are what he fears. He thinks land people waste a lot of time wondering why. Winter comes, they can't wait for summer; summer comes, they're living dread of winter. That's why people are never tired of travelling, with chasing some places where there's always summer far away, but that doesn't sound like a good bet to him. He fears about the city, because in that entire sprawling city there is everything except an end (Li, 2005). Just the streets, there were thousands of them! There are too many choices, this make him crazy. When max asks him why he doesn't set foot on the land, he answers: "Land? Land is a ship too big for me. It's a woman too beautiful; it's a voyage too long, a perfume too strong. It's a music I don't know how to make. I could never get off this ship. At best, I can step off my life. After all, I don't exist for anyone. You're an exception, Max, you're the only one who knows I'm here. You're a minority, and you better get used to it. Forgive me, my friend, but I'm not getting off." Besides, in 1900's eyes, you just couldn't see the end of the city. It wasn't what 1900 saw that stopped him. However, it was what 1900 didn't see. In all that sprawling city there was everything except an end. There was no end. What 1900 did not see was where the whole thing came to an end. As a result, he stayed and choose to the life with the piano, ship and sea.

Fourthly, he sticks to the border in his heart. People will come across a lot of borders in their lives, when people are encountering them, everyone must want to step over them, maybe, 1900 is the only one that can stick to the border in his heart, he gives up the right to come across the border. 1900 sticks to the border in his heart with a unique way, his border is in the ship and in the keys of the piano and he expresses his talents in the keys and makes a great glory. Either the ship or the keys, they are not infinite. His happiness of life comes from playing infinite music in limited keys. It's just like the ship; its space is between prow and stern. He has a clear border in his heart; he says to Max "Take a piano. The keys begin, the keys end. You know there are eighty-eight of them, nobody can tell you any different. They are not infinite. You are infinite. And on these keys the music that you can make is infinite. I like that and that I can live by. You get me up on that gangway and you're rolling out in front of me a keyboard of millions of keys, millions and billions of keys that never end, and that's the truth, Max. That they never end. That keyboard is infinite. And if that keyboard is infinite, then on that keyboard there is no music you can play. You're sitting on the wrong bench. That's God's piano." He knows his position and border; he sticks to it in his life. The Legend 1990 just explains a philosophy view in another language. 1900 is lonely and the only thing that can company him is music. He can not imagine what life will become if he goes ashore and he does not know the significance of his life. So he chooses to stay in the ship and perishes alongside the floating city on the sea.

IV. WHAT CAN PEOPLE LEARN FROM 1900

In ancient times, participating in the social life referred to three levels: life self-cultivating; family-regulating; state-ordering; then the land great governed, but in modern times, it mainly refers to a state of mind, the so-called participating in the social life is looked success or failure, right or wrong, lost or gain as the basic principles to get along with people. People must work with a positive and initiative attitude; people want to use limited life to get great achievement. People live to do things for themselves or for society, people can see the sunrise and sunset everyday, but how many times you can see this scene in your lifetime? So people must cherish everything and never waste of time. Spring flower and autumn moon is fun; cold winter, hot summer is ok. People must live full and meaningful, it is beneficial to people and also good for ourselves. People need a positive and effective state of mind and do everything as a big celebration, don't be pessimistic, people need do everything step by step.(Guo, 2009) In ancient times, withdrawing from the business of the world was isolated from the world of mortals, they were often solitary and hid in the mountains, pursued the inaction and the inner peace, but in modern times, the so-called withdrawing from the business of the world is to respect life and the objective law, people must try their best to do everything, people must get along with people with a gentle state of mind, don't pursuit perfect, stand a little higher, see a bit further, see some things lighter. To get along with people, you must not look the interests too heavy, you need have a gentle attitude, when a person participates in the social life too deep, as time passes, he will lost into tedious life, look the actual benefits overweight, then he is always realistic and constrained by prejudice, it is difficult to get out of it, he can't have great work. And at this time, people need a spirit of withdrawing from the business of the world. Just as what we learn from 1900, what he faces is the endless temptation and endless choices. 1900 abandons the entire world to choose the music. For him, it is a comfort, but also content; is stubborn, but also happiness to choose music as his lifetime company. Only in the music can he feel free.

V. CONCLUSION

1900 has become the last legend of 20th century, this legend only exists in literary works now, it is difficult to realize

in real life, people can do now is handle the mentality of withdrawing from the business of the world and participating in the social life. It is a contradictory but complementary problem, people must participate in the social life, then people can withdraw from the business of the world, at the same time, people must withdraw from the business of the world, then people can participate in the social life. Life is rich, colorful and varied, so every mode of existence is correct. In a word, withdrawing from the business of the world or participating in the social life is just a way of life. What can people do now is not only withdrawing from the business of the world but also participating in the social life, people must involve in social reality actively and transcend beyond the world, people need transcend the reality but don't escape from reality, people must work step by step but not fall in it, people must not seek to withdraw from the business of the world, but we also need a little indifferent to fame and wealth. Perhaps the highest level of withdrawing from the business of the world and participating in the social life is a Chinese saying: The junior hermit practices in the wild; the medium in the crowd; the senior in the court.

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Teaching Pronunciation: The Lost Ring of the Chain

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Abstract—Recent developments in the literature provide us with a better understanding of the importance of second language pronunciation teaching which has been intermittently downplayed for years. This study aims at describing and understanding the different approaches to teaching pronunciation. It first gives an account of different views on pronunciation and its teachability. Then segmental and suprasegmental features and their place in language teaching programs are brought to notice. Since achieving settlement in whether teachers should set native-like accent or a fluent but accented style of speaking as the target in the pronunciation teaching programs has remained a thorny issue, a discussion of the related lines of arguments is presented. Finally, the future directions and consequent problems are discussed in the light of findings.

Index Terms—teaching pronunciation, teachability, segmental and suprasegmental features, accent

I. INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation teaching has not always been popular with teachers and theorists. However, for communicating effectively, learners need to become proficient in using the phonological elements of the language being learned. This need is two-fold: learners' pronunciation is responsible for intelligibility, plus, pronunciation plays a central role in the way learners identify their membership in a special community. Pronunciation is the language feature which easily distinguishes native speakers from non-native speakers of languages in general and English in particular. Although pronunciation teaching has placed its much emphasis on the articulation of consonants and vowels in the past, the emphasis has recently shifted to a more comprehensive scope to include suprasegmental features.

II. BACKGROUND

It seems that teaching pronunciation gained momentum with the advent of Reform Movement in the 1880s. That was when the scientific analysis and description of the sound systems of languages were established. Furthermore, the main focus shifted from written to spoken mode; hence the International Phonetic Association was founded in 1886 (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). This attention to spoken language gave rise to phonetic training in order to establish good pronunciation habits. On the other hand, material developers also began to write instructional books for teaching pronunciation.

Different methods have considered the role of pronunciation from different viewpoints. Grammar- Translation method and Audiolingual method in the United States (Situational Language Teaching in Britain) can be located on the two extremes of a cline. Grammar-Translation method virtually gave no importance to pronunciation while in Audiolingualism it was a matter of maximum concern in a way that most of its typical activities i.e., minimal pairs, and short conversations were centered upon pronunciation. Some of these approaches to language teaching have pushed teaching pronunciation aside altogether adducing reasons that teaching pronunciation has little (if any) effect on learners' pronunciation.

By and large, teaching pronunciation has undergone a move from sound manipulation exercises to communication activities, and also from a focus on isolated forms to the functioning of pronunciation in discourse. As Jones (2002)

argues, with the development of recording technology and rise of Audiolingualism, such methods (listen and repeat) became the stock-in-trade of language teaching, and although now widely discredited in the areas of grammar and vocabulary teaching this approach has persisted in the teaching of pronunciation.

However, communicative approaches set their goals according to inherent notions of their approach that is communication of meaning which in its own turn involves teaching pronunciation. To them what counts is negotiating successfully. When the learner understands and is understood in the context, it is believed that his or her use of phonological patterns of the language in the question has been appropriate. Nonetheless, although both imitation and dissemination drills have an important role in the teaching of pronunciation as a means to help articulation become more automatic, they can be seen as a step toward more meaningful and communicative practice.

Acton (1984) argues that drills can also be made more lively and memorable by concentrating not just on oral and aural modalities, but also including visual representations and training in the awareness of kinesthetic sensation. He continues that a host of material writers have begun to recognize the importance of other modalities in pronunciation training, combining pictures, gestures and social activities with drills, along the lines of total physical response.

Task-based instruction offers pronunciation teaching a considerable scope for development in many respects (Ellis, 2003). Learners' attention can be drawn to the intonation and rhythm of sentences produced during the task. In the focus on form task, learners have more chances to practice and bring some modifications to their mispronunciations. On the other hand, when much focus is on the negotiation of meaning not on the form; they are involved in a reciprocal process of language in which unconsciously their pronunciation will be enhanced. However, task-based instructions' full potential has yet to be explored. As for learning goals, these are not that crystal clear.

Another consideration which cannot be overlooked by any means is that in the area of ELT profession many users of English need the language for lingua franca communication with other "non-native" speakers as well as with native speaker (Widdowson, 1990). The implications of the research in this area will take a while to influence the formulation of learning priorities and targets (Seidlhofer & Dalton-Puffer, 1995). As a result, nobody can question the idea that the measure for successful pronunciation should be the speaker's degree of intelligibility as determined by a native-speaker. Since the majority of English speakers around the world are non-native speakers of English, it is quite reasonable to expect that more exchanges occur between non-native speakers of English than between non-native speakers and native-speakers.

A. Teachability of Pronunciation

The proponents of the idea that direct teaching of pronunciation is impossible center their rationale on two suppositions at which a barrage of criticisms have been leveled. It seems that the lack of success in teaching pronunciation in the literature, in comparison to other areas of language teaching e.g. vocabulary, grammar, etc. has led this group of scholars to construe this disappointment as in-teachability of pronunciation. When Lenneberg (1967) introduced the well-known hypothesis of critical period, it came to every researcher as a breakthrough. In fact, it was a breakthrough in the sense that it drew every body's attention to the significance of age in learning a language and also all its subclasses of skills. Nevertheless, Lenneberg played fast and loose with his definitions. Because as Flege (as cited in Jones, 2002) points out the hypothesis itself is difficult to test, for it is hard to isolate speech learning from other factors associated with age.

The opponents of teaching pronunciation have taken Critical Period Hypothesis as their point of departure (Goodwin, 2001). There are a lot of studies which share the conclusion that children outperform adults when learning the pronunciation of a second language (e. g. Brown, 2007). However, they have not claimed that it is impossible for adults to acquire native-like pronunciation. It would be a bizarre claim that adults can make use of their L2 pronunciation in a way that some delicate adjustments in the oral cavity may help them approximate the L2 pronunciation. Children also can benefit from L1, but they seem to be in trouble when some consciousness-raising is involved. It is also possible that age-related differences be a result of various learning strategies among different age groups or even an offshoot of sociocultural variables. The implication of the above-mentioned research on the development of pronunciation teaching materials is not that adults should be denied training in pronunciation. Jones (2002) maintains that learners of different ages may respond differently, both emotionally and cognitively, to different kinds of teaching approaches and task types.

The second supposition which goes against teaching pronunciation is that there are some acquisition variables which have the major role in second language pronunciation. According to their argument these variables cannot be affected by explicit teaching of formal rules in classroom situations. This assumption was put forward by Krashen in 1982. Such a belief had a great effect on the course books of the 1970s that lack pronunciation parts in them was quite a common practice.

The advocates of this idea believed that teachers had no control over factors which were significant in actuation of the second language system i.e., aptitude, motivation, and interaction with native speakers. In their opinion, exposure to out-of-classroom situation language is both necessary and sufficient. The problem with this view is that, on the one hand, usually we have scant access to native speakers let alone second language environment, and on the other hand, this fact has been neglected that classrooms and teachers can be of much assistance in fostering motivation and exposure. Jones (2002) points out that pronunciation teaching methods should address the issues of motivation and exposure to native speaker input.

B. Segmental and Suprasegmental Features

Roach (2000) classifies suprasegmental features of English as stress, pitch, rhythm, intonation, and juncture. English by its nature is affected by intonation to a great extent. For example, intonation functions as a signal of grammatical structure in English. This is most obvious in marking sentence, clause, and other boundaries. It also functions to clarify the contrasts between question types and the way in which questions differ from statements. Furthermore, intonation is used to express speakers' personal attitude or emotion along with other prosodic and paralinguistic features. Intonation has many other functions; it gives turn-taking clues in conversation and may also reveal social backgrounds of the speaker as well. Despite all these vital functions, it is not systematically taught.

Unfortunately, what teachers have at their disposal now is a handful of suggestions which lack authentic data to show the reliability of recommended approaches and procedures. Teachers should exercise care so that they do not adopt whatever they find in their immediate environment since this may lead to induced errors.

Generally, teachers have come to this conclusion that either meaning or segmental accuracy alone cannot be a safe criterion for teaching pronunciation. Goodwin (2001) best describes the situation, just as ESL teachers have acknowledged that an emphasis on meaning and communicative intent alone will not be enough to achieve grammatical accuracy. Pronunciation has emerged from the segmental/suprasegmental debate to a more balanced view which recognizes that a lack of intelligibility can be attributed to both micro and macro features. Therefore, the question is not whether to teach segmental or suprasegmental features, rather, what features to teach to learners in a way that they will be able to get their messages across and understand the incoming content.

C. Point of Departure

As a rule of thumb, learning in general and learning the sound system of a language in particular will improve if learners have a voice in decision making process. Although controlled by the ultimate authorities, learners' personal ideas and their likes and dislikes should be taken into account. Moreover, it has been proved that having some understanding of pedagogical assumptions behind the classroom activities on learner's part will help us achieve our main purposes more easily. The teacher should clarify the role of pronunciation to learners. It is their right, after all, to know the advantage of internalizing the second language sound system.

Hebert (2002) contends that by introducing learners to some of the prosodic features of English, learners can understand the reasons for activities used in the classroom. She adds that the aforementioned knowledge makes learners evaluate their own progress and provide them with strategies to use in communicative exchanges outside the classroom. In case of grown-ups this can be done much more easily because their background knowledge helps them understand the ambiguous concepts and ask questions when they are not sure about the appropriateness of their interpretations. Not surprisingly, a quite different approach is needed when it comes to children. The teacher should make use of simplified speech, clarification gestures, and graphic representations to help young learners understand the phonological twists and turns.

D. Setting Realistic Goals: Native-like Accent or Accented Fluency?

According to Hebert (2002), spoken language imparts referential and affective meaning. When we speak we reveal our interest and attitudes toward the topic being discussed and toward the people we are speaking with. These messages are largely conveyed through the prosodic features of language, namely stress, rhythm, intonation, pitch variation, and volume. For these reasons, it would seem essential that phonology be learned in context and not treated incidentally and/or separately. However, this question remains to be addressed: which one should be set as the target in the learning of pronunciation, native-like accent or a fluent but accented style of speaking?

Morley (1994) has introduced four main goals for teaching pronunciation: functional intelligibility, functional communicability, increased self-confidence, and speech monitoring abilities. Accent may impede intelligibility. On the other hand, as Goodwin argues, "learners rarely achieve an accent-free pronunciation" (2001). It seems that since the reduction of L1 accent is almost impossible, we have to accept that provided that accent is not distracting to the native listener, trying to get rid of L1 accent would be so irrelevant. Instead of reducing L1 accent, adding a new accent should be the goal for learners to achieve. Having practiced the phonological patterns of the second language, learners can be hopeful to get achieve fluency in L2 pronunciation despite their L1 accent. This practice has a focus on meaningful chunks rather than isolated words and in order to integrate pronunciation effectively into other language activities, priority should be given to factors that contribute more significantly to an intelligible communication.

What Brown (2007) calls "Henry Kissinger effect" in honor of the U.S. secretary of state is a tangible example of bad pronunciation and very eloquent and intelligible speech which clearly exceeded that of many American native-speakers. Even a noticeable accent should not embarrass learners who are grappling to communicate effectively. In addition, authorities are likely to emphasize and pay more attention to learner's sociolinguistic conditions. They will be more inclined to make an attempt to find ways of dealing with the psychological aspects of pronunciation training, integrating confidence-building and reflective activities into their courses.

On the other hand, if the emphasis is put on fluency rather than accuracy of pronunciation, learners would not receive feedback on their pronunciation being interrupted while speaking and would feel more emotionally willing to express their opinion. Immediate feedback or interrupting learners in the middle of interactional activities has been found to be

disruptive and demotivating and likely to distract learners and divert their attention away from meaning. In other words, it is likely to detract from the learning of automaticity and the associated strategies of learning (Clariana et al., 2000).

In fact, setting native-like accent as the ultimate goal in teaching pronunciation would be not only far-reaching but also unrealistic. It is really paradoxical to reduce one accent on the one hand, and to add another on the other hand while, linguistically speaking, no language has priority over the other. Therefore, while maintaining the home accent, learners should make an attempt to achieve functional communicability and fluency in order for a successful performance in different contexts the learner will face. Setting too high standards for achieving native-like accent can have detrimental corollaries despite some superficial gains. This issue, however, paves the way for another heated debate, i.e., model versus goal.

E. Models versus Goals

That most language learning classrooms are monolingual cannot be evaded by the justification that they are not ideal ones. Rather, it is a reality scholars and teachers cannot ignore. It could be very helpful to organize the class to have learners whose first languages are shared by all the participants even the teacher in the same classroom. This is especially important in teaching pronunciation. Non-native teachers are better able to help learners build up their pronunciation abilities and second language phonological system making use of home sound system though learners may not be able to develop native-like abilities. Therefore, the presence of a native-speaker teacher is of restricted value because the main purpose is not to develop in learners' native-like accent. This is not by any means to say that having native-speaker teachers is worthless; rather a competent non-native speaker can make a better teacher for his /her learners for they have a common language. He or she can outperform his or her native-speaker counterpart because he or she has both first and second phonological system at his/her disposal.

Accordingly, Roach (2000) meticulously makes a distinction between models and goals. His rationale for doing so was that in 1970s and 1980s pronunciation teaching was commonly treated as a rather outdated activity. The justification was that teaching pronunciation was attempted to make learners sound like native speakers of Received Pronunciation which discouraged them due to difficult exercises they were required to do. This failed to give importance to communication. However, such claims in Roach's term are "misguided" because a significant growth of interest in pronunciation teaching and many new publications on the subject have been reported in recent years. Roach continues that this claim mixes up models with goals; the model chosen is Received Pronunciation but the goal is normally to develop the learners' pronunciation sufficiently to permit effective communication with native speakers. Roach, however, does not consider the role of L1 and its influence on learners' ability to improve their pronunciation especially in EFL contexts.

F. The Role of Transfer

Although the radical beliefs of the strong version of contrastive analysis (CA) have waxed and waned, many researchers reported its effects on the acquisition of a sound system. It seems that the Interlingual phonology is vulnerable to negative transfers to a great extent. Jones (2002) mentions a large number of pronunciation teaching materials including sections on contrastive analysis (Baker, 1977, Bowler & Cunningham, 1991; Kenworthy, 1987; O'Connor & Fletcher, 1989). It has been concluded that when negative transfer from L1 is accompanied by segmented teaching of pronunciation, some persisting mispronunciations or even fossilization would be inevitable.

It should be taken into account that contrastive analysis has given way to a wider scope so that interlanguage can be explained by L1 pronunciation development. As a result, new categories for unfamiliar features are created by using existing categories where similarities exist. In light of these findings, material developers should approach predicting pronunciation problems based on learners' native language with caution (Jones, 2002). Teachers also should point out and elucidate the differences between the two phonological systems and the learners' interlanguage instead of correcting their errors.

III. CONCLUSION: WHY TEACHING PRONUNCIATION SEEMS FORMIDABLE?

Non-native EFL teachers' incomplete mastery of the second language sound system coupled with the lack of theoretical rigor when applied to language teaching context has made teaching pronunciation a demanding task. In this respect, two views should be taken into consideration. The first one is that in spite of a lot of explicit teaching of pronunciation, learners tend to disappoint syllabus designers due to their weak performance. Thus, syllabus designers believe that teaching pronunciation should be abandoned altogether noting that pronunciation will take care of itself. According to the proponents of the second view, on the other hand, teaching pronunciation can only be a detrimental factor in the case of elementary learners. They vaguely posit that teaching phonological points to learners who are at elementary level makes learning a complex and demanding task in their eye. In order to have an optimal gain, based on the seemingly moderate view, teaching pronunciation must be postponed until later stages of development.

Furthermore, there are some other factors that influence and restrict teachers in teaching pronunciation. Chela-Flores (2001) introduces three main problems in teaching pronunciation that have a close relation to the aforementioned views; insufficient time in class, mistargeting lessons to intermediate and advanced students, and lack of awareness by students and teachers about the connection between teaching pronunciation and effective aural-oral communication. Delving into

these areas of research can help make teachers and researchers informed so that they can come up with genuine remedies for the problems they might encounter in the classroom. This is in line with Kumaravadivelu's (2006) discussion on teacher autonomy. He believes that teachers, based on their experience and academic knowledge should come up with their own styles and strategies of teaching. This might involve the integration of different skills and components in teaching (Hinkel, 2006).

The integration of pronunciation with other skills has been argued for, but implementing such integration into language activities throughout a complete EFL/ESL program, as Chela-Flores (2001) argues, would not be possible with many course materials available. The reason is that firstly materials are designed for intermediate to advanced learners and secondly, they usually have short-term objectives. The suggested idea for settling these problems at hand is that since structures and vocabularies in pronunciation exercises are controlled, we have to deal with the immediate pronunciation needs found in the aural-oral activities of the language course used instead of first choosing a phonological feature and then finding multiple occurrences to highlight and practice it. To the possible extent, the similar structures and vocabularies used in the course should be included in pronunciation activities. If, as in learning grammar and vocabulary, learners are gradually immersed into pronunciation, their learning of pronunciation not only will not interfere with the learning of grammar and vocabulary but also it will reinforce them.

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Cultural Differences in English Literature for Chinese Students

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Abstract—Generally, Chinese students, majoring in English literature, have their difficulties in study. The main problem is that they could not understand the works well. Concerning some primary aspects of culture which are reflected in English literature, from the point of intercultural communication, they are advised to learn more knowledge of the English culture as well as their study in English literature.

Index Terms—intercultural communication, cultural differences, English literature, Chinese student

With the rapid development of communications, the earth has become a village. The arrival of globalization accelerates the communications among all countries. It also accelerates the intercultural communication. In this trend, the culture plays an important role. For a long time, Chinese students, majoring in English literature, have some problems in their studies. Sometimes, they could not appreciate English works well, even with anxiety in their studies. How do those problems arise? This is not the fault of their abilities, for they are lack of the relative knowledge of the English culture. In order to do a good job in English literature, they need to study the relative knowledge of English culture at different period as well as their studies in English literature.

Of culture, different people hold different opinions. In OED, the *culture* is defined as “the training development, and refinement of mind, tastes, and manners; the condition of being thus trained and refined; the intellectual side of civilization”(4vol, p. 121). This definition is abstract. In order to support the purpose of this article, the definition of *culture* of Bates and Plog is cited here:

Culture is a system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that the members of a society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning. This definition includes not only patterns of behavior but also patterns of thought (shared meanings that the members of a society attach to various phenomena, natural and intellectual, including religion and ideologies), artifacts (tools, pottery, houses, machines, works of art), and the culturally transmitted skills and techniques used to make the artifacts. (qtd. in Samovar et al., 1998, p. 36)

So the culture covers beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts of a society. Literature, defined in OED as “the body of writings produced in a particular country or period”, reflects beliefs, customs of a society of certain period (15vols, p. 294). It is inseparable from the culture. As Fred Whitehead (1994) has said in his book, *Culture Wars*: “Without literature [. . .] the fine art of comparison is lost” (p. 19). He emphasizes in his book that the literature plays an important role in culture wars in America. He thinks that the literature can give moral instruction to the young people. That is to say, the culture has literature in it, and the literature is a mirror of culture. In The 7th Triennial Conference of Chinese Comparative Literature Association and the International Conference, Douwe W. Fokkema, Professor of Utrecht University, Netherlands, President Emeritus of ICLA, gives his speech, “Is There a Specific Role for Literature Reading in Cultural and Cross-Cultural Communication?”, and recalls all that the literature is very important in cultural and intercultural communication (Chen, Aimin and Lixin Yang, 2003, p. 11-23). It is no doubt that literature is very important to culture.

In English literature learning, there are four important aspects concerning English culture, namely, language, Christianity, traditional cosmology and Greek myths, and customs. They do much help in studying the English literature.

First of all, it is the language. Language plays an important role in a culture. It is also true for English culture.

Why the language is so important in a culture? Because it is the way human being making contact with the surroundings. It is a set of words and rules understood by a large group of people. With language, one can exchange his ideas with others, finish an action, record down his thought, and learn information from outside world, etc., even with the people from different countries. It is impossible to separate language from culture. It is the vehicle of the culture.

To learn English literature, the first step is to learn English well. As a language, English shows the thought patterns of English people. For Chinese, they have thought patterns of Chinese, and English has their thought patterns. Only one learns the language, he can understand what he is reading, or studying. Then he can communicate with the writer, or

others. Based on understanding, one can make progress in understanding English culture. So the ability of language is the first step in communication. In English literature, to learn English well is very important. If one does not learn English, how can he understand the texts of English literature, then English culture?

To learn language is the first step, and then one must know more about language, such as the hierarchies of language, and usage of words, etc.

As Eugene A Nida (1993) has pointed out in his book, *Language, Culture, and Translating*: “A language does reflect in certain aspects the culture of a society, but primarily in its optional features. i.e. in certain of its hierarchies of vocabulary and in the priorities given to various discourse patterns” (p. 107). “The hierarchies of vocabulary, that is, the ways in which terms representing classes of entities, activities, and characteristics are built up into taxonomies (both popular and scientific), reflect in a large measure the manner in which people understand and classify the world in which they live” (p. 108). The hierarchies of language are very common in every language, so does in English. When talking about the same thing, people of different classes use different words. And the words show their classes. In *Great Expectations*, one of Dickens’ novels (1965), Pip was jeered by Estella, when he called the jacks the knaves in playing cards with her (ch. 8). Pip was a boy from working class, whose brother-in-law was a smith, and Estella was a girl reared by Miss. Havisham, a lady. The different usages of words show their class differences.

As Nida (1993) pointed out: “the knowledge of certain terms is often an index to competence in a particular field of endeavor, and the disappearance of terms from the vocabulary of a large segment of a society may indicate a significant change in the concerns of a culture” (p. 109). Some words used in poems, called archaism, are seldom in use today, such as *ay, thou, thy, doest*, etc. They are *always, you, your, do* in today’s meanings. And if one carefully studies the literary works before and after 17th century, he is surely to find some difference in the works before the end of 17th century and after 17th century. The word *it* seldom appears in the works before 17th century. In Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, there are only several *it*. But in 18th century, the word *it* is popularly used.

In his book *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*, Geoffrey N. Leech (2001) distinguishes poetic language from “ordinary” language (p. 5). In simple words, the poets use special words to refer the ordinary things. Examples are *prime, the eye of heaven, bark, lea, and deep*, etc. These are periphrases for “spring”, “sun”, “boat”, “meadow”, and “sea” in the poems respectively.

Ms. Liu Yiqing, Professor of Peking University, has mentioned in her class that special attention should be paid to the pronoun in reading the novels of 18th century. Sometimes, there are several *he* in one sentence, but they refers to different people. If one cannot make a clear distinction, he is surely to get confusion.

From the above four points, it shows the important position of language in English culture and English literature study. So in studying English literature, learning English language well is the first step. If one cannot master English and understand the works, how can he talk about the English literature? With more knowledge about language, that is to say, his abilities in language, he actually understands the work itself and has a better understanding of the author.

Second, it is the religion should be given much attention. Concerning religion, Christianity is the major one mentioned here. It plays an important role in the life of English people.

Christianity has a long history. From the beginning to present day, it has passed more than one thousand years. During the long history, it has developed many branches, such as Catholic, Protestant, Pietist, Huguenot, Presbyterian, Latitudinarian, Methodist, Mennonite, Congregationalist, Quaker, Baptist, Unitarian, etc. (Gay, 1996, p. 36). As a Western country, England is also influenced by Christianity. Tracing the English history, it is easy to find many historical events about Christianity. One most important example is the Henry VIII. In order to divorce his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, he broke from the Catholic Church by the Act of Supremacy. This is a great event in English history. It is the founding of Anglican Church. Nowadays, religion also has an important place in social life of England. In 1943 the UK government published the White Paper. It preceded the 1944 Education Act. Board of Education considers the essential goal of religious education is to concern for traditional and religious values in the daily life:

There has been a general wish not confined to representatives of the churches, that religious education should be given a definite place in the life and work of schools, springing from the desire to revive the spiritual and personal values in our society and in our national tradition. (qtd. in Cairns, 2001, p. 61)

It is clear that the religion is an important part in English culture.

As the religion provides people values, philosophies of life, and moral criteria, Christianity also gives them to the English people. So, most writers are believers, belong to this or that branches of Christianity. In the works of those writers, they always choose religious themes, such as religious poems of John Donne and the Metaphysical poets. In 17th century, there are two important works. One is John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*; another is John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. As Christianity, Milton chose the story of the fall of Adam to write his epic. When he thought he should write something immortal, he considered only the story from the Bible could serve his purpose. So he produced his masterpiece *Paradise Lost*. John Bunyan is another important writer of the 17th century. He is a tinker, and a persecuted Dissenter. His reading of the Bible in prison, combined with his spiritual experience, gave him sensitive imagination with great impressions and vivid images. He wrote them down and came *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. This book is a religious allegory. It tells people what is virtue and what is vice. No one would think it is a truth story, but everyone would think it is a wonderful literary work.

In 18th century, the novel flourished. Many novels served the function of moral preach. Many novelists used names

and stories from the Bible to serve this function. Take *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews, and of His Friend Mr. Abraham Adams: Written in Imitation of the Manner of Cervantes, Author of Don Quixote* of Henry Fielding as an example. Packed out of his mistress' house, Joseph sets out to find his sweetheart Fanny. With a friend meeting on the road, Parson Adams, he encounters many adventures, and reunions with his lover at last. In Bible, Joseph is the name of the son of Jacob. He is betrayed by his brother and sold to Egypt. In the novel, Joseph has similar experience. He is robbed and beaten by the outlaws. It is not a coincidence. Fielding used the allegory in Bible to enhance the moral theme in the novel. The parson, Abraham Adams, as the title of the novel indicates, is an English Don Quixote. He is a special role in the novel. His name bears special meanings. Abraham is the tribe leader of Jews. He symbols the father of the tribe. Here, the name means the parson is like a father who will accompany Joseph to go from vice London to the virgin country. And also, Fielding gave the priest the name Adams. Adams contains "Adam", who is the grandfather of human being. This name indicates the simple and good personality of the parson, and enhances his parental position in this novel.

From the above examples, it shows that religion occupies the important position in English literature.

The third aspect is about the cosmology and Greek myths. The Western culture is greatly influenced by the cosmology and myths of ancient Greece. Though Christianity dominates the western countries for more than one thousand years, but the Europeans still reserved many traditional thoughts of ancient Greece. The cosmology and myths are two important fields. During Renaissance, it is the rediscovering of the ancient civilization. Many writers used many ancient terms and knowledge to express their ideas.

Here is an example from Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*:

When the sweet showers of April fall and shoot
Down through the drought of March to pierce the root,
Bathing every vein in liquid power
From which there springs the engendering of the flower,
When also Zephyrus with his sweet breath
Exhales an air in every grove and hearth
Upon the tender shoots, and the young sun
His half-course in the sign of the Ram has run,
And the small fowls are making melody
That sleep away the night with open eye [. . .] (*The Prologue* 1-10)

The first line indicates that the story happens in April. But it does not say on which day. With the knowledge of cosmology, one can find a cue from the poem. It is the sentence, "the young sun / His half-course in the sign of the Ram has run", that gives the clue. There is something about zodiac. In western tradition, the zodiac belt is a very important concept of cosmology. There is a belt of celestial sphere, which is divided into twelve parts, named after twelve constellations, Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces. These symbols are Ram, Bull, Twins, Crab, Lion, Virgin, Scales, Scorpion, Archer, Goat, Water-bearer, and Fishes. Each of them represents a month. The sun passes through in each month. And the sun is supposed to enter the Ram later in March and to leave it beyond the middle of April. So in the poem, the time is near the eleventh of April. It is just like the lunar calendar of China.

In those lines, there is another word to mention, Zephyrus. It is a name of Greek God, here representing the west wind. It takes the winter away, and brings the spring.

In 17th century, the Metaphysical poet, John Donne, wrote many religious poems. But he also used some concepts of cosmology in his poems. His poem, *A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning*, describes his departure from his wife:

Moving of th'earth brings harms and fears,
Men reckon what it did and meant,
But trepidation of the spheres,
Though greater far, is innocent. (9-12)

Here, the "trepidation of the spheres" means the moving of the planets. According to the Ptolemaic system, the universe is round. Earth is the center of the universe. Outside of the earth, there are nine degrees of sphere. From earth, they are Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Fixed Star, and Crystal sphere. The Crystal sphere is the prime mobile of the sphere. Its motion causes the moving of the other planets. The moving of the planets is far greater than the moving of the earth, earthquake. But it does not do harm to man like the earthquake. The poet used this metaphor to mean that the departure of secular lovers is like the earthquake, which causes terror and sorrow, and the departure of spiritual lovers is like the moving of planets, which produce tranquility and harmony. With this metaphor, the poet gave the readers more vivid impression.

Greek myths are another source of English literature. Like Zephyrus appears in Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, many writers used names of Greek gods in their works, such as Apollo, Daphne, Pan, and Syrinx in a poem of Donne, *The Garden*. In Greek myth, there is a story of Prometheus. As punishment, Zeus deprived humankind of fire. In order to give human being a better life, Prometheus climbed to the heavens, got a sparkle from the chariot of the sun, and taught man how to use fire. In retribution for this action, Zeus chained Prometheus to a rock on Mount Caucasus, and spread evils over the world through Pandora's box. This story has some resonance: the courage needed to disobey the

gods, the “fire” of intelligence. Prometheus became the symbol of noble-hearted revolutionaries. Continued with this story, Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote his masterpiece, *Prometheus Unbound*. He created a figure of moral perfection, which is liberated by benign forces in the universe and triumphs over Tyranny. So with the Greek background, one can understand this lyrical drama better.

And last, customs are also important in English culture. Below is the excerpt from Christopher Marlowe’s poem, *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love*:

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing,
For thy delight, each May morning.
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me, and be my love. (25-28)

In this poem, everyone can understand what poet wants to say. But one will miss the meaning of “May”. In general, most people would consider it means the time of the shepherd pursues his lover. But why it must be in May? In England, May Day is a traditional festival. On that day, the young lovers wear garlands and dance around a Maypole, painted with spiral stripes and decked with flowers, to show their love. One girl will be chosen as the queen of the May, who is gaily dressed and crowned with flowers. It is the happiest of the young people in a year. Though May Day has become an international Labour holiday, but it is still a national festival for young people in England. The poet used this image to indicate his love to his lover. So, with the background of customs, the poet is understood better.

From what has been discussed above, it is clear that, in studying English literature, the Chinese students should pay more attention to these important aspects, language, religion, cosmology and Greek myths, and customs, etc. These are the principle elements concerning the English culture. To learn more about English culture, it will help Chinese students to understand English literature and communicate easily with English people.

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The Predictive Validity of Final English Exams as a Measure of Success in Iranian National University Entrance English Exam

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Abstract—This study is an attempt to investigate the probable relationship between English scores of high school and pre- university with the English scores of the learners in (INUEEE) Iranian National University Entrance English Exam. To find out the relationships, a sample of 42 students randomly were selected out of the whole population of Pre-university students in Naghadeh, West Azerbaijan. The students final English scores in grade three and pre-university 1 and 2 were collected from the school archives and all sets of scores were correlated with the students' scores on INUEEE. All the statistical analyses were done by SPSS. Results of the analyses showed that all the correlations were significant at (.01) level of significance. However, since we were indented to use these sets of (high school and Pre-University) scores for INUEEE score prediction, we failed to do so due to low correlation coefficients between the variables. Therefore, we can strongly state that there is no guarantee that those students who grade high in high school and pre-university English exams will grade high in INUEEE as well.

Index Terms—Iranian National University Entrance English Exam (INUEEE), predictive validity

I. INTRODUCTION

In Iranian educational system, any university candidate should pass through a test battery which includes the selected courses that the learners have already covered at high school and pre-university level. Iranian Measurement Organization (IMO) has been in charge of preparing and administering tests for university candidates for several decades nationwide. This test battery namely, Iranian National University Entrance Exam (INUEE) has got a screening function to select the most appropriate students for the majors that they have applied. Among these selected courses, there is an English exam aimed at measuring the English proficiency of the candidates. This test is comprised of 25 multiple-choice items, each measuring a different sub-component of English proficiency (Vocabulary – Structure – Reading). These items cover the contents of two course books (English Book 3 and Pre-university Book 1-2). This study is an attempt to examine the predictive validity of these three final exam scores (grade three and pre-university 1 - 2) as a measure of success in the students later performance in (INUEEE).

A. Description of Tests 'Contents

Normally, test constructors follow a fixed procedure in the process of test construction for (INUEE). In English test construction for (INUEE), they devote the first five items to structure, ten items to vocabulary, five items to reading skill and the last five items to cloze passage in multiple choice format. Since they have to construct tests based on the content of three books (English textbook 3, Pre- university English textbook 1 and 2), they have to consider the share of items assigned to each of the books mentioned above. Normally, 40 percent of the items are constructed from Book 3 and the rest 60 percent from Pre – university textbooks. In the final exams on Book 3 and Pre-university 1 and 2, different types of test items are employed (completion – multiple choice – matching – essay). The effect of guessing is considerably reduced in the final exams, since the number of multiple choice items is few.

B. What is Validity?

A test is considered to be valid if it measures what it purports to measure according to Hughes (2003). The concept of validity can be approached from several dimensions, each of which displays a different perspective to the concept of validity.

Hughes (2003) categorizes validity under four main headings which are: Content validity, Construct validity, Face validity and Criterion-related validity (concurrent and predictive validity).

Content validity is related to how adequately a test covers representative behavior which it is concerned with (Hughes, 2003). Having a table of specifications of the course content can be helpful in judging the content validity of a test; however, everything in the table of specifications may not be expected to appear in the test. A test which reflects the major aspects in a table of specifications is likely to measure what it claims to measure; thus, have content validity (Hughes, 2003).

Bachman (1990, p. 255) defines construct validity as “the extent to which performance on tests is consistent with predictions that we make on the basis of a theory of abilities, or constructs.” Alderson, Clapham and Wall (1995) mention different ways for establishing the construct validity of a test. Some of these are assessing whether the test is based on its underlying theory, internal correlations among different components of a test, multitrait-multimethod analysis, convergent-divergent validation and factor analysis.

Face validity that is not considered to be a scientific concept by many authors; however, is regarded as quite important. Bachman and Palmer (2000, p. 42) state that face validity is the appearance of validity, or the extent to which the test appeals to the test takers and test users. They also argue that the notion of 'test appeal' is essentially a function of authenticity and instructiveness. Poor items, unclear instructions or unrealistic time limits may negatively affect the face validity of a test (Alderson, Clapham & Wall, 1995).

Criterion-related validity, according to Fulcher and Davidson (2007, p. 4), demonstrates whether there is a relationship between a particular test and a criterion to which we wish to make predictions. They also argue that validity evidence is the strength of the predictive relationship between the test score and that performance on the criterion. There are two types of criterion-related validity: concurrent and predictive.

In concurrent validity the test scores are compared with another measure for the same examinees and both measures are administered at about the same time (Alderson, Clapham & Wall, 1995).

The second type of criterion-related validity, predictive validity according to Alderson, Clapham and Wall (1995), can be tested for the same examinees by comparing a test score with another measure, which is collected after the test has been given. It is common to look for predictive validity in a proficiency test because predictive validity analyses are important in checking whether the main objective of the proficiency exam, which is to evaluate an examinee's ability to successfully perform in a future course, is achieved or not.

Crocker and Algina (1986, p. 224) define predictive validity as “the degree to which test scores predict criterion measurements that will be made at some point in the future.” In terms of a proficiency test, predictive validity refers to the extent to which a test can be appropriately used to draw inferences regarding proficiency.

Brown (2004, p. 24) asserts that predictive validity of an assessment becomes important in the case of placement tests, admissions assessment batteries, language aptitude tests, and the like. He also argues that the assessment criterion in such cases is not to measure concurrent ability but to assess (and predict) a test-taker's likelihood of future success.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Studies on Predictive Validity

A study was conducted by Prapphal (1990) to find out the predictive validity of three sub-tests of the National English Entrance Examination in Thailand on academic achievement in Freshmen General English and English for Academic Purposes courses at two different universities. The study involved 264 randomly selected science students who had taken the National English Entrance Examination in Thailand in 1982. The results indicated that all three tests correlated significantly and substantially with university English achievement. Since the content of all three tests involved general English, the three tests account for more variance with the General English Course than with the English for Academic Purposes Course. Prapphal (1990) also suggested that test format can play an important role in predicting future academic achievement in English.

Another study conducted by Prapphal (1990) examined the relationship between the test of General English (GE) which aimed at assessing the students' ability in understanding general English and the English for the Academic Purposes Test (EAP) which had a more discipline specific content. The formats of both exams were the same. The study was conducted with 320 Chulalongkorn University students. Significant indirect relationships between the subskills of General English and English for Academic Purposes were found. This study suggests that all language subskills are related to one another, no matter what the format is. A transfer of subskills from one content (General English content) to another (English for Academic Purposes content) is possible.

A third study that Prapphal (1990) conducted involved 100 first year students. The study was conducted to find out to what extent did the EAP subtests, the EAP Department Test and the University English AB Entrance Examination which assessed the general proficiency predicted the academic achievement which is represented by GPA. The results showed that even if all the tests were able to predict the academic achievement, the EAP tests were more successful when compared with the General English Test. It is suggested that EAP tests may predict achievement in EAP programs more effectively than General English tests.

A study carried out by Stofflet, Fenton, and Strough (2001) examined the predictive validity of the Alaska State High School Graduation Qualifying Examination (HSGQE) and Benchmark Examinations on the performance on California Achievement Tests (CAT). The results showed a strong and direct relationship between performances on the Benchmark Test or HSGQE Reading scores and Writing scores and performances on the CAT Total Reading scores and Total Language and Arts scores, respectively.

Dooley (1999) carried out a study which aimed at answering the question of whether IELTS is an accurate predictor of performance and success in Business, Science and Engineering students. Business was particularly chosen as 'linguistically demanding' as opposed to Science and Engineering which was considered to be 'less linguistically demanding'. This provided the opportunity to compare students in different disciplines. The study was conducted on a

total of 89 students in their first years. The results indicated that the only consistently positive correlation was found between IELTS reading subset scores and success in business which was considered to be 'more linguistically demanding' discipline.

A study conducted by Educational Testing Unit researchers, Ramist Lewis and McCauley-Jenkins (2002) investigated the correlations between SAT II Subject Tests and freshmen GPA. The results pointed out that English composition had a correlation of .51 with freshmen GPA. This was the highest correlation among SAT II Subject Tests. French, German, Hebrew, Latin and Spanish sub-tests showed lower correlations with freshmen GPA.

Some studies on the relationship of TOEFL with other English Proficiency Tests have been cited in Marvin and Simner (1999) in order to justify the use of the TOEFL for decision making. In addition, according to Marvin and Simner (1999) a relationship between TOEFL scores and first year performance in university English courses can be possible; however, the relationship may not continue beyond first year. Pack (1972) (in Marvin & Simner, 1999) carried out a study on 402 students and found out that, TOEFL scores were "significantly related to the grade obtained in the first English course taken, however, they are not related to grades obtained in subsequent English courses nor are they related to the probability that an examinee will graduate" (Hale et al. p. 161) (in Marvin & Simner, 1999).

A study conducted by Huong (2001) investigated the predictive validity of IELTS scores. The relationship between IELTS scores and subsequent academic performance was examined. 202 Vietnamese students who studied in different Australian universities were participants. Huang found a significant and positive correlation between IELTS scores and first and second semester GPA's which was considered to be satisfactory by Alderson, Clapham and Wall (1995). Moreover, among the four sub-tests of IELTS (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking) the highest correlation was observed between Reading and first semester GPA; Reading and Listening subtests compared to Writing and Speaking had higher correlations with first and second semester GPA's. The findings suggested a correspondence with the first and second semester GPA in terms of both IELTS total scores and sub-test scores.

Breland, Kubota and Bonner (1999) carried out a study in order to examine the relationship between scores on the SAT II: Writing Subject Test and performance in writing in the first year of university. 222 students participated with all the required writing samples; however, more cases were available for some variables when compared to others. The results of the study revealed high correlations between SAT I Verbal score and university course grades. Also, a high correlation was achieved for SAT II: Writing Test. However, the SAT Writing Test Essay score had a lower correlation for predicting course grades when compared to SAT I Verbal score and SAT II : Writing Test.

In a study, Heard and Ayers (1988) examined the validity of the American College Test (ACT) in predicting success on the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST). PPST is designed to measure proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics. ACT, which is used for admission, consists of English, mathematics, natural science, social science subtests in addition to a composite test score. 202 students took part in the study. These students had taken the PPST as a requirement for admission to the Professional component of the teacher education program at Tennessee Technological University. The students had also completed the ACT. It was concluded that the ACT composite score was the best predictor of success on three tests of PPST. ACT composite scores, subtest scores together with GPA in college English courses improved the prediction of achievement. These results indicate that scores from ACT are a reasonable predictor of success on the PPST.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. *Research Questions*

To investigate the predictive validity of these tests the following research questions were raised.

H1: Is there any relationship between the final English score in grade three of high school and INUEE's English subset?

H2: Is there any relationship between the final English score in pre-university(book 1) and INUEE's English subset?

H3: Is there any relationship between the final English score in pre-university (Book 2) and INUEE's English subset?

H4: Is there any relationship between the average scores of final English scores on (grade three of high school and pre-university 1 – 2) and INUEE's English subset?

B. *Subjects and Instruments*

The pool of subjects was 42 students at pre-university level .The subjects were randomly selected out of the whole population of pre-university students in Naghadeh. The sample consisted of students in different fields of study .The subjects were all male students in two classes who had already attended in all three exams in question. Their English scores in the previous years were collected from the school archive. Having collected all the students' scores in all the exams, we calculated reliability of the tests using KR-21 reliability formula.

C. *Data Analysis*

The English scores of the subjects in grade three were correlated with their English scores in (INUEEE).We correlated the subjects' English scores in Pre-university -1 with their English scores in (INUEEE).Later, the subjects' English scores in Pre-university -2 with their English scores in (INUEEE) were correlated. In the final step, we

calculated the mean of all three exams in (grade three – pre-university -1 and pre-university -2) and correlated it with the subject's English scores in (INUEEE). All the statistics analyses were done by SPSS.

IV. DISCUSSION

The correlation coefficient used in predictive validity studies is called a validity coefficient. Crocker and Algina (1986) define validity coefficient as a correlation coefficient between two variables: a test score and a criterion score. As an answer to the question of what an acceptable validity coefficient can be is answered by Hughes (1989) who says that a validity coefficient around 0.40 is the highest correlation expected in predictive validity studies. Cronbach (1990), states that a correlation as low as 0.30 may definitely have a practical value and correlations below that value may help improve decisions. The reason for having such low validity coefficients is because students who are below the cut scores in the test are not included in predictive validity studies. Still, Cronbach (1990) argues that test validities ranging from 0.30 to 0.50 contribute considerably despite the fact that they may wrongly predict many students. Whereas, validity coefficients around .40 can be accepted as sufficient with any suitable external measure, higher validity coefficients may be expected between the measure and the criterion if both are measuring similar traits. For example, an English proficiency exam is expected to yield a higher predictive validity coefficient across the grades obtained from a freshmen English course.

Mousavi (1999) argues that in discussing the coefficient of validity, one central issue is its magnitude. How high should a validity coefficient be? He also states that no general answer to this question is possible, since the interpretation of a validity coefficient must take into account a number of concomitant circumstances. The obtained correlation should be high enough to be statistically significant at some acceptable level , such as the .01 or .05 levels.

Hatch and Farhady (1982, p. 224) state that if the correlation between the two scores is low, our best guess about performance on the new test is the mean. Thus, as the correlation coefficients obtained are too low, using correlational analysis for predictive validity do not suit this particular case.

Jafarpur (1999, p. 143) provides a range for the magnitude of coefficient correlation arguing that any acceptable magnitude is dependent on the purpose of research. He states that if a sound decision is indented to be made, there should be a high correlation coefficient between the variables.

Considering the acceptable range for any correlation to be predictably valid, we can state that the magnitudes of two correlations (Pre 1 and 2) obtained are too low to be valid for predictive decisions and the magnitudes of the other two correlations are average and not enough for important predictive purposes. In the table of correlations, the highest correlation exists between grade three and INUEEE (r =.494) which is of an average value for correlation. The second highest correlation exists between student's average scores on the three final exams and INUEEE(r = .449), (average) which is exactly what we expected to obtain prior to this investigation. The third highest correlation exists between Pre-1 and INUEEE, (r = .343) (low) and the last correlation between Pre-2 and INUEEE (r = .329) (low) indicating that they should be ignored in this predictive analysis. Though all of this correlation is significant at (.05) and (.01) levels of significance, they are not able to efficiently predict the learner's success in INUEEE.

Coefficient of Determination

Henning (1987, p .69) argues that the correlation coefficient has another interesting property of use to us in Language test development .Since correlation is a measure of the relatedness of two variables, the square of the correlation coefficient tells us the proportion of variance in one variance accounted for by the other variable. Mousavi (1999, p. 45) states that coefficient of determination gives the percentage of variance in one variable that is associated with the variance in the other. You can think of a test score as being the result of many separate elements. Some of these elements are characteristics of the person taking the test .Some are characteristics of the situation in which the test is taken, and some are characteristics of the test itself. Based on what we mentioned above, we shall calculate the coefficient of determination for any of the correlations to see how much of the variables being correlated are the same and how much are different.

TABLE - 1

Variables	Correlation coefficient (r)	Coefficient of Determination 2 (r)
Three and INUEEE	.494	.244
Pre 1 and INUEEE	.343	.117
Pre 2 and INUEEE	.329	.108
Mean and INUEEE	.449	.101

As was illustrated in the table above, none of the Coefficient of Determinations are of great magnitudes, indicating that the variables in mind do not have much common variances.

V. CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that there is a positive relationship between each of the exams and INUEEE, separately and in combination. All the hypotheses that we had raised were confirmed in different levels of significance. However, as mentioned above, lack of high correlation between the variables do not allow the researchers to use the exams in

question for predictive purposes. So, Iranian English teachers who are teaching in high school and pre-university level should be aware that, the tests which they construct for final exams (high school and pre-university) do not have very high relationship with INUEEE, though the contents are the same. This study is not intended to dwell on the possible reasons of this low relationships. However among the possible reasons that can be investigated for further research are different ability levels that each of the exams is measuring or, lack of correlation between different forms of tests that are used in each of these exams.

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