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The Relationships between Vocabulary Learning Strategies and Vocabulary Size among Adult Spanish Foreign Language Learners

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Abstract—The aim of this study is to investigate the relationships between the type of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) adult Spanish foreign language (FL) students use at different levels of proficiency and their vocabulary size. A total of 475 college students enrolled in Spanish courses at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced proficiency levels participated in this study. The data were analyzed through quantitative methods using two measuring instruments: a vocabulary learning questionnaire used to discover students' VLS preferences, and a vocabulary test used to estimate participants' Spanish vocabulary size. Analyses of the data suggest that a significant relationship exits between the use of certain types of learning strategies and vocabulary size among advanced, more experienced learners, but not among beginning- or intermediate-level students. Findings suggest that less experienced Spanish FL learners may be less effective at managing their own vocabulary learning. Possible reasons are addressed.

Index Terms—vocabulary learning strategies, Spanish vocabulary, vocabulary size, vocabulary learning

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning a second or foreign language (L2/FL) is arguably one of the most cognitively challenging undertakings most people will go through in a lifetime, and many argue that learning the vocabulary of a L2 is perhaps the most challenging aspect of becoming proficient in the target language (Meara, 1995; Milton, 2009; Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2000). Some characteristics that distinguish vocabulary learning from other language skills include the fact that "vocabulary learning is incremental, potentially limitless, and heavily constrained by the learners' experience" (Swain & Carroll, 1987, p. 193). One area of L2 vocabulary acquisition research that has been gaining attention in recent years to help explain the difficulties some L2 learners encounter when learning vocabulary is the focus on learning strategies—vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) in particular. Scholars' interest in L2 VLS, Schmitt (2000) argues, stems from the movement to get away from a predominantly teacher-oriented pedagogical philosophy to a more learner-centered ideology that includes an interest in how learners themselves can manage their own language learning. Schmitt believes that it may be easier to apply learning strategies to vocabulary learning due to the relatively discrete nature of vocabulary learning as compared to more integrated language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, listening, and grammar.

Learning strategies are the tools that learners use for active, self-directed language learning, and research shows that the conscious, orchestrated and tailored use of such strategies is strongly associated with language achievement and proficiency (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Research on L2 learning strategies and vocabulary acquisition over the past four decades has greatly advanced our knowledge and understanding of L2 vocabulary acquisition. However, most of the L2 VLS studies conducted to date have focused on specific learning strategies under experimental conditions such as the keyword method, dictionary use and inferencing. As a result, there is a lack of research on learner-selected VLS, particularly in languages other-than-English. This study will help fill this gap by focusing on Spanish as a FL since Spanish is the fourth most common FL taught in the world (Rhodes & Pugahl, 2009). Yet, we know relatively little about the techniques or strategies that Spanish FL students use to expand their knowledge of Spanish vocabulary and which strategies or types of strategies result in better Spanish vocabulary learning and why. After an extensive review of research studies on L2 vocabulary learning in the last decade, relatively few studies have focused on Spanish as a FL (Barcroft, 2009; Pulido, 2004, 2009; Sagarra & Alba, 2006; Scribner, 2000). However, these studies were limited to only a handful of learning strategies such as rote memorization (Sagarra & Alba, 2006; Scribner, 2000), semantic mapping (Sagarra & Alba, 2006; Scribner, 2000), dictionary use (Hsien-jen, 2001), keyword mnemonics (Sagarra & Alba, 2006; Scribner, 2000), L2 word-picture associations (Barcroft, 2009), and reading (Pulido, 2004, 2009; Pulido & Hambrick, 2008). As a result, these studies reveal little about the self-selected vocabulary learning techniques and strategies that Spanish FL learners actually use in and out of the classroom. No study in recent decades has investigated the wide range of vocabulary learning strategies that students learning a FL actually use in and out of the classroom in order to gain vocabulary. In addition, no study has investigated the nature of the VLS FL learners resort to at different stages of language development and the effectiveness these types of strategies have on improving vocabulary development at different levels of proficiency. The present study focuses on the wide range of self-selected learning

strategies that Spanish FL learners are using to learn Spanish vocabulary, how these strategies relate to their vocabulary proficiency, and the differences in learning strategies between learners with differing levels of language and vocabulary proficiency.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Vocabulary Learning Strategies (VLS)

A common belief within L2 pedagogy is the notion that some L2 learners are more successful than others. One reason may be the fact that successful learners tend to approach the task of language learning with different, sometimes more effective strategies (Anderson, 2005; Nunan, 1999). Successful FL learners know that to learn the form and meaning of a large number of FL words, to be able to store them in their memory and recall them at will, and to learn how to use them appropriately in a variety of contexts and situations, they will have to rely on wide range of learning strategies. Catalán (2003), using Oxford (1990) and Schmitt's (1997) definition for language and vocabulary learning strategies respectively, proposed the following working definition for vocabulary learning strategies in her study of VLS among FL learners:

Knowledge about the mechanisms (processes, strategies) used in order to learn vocabulary as well as steps or actions taken by students (a) to find out the meaning of unknown words, (b) to retain them in long-term memory, (c) to recall them at will, and (d) to use them in oral or written mode (p. 56).

A number of recent studies (Barcroft, 2009; Borer, 2007; Catalán, 2003; Fan, 2003; Gu, 2002; Gu & Johnson, 1996; Schmitt, 1997; Tseng & Schmitt, 2008) have concluded that more proficient L2 learners successfully use a variety of VLS significantly more often than less proficient students, and use learning strategies that require more cognitive effort. In fact, it has been suggested that L2 learners can be categorized on the basis of their learning strategies (Ahmed, 1989; Lawson & Hogben, 1996). Successful L2 learners, according to Ahmed, are able to use a wider variety of cognitive demanding strategies, while less successful learners generally use fewer strategies and tend to use them inadequately. Ahmed's conclusion is an important factor to consider since research in cognitive psychology has shown that the more cognitive effort is invested in learning a word, the easier it becomes to recall that word at a later time (Baumann, Kame'enui, & Ash, 2003; Borer, 2007; Ellis, 1995; Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997).

Over the past thirty years, scholars have developed numerous classifications for VLS (for examples see: Cohen, 1990; Gu & Johnson, 1996; Intaraprasert, 2004; Lawson & Hogben, 1996; Nation, 2001; Rubin & Thompson, 1994; Sanaoui, 1995; Schmitt, 1997; Stoffer, 1995; Winke & Abbuhl, 2007). These classification systems have contributed substantially to the field L2 vocabulary acquisition. Schmitt (1997) developed a comprehensive and often cited taxonomy of VLS by integrating several classification systems into a taxonomy organized around Oxford's (1990) metacognitive, cognitive, memory, and social classifications of L2 learning, and Nation's (1990) distinctions between discovery and consolidation strategies (Table 1). Catalán (2003) argues that this taxonomy is popular because it offers a number of advantages not found in other taxonomies, including the fact that is comprehensive; it incorporates key elements from commonly used vocabulary learning taxonomies by Nation (1990), Oxford (1990) and Stoffer (1995), and is rooted on language learning theory as well as on theories of cognition and memory.

TABLE I
SCHMITT (1997) TAXONOMY OF L2 VOCABULARY LEARNING STRATEGIES

Discovery Strategies	Determination Strategies
	Social Strategies
Consolidation Strategies	Social Strategies
	Memory Strategies
	Cognitive Strategies
	Metacognitive Strategies

B. Cognitive Learning Strategies.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) describe cognitive learning strategies as those which "operate directly with incoming information" (p. 44) and the manipulation of this input to enhance learning. Cognitive learning strategies enable the L2 learner to "manipulate the language material in direct ways, e.g., through reasoning, analysis, note-taking, summarizing, synthesizing, outlining, reorganizing information to develop stronger schemas (knowledge structures), practicing in naturalistic settings, and practicing structures and sounds formally" (Oxford, 2003, p. 12).

C. Metacognitive Learning Strategies.

Schmitt (1997) describes metacognitive learning strategies as those "used by students to control and evaluate their own learning, by having an overview of the learning process in general" (p. 216). In other words, knowledge about learning; the techniques that L2 learners use to identify their own learning style preferences and needs, for planning L2 tasks, for gathering and organizing materials, for arranging a study space and a schedule, for monitoring mistakes and evaluating task success, and for evaluating the success of their own learning strategies (Oxford, 2003).

There are four main processes that constitute metacognitive learning: the organization of information, the management of information, the monitoring learning, and the evaluation of learning (Chamot, Keatley, Meloni,

Gonglewski, & Bartoshesky, 2010). Chamot, et al. (2010) argue that these metacognitive processes follow the sequential order of activities L2 learners generally go through in accomplishing any task. Planning and monitoring are generally considered two of the main processes found in most metacognitive L2 learning strategies. Monitoring processes are key to metacognitive learning since they help learners become aware of what they are doing and to bring their mental processes under conscious scrutiny and thus more effectively under control (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Metacognitive learning strategies are not an automatic process, but rather the result of long-term development of cognitive processes. In the end, cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies are often used together, supporting each other (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

D. VLS and FL Proficiency.

The main reason to investigate language learning strategies has been to determine the relationship between strategy use and L2 proficiency (Anderson, 2005). However, as Nyikos and Fan (2007) argued, few studies have considered how learning strategy preferences evolve over time and with increasing proficiency. It is believed that L2 learners with varying levels of L2 learning experience and proficiency have acquired some degree of knowledge about language learning which influences their approach to language learning and the expectations they hold about learning strategies and the outcome of their efforts (Wenden, 1998). Schmitt (1997), for example, compared three different age groups of Japanese L2 learners (junior high school students, high school students, university students and adult learners) and concluded that less experienced L2 learners rely more on mechanical learning strategies such as oral and written repetition, word lists, and flashcards than learners with higher L2 proficiency. In turn, Schmitt argues, L2 learners with higher L2 proficiency prefer more complex metacognitive strategies such as the use of dictionaries, guessing from context, imaging word meanings, asking teachers for paraphrases or synonyms, word part analysis, and connecting words with personal experiences. Regardless of L2 developmental stage, Nyikos & Fan (2007) argued, results from study after study indicate that successful L2 learners, for the most part, show a pattern of selecting more complex, appropriate, and task-compatible strategies for learning new L2 words and achieve results comparable to more proficient L2 learners. In fact, Anderson (2005) argues that language proficiency level can explain between .30 and .78 of the variance in learning strategy use.

The evidence reviewed so far suggests that VLS used by FL learners may vary depending on the learners' language proficiency and experience with the target language. Thus, the focus of the present study is to evaluate the use of different types of self-selected learning strategies at different levels of Spanish FL proficiency and their relationship to Spanish vocabulary size.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the relationship between VLS used by adult Spanish FL students at different levels of proficiency and their vocabulary size?
2. Do beginner, intermediate and advanced adult Spanish FL learners differ significantly in the types of VLS they report using? If so, what are the main patterns of variation?
3. What type of VLS are associated with higher vocabulary gains within different proficiency levels and why?

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Setting and Participants.

The present study took place at a U.S. military undergraduate academic institution during the fall semester of 2010. This institution of higher learning is a fully accredited undergraduate academic institution with an approximate enrollment of 4,400 students. FL courses at this institution are divided into three levels: 100-level courses designed for beginner-level basic FL skill development, 200-level courses designed for intermediate-level basic FL skill development, and 300-level courses which focus primarily on FL conversational skills for advanced level FL students. The participants in this research study included 475 students enrolled in Spanish FL courses at the 100-level (n = 182), 200-level (n = 188), and 300-level (n = 105). Each student at this academic institution is placed in the appropriate FL course level based on prior experience with the FL and the results from a placement test they are given prior to the start of their freshman year. In addition, during the first four weeks of instruction, FL instructors and professors are tasked with reevaluating the proficiency level of each student and, if necessary, transferring the student to the appropriate proficiency level course. As is common at military academic institutions, 80% of participants were male students and 20% were female. All participants were between the ages of 18 and 24.

B. Instruments.

Two instruments were used in this Spanish FL VLS study: a Spanish L2 vocabulary learning questionnaire (VLQ) with a demographics survey and a Spanish Yes-No Vocabulary Checklist Test. The participants were also given two Scantron sheets to record their answers—one for the demographic survey and VLQ, and another for the vocabulary test. The two Scantron sheets that each participant received were pre-marked with a three-digit number in order to match the two forms and merge the answers each student gave in each of the two assessment instruments.

Spanish Vocabulary Learning Questionnaire (VLQ). Schmitt's VLS taxonomy (1997) incorporates 59 different strategies divided into two domains: strategies used to infer the meaning of the unknown words (discovery strategies), and strategies used to consolidate the meaning of the new word (consolidation strategies). Schmitt's taxonomy includes commonly used VLS which fall in one of the following six categories: 1) *Discovery-determination* (e.g. analyzing parts of speech, checking for L1 cognates, guessing from context, and use of bilingual or monolingual dictionary), 2) *Discovery-social* (e.g. asking the L2 teacher for an L1 translation, asking classmates for meaning, and discovering meaning through a group work activity), 3) *Consolidation-social* (e.g. study and practice word meaning in a group and interaction with native speakers), 4) *Consolidation-memory* (e.g. study word with a pictorial representation of its meaning, using semantic maps, imaging word form, using keyword mnemonics, and connecting words to a personal experience), (5) *Consolidation-cognitive* (e.g. note-taking, verbal repetition, written repetition, word lists, flash cards, and keeping a vocabulary journal or notebook), and 6) *Consolidation-metacognitive* (e.g. testing oneself with word tests, use of target language media, using spaced word practice and continuing to study a word over time).

The Spanish VLQ that was used for this study was adapted from Catalán's study (2003) which used Schmitt's (1997) taxonomy of L2 vocabulary learning. Schmitt's VLS taxonomy is divided into two domains based on Nation's (1990) suggestions: discovery strategies (items 1 through 14), which are strategies used to discover the meaning of an unknown word, and consolidation strategies (items 15 through 60), which are strategies used to consolidate (i.e. learn) the meaning of a previously unknown word. Discovery strategies are further subdivided into determination strategies (items 1 through 9) and social strategies (items 10 through 14). Consolidation strategies, on the other hand, are subdivided into social (items 15 through 17), memory (items 18 through 44), cognitive (items 45 through 53), and metacognitive strategies (items 54 through 60). In addition, after a pilot study in which 14 university students enrolled in FL courses were asked to add any additional vocabulary learning strategies they used and that were not listed in Schmitt's taxonomy, it was decided to add two items to the questionnaire: 1) an item on computer-based VLS (item No. 59), which were not common when this taxonomy was created in the mid-90s but is extensively used at this institution and most other schools today, and 2) extensive FL reading (item No. 60), which was a common strategy among the participants in the pilot study and an effective and commonly used strategy for vocabulary learning. Using Schmitt's (1997) definition of metacognitive learning strategies, both of these items were added to the metacognitive section of the taxonomy. Using a scantron sheet to record their answers, students had to respond to whether they use each strategy A (never), B (infrequently), C (sometimes), D (often) and E (very often) using a 5-point Likert scale. Each answer was worth between one point (A) and five points (E). Option A was worth 1 point; option B was worth 2 points, and so forth. Averages were computed for each strategy in each proficiency group.

Participants were asked to answer the VLQ anonymously. No personal identifiable information was asked of any participant in order to counteract the tendency for respondents to answer what they perceive to be the right answer in the researcher's mind. Section I of the VLQ was developed in order to ascertain general demographic information of each participant. Participants were asked to fill out the multiple choice demographic survey using a scantron sheet. In order to answer research question two, strategies that received an average score of 3.0 or above—strategies used sometimes (3), often (4) or very often (5)—were considered as the strategies normally used by students. In their studies on VLS, Schmitt (1997) and Catalán (2003) did not use a Likert scale for their questionnaires. Instead, they asked their participants to mark whether or not they use each of the strategies on the questionnaire; whether they use them sometimes, often or very often. Therefore, for the present study 3.0 and above was the average threshold of use for each strategy.

Spanish Yes-No Vocabulary Checklist Test. The Yes-No Vocabulary Checklist Test was adapted from Meara and Milton's (2003) Yes-No lexical frequency based test of vocabulary size. This test was designed to measure students' passive recognition of Spanish words in a list of relatively high frequency Spanish words (Davies, 2006). The vocabulary proficiency scores from this test were used as the dependent variable that represents students' most basic knowledge of a word—the passive recognition of a Spanish word. In a study of vocabulary knowledge hierarchies, Laufer and Goldstein (2004) were able to find a significant Pearson correlation of .49 (p < .001) between scores on a passive recognition vocabulary test and the participants L2 class grade point average.

The Yes-No Vocabulary Size Test was originally developed in the mid-eighties by Meara and Buxton (1987) with a simple checklist format in which test-takers are required to indicate whether they know a target word by checking a yes or no box next to each word. The checklist format allows for a large number of vocabulary items to be tested and scored in a limited amount of time.

The Yes-No test consists of two different types of words: real words and pseudo or fake words. Pseudowords are words that fulfill the phonological and orthographical constraints of the target language but do not bear any meaning (Alderson, 2005; Mochida & Harrington, 2006). These pseudowords provide a basis for adjusting the scores of those students who tend to overestimate their vocabulary knowledge. A 'yes' response to a real word is labeled as a hit, while a 'no' response is labeled a miss. On the other hand, a 'yes' response to a pseudoword is labeled a false alarm, while a 'no' response to a pseudoword is labeled as a correct rejection (Table 2). Test-takers know that the test contains pseudowords but they do not know how many nor their location on the test, which gives them little choice but to be honest with their responses.

TABLE II.
YES-NO VOCABULARY CHECKLIST TEST SIMPLE TOTAL SCORING

Know it?	Yes	No
Real Word	HIT	MISS
Pseudoword	FALSE ALARM	CORRECT REJECTION

The Spanish Yes-No vocabulary test used in the present study included 100 Spanish content words and 50 pseudowords in randomized order. Only Spanish verbs were used since in most languages there are relatively fewer verbs than other lexical forms; nouns are a large category and adjectives are often derived from nouns (Alderson, 2005). The 100 Spanish verbs were randomly selected from the 1074 verbs found in the 5000 most-frequently-used Spanish words list (Davies, 2006). The 100 word list includes a representative sample from each of Davies' five Spanish vocabulary frequency bands: 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000 and 5000 levels. According to Davies and Face (2006), the 5000 most-frequently-used Spanish words cover 98 percent of the words found in authentic texts and represent the core of vocabulary knowledge that Spanish native speakers acquire early in life. Therefore, a representative sample of the 1074 Spanish verbs in the 5000 word list should yield a reasonable estimate of overall Spanish vocabulary size. Participants were given a separate scantron sheet to respond to the multiple choice vocabulary test and were instructed to select "A" on their scantron sheets if they knew the word's most basic meaning or "B" if they did not. They were also instructed not to guess, since guessing is easily detected by the use of fake words.

Vocabulary Test Scoring. There are several different procedures that have been proposed for scoring the Yes-No vocabulary checklist test and some disagreements prevail as to which scoring system results in the most valid and reliable scores (Beeckmans, Eyckmans, Janssens, Dufranne, & Van de Velde, 2001; Huibregtse, Admiraal, & Meara, 2002; Mochida & Harrington, 2006). However, according to developers of the European Union's Diagnostic Language Test—DIALANG (Alderson, 2005), the most accurate and reliable scoring method is the simple total (also known as raw hits), which represents the total number of categorical hits and correct rejections—that is, 'yes' responses to real words and 'no' responses to pseudowords. Therefore, for the present study, the simple total scoring method was used to estimate each participant's Spanish vocabulary size. The scores test-takers earned in the Yes-No vocabulary test, therefore, range from zero points (lowest vocabulary size) to 150 points (highest vocabulary size) according to the number of hits and correct rejections each test-taker achieved on the vocabulary test.

The two Scantron sheets that each participant used were scanned by a Scantron reader and downloaded into Excel spreadsheets. Two Excel spreadsheets were created, one with all the participants' answers to the demographic questions and the VLQ, and another with the participants' answers to the vocabulary test. Once the scores to the vocabulary test were obtained for each participant, they were manually inserted in the VLQ spreadsheet as an additional column ensuring that each score was attributed to the right participant by means of identification numbers. Once all the answers and scores for each participant were recorded, they were divided into three separate spreadsheets—one each for beginning, intermediate, and advanced groups. The next step was to obtain an average score for each of Schmitt's six categories of VLS. The average scores per rows (participants) and per columns (strategies) were calculated. The average VLS scores for each participant within each proficiency level, plus their corresponding vocabulary test scores were then recorded in each spreadsheet by adding additional columns.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

First, an ANOVA was performed on the vocabulary test scores to determine how much of the total variability among scores can be attributed to the participants' language proficiency group. Then, multiple linear regression analyses were conducted on the results from each proficiency group in order to obtain answers to our first research question; the vocabulary test scores represented the dependent variable in the regression analysis, while the number of study hours per week and the average score for each of the six learning strategy categories represented the independent variables. In order to answer research question two, it was necessary to determined first which learning strategies in the VLQ received an overall average score of 3.0 and above (strategies used *sometimes*, *often*, and *very often*) within each proficiency group in order to make comparisons between each group. An ANOVA test was also performed to determine whether any significant differences exist in the study habits between the three groups in this study.

VI. RESULTS

A. Spanish Yes-no Vocabulary Size Test Results.

The average vocabulary test score for all participants was 84.17 out of 150 possible points, with a range of 51 to 143. The beginning group had an average score of 72.66, the intermediate group averaged 83.32, and the advanced group averaged 105.75 points (see Table 3). The vocabulary test's Cronbach's Alpha internal reliability coefficient was .967 which suggests highly reliable results. In addition, a one-way ANOVA showed that there was a significant difference in the vocabulary test score means between the three Spanish proficiency groups: $F(2, 478) = 186.07$, $p < .001$. Furthermore, the R-Squared value of .439 revealed that 43.9 percent of the variance in the vocabulary test scores can be attributed to the participants' language proficiency group placement. Furthermore, a multiple comparisons Scheffe Post Hoc Test revealed that the vocabulary size test score means from all three Spanish FL proficiency groups differed

significantly from each other ($p <.001$). In addition, the vocabulary test means for the three proficiency groups of Spanish FL students shows a clear and predictable pattern of vocabulary knowledge increase from beginning level through intermediate and advanced levels.

TABLE III.
VOCABULARY TEST RESULTS DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Proficiency	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Beginners	183	72.66	12.52	.92	51.00	117.00
Intermediates	187	83.32	13.34	.97	54.00	116.00
Advanced	105	105.75	15.40	1.50	57.00	143.00
Total	475	84.17	18.34	.84	51.00	143.00

The Yes-No Spanish Vocabulary Size Test included words from five Spanish word frequency band levels (1000-, 2000-, 3000-, 4000-, and 5000-level words) and 50 pseudowords. Table 4 below presents the breakdown of the vocabulary test scores by language proficiency and word frequency levels. Participants from all three proficiency groups achieved almost the same mean of correct rejections for pseudowords, suggesting that performance on pseudowords in the Yes-No vocabulary checklist test does not distinguish between proficiency levels. Finally, according to the results from an ANOVA test of between levels effects, the vocabulary size test scores from each word frequency level differ significantly from each other ($p <.001$) except for pseudowords.

TABLE IV.
HITS AND CORRECT REJECTIONS BY PROFICIENCY GROUP AND WORD FREQUENCY LEVELS

Word Frequency Level	Percentage of Hits and Correct Rejections by Proficiency Group		
	Beginning (%)	Intermediate (%)	Advanced (%)
1000-Level	44.96	61.61	84.36
2000-Level	24.57	37.83	69.17
3000-Level	29.74	35.42	54.42
4000-Level	19.05	27.55	43.25
5000-Level	8.6	9.6	29.0
Pseudowords	87.06	86.96	87.94

B. Vocabulary Learning Questionnaire (VLQ) Results

In order to determine the reliability of the responses to the 60-item VLQ, an internal reliability test was conducted. The result was a Cronbach's Alpha internal reliability coefficient of .901. The participants' responses to the VLQ suggest a slight increase in the number of VLS used by students as they progress from beginning-level (19 VLS) through intermediate (24 VLS) and advanced-level (25 VLS) FL courses. Almost half of the 31 strategies that participants claimed to use (14 out of 31) were used by participants in all three groups, which suggests that many of these VLS are popular among Spanish FL students regardless of proficiency level. The advanced group, however, had a larger number of unique learning strategies not used by neither beginning nor intermediate groups.

Multiple linear regression analyses were conducted within each group of Spanish FL learners to examine the linear correlations between the independent variables (six types of VLS) and the dependent variable (vocabulary size score). On average, beginning-level students achieved a mean score of 73.1 on the dependent variable—the vocabulary size test. Among the six independent variables under assessment, determination strategies received the highest mean score (3.15) and consolidation social strategies received the lowest (2.2). According to the ANOVA results (Table 5), however, the relationship between the predictive variables and the dependant variable in the beginning-level group was found to be not significant (F = .883, $p <.52$). Thus, these results suggest that there is no significant relationship between the type of VLS participants in the beginning group report using, as proposed by Schmitt (1997), and their vocabulary size test scores.

TABLE V.
BEGINNING GROUP ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1018.180	7	145.454	.883	.521[a]
	Residual	28992.858	176	164.732		
	Total	30011.038	183			

a. Predictors: Determination Strategies, Consolidation Social Strategies, Discovery Social Strategies, Cognitive Strategies, Memory Strategies, and Metacognitive Strategies

b. Dependent Variable: Vocabulary Score

The intermediate-level Spanish FL students achieved a mean score of 84.43 on the dependent variable—the vocabulary size test. Among the six independent variables under assessment, again determination strategies received the highest mean score (3.18) and again consolidation social strategies received the lowest (2.27). According to the

ANOVA results (Table 6), however, the relationship between the predictive variables and the dependant variable in the intermediate-level group was also found to be not significant (F = .959, p <.463). Again, these results suggest that there is no significant relationship between the type of VLS participants in the intermediate group report using.

TABLE VI.
INTERMEDIATE GROUP ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1298.192	7	185.456	.959	.463[a]
	Residual	34823.909	180	193.466		
	Total	36122.101	187			

a. Predictors: Memory Strategies , Discovery Social Strategies, Cognitive Strategies , Consolidation Social Strategies, Metacognitive Strategies , Determination Strategies

b. Dependent Variable: Vocabulary Test Score

Finally, the advanced-level students achieved a mean score of 105.75 on the dependent variable—the vocabulary size test. Among the six independent variables under assessment, again determination strategies received the highest mean score (3.07) and, as with the two other groups, consolidation social strategies received the lowest (2.15). Unlike the previous two groups, however, the ANOVA results for the participants in the advanced group (Table 7) reveal that there is a significant relationship between at least one independent variable and the dependent variable—vocabulary size (F = 4.1, p <.001).

TABLE VII.
ADVANCED GROUP ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5643.526	7	806.218	4.108	.001[a]
	Residual	19036.036	97	196.248		
	Total	24679.562	104			

a. Predictors: Memory Strategies , Discovery Social Strategies, Cognitive Strategies , Consolidation Social Strategies, Metacognitive Strategies , Determination Strategies

b. Dependent Variable: Vocabulary Test Score

To determine which of the six independent variables under assessment can significantly predict the outcome on the dependent variable, Table 8 represents the variance breakdown for each of the independent variables. These results show that only three independent variables can significantly predict the outcome on the dependent variable within the advanced group: Consolidation Social (p <.004), Cognitive (p <.002) and Metacognitive (p <.02) learning strategies.

TABLE VIII.
ADVANCED GROUP BREAKDOWN OF VARIANCE FOR EACH INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	105.965	12.015		8.820	.000
	Determination Strategies	-1.445	4.215	-.037	-.343	.732
	Discovery Social Strategies	-3.143	2.814	-.130	-1.117	.267
	Consolidation Social Strategies	7.389	2.509	.324	2.945	.004
	Memory Strategies	-1.802	4.347	-.053	-.414	.679
	Cognitive Strategies	-7.570	2.434	-.318	-3.111	.002
	Metacognitive Strategies	7.315	3.271	.255	2.236	.028

a. Dependent Variable: Vocabulary Score

In order to determine the strength of this relationship, the model's R-Square value was calculated. The model summary reveals that 23 percent of the variance (R-Square .229) in the dependent variable (vocabulary test scores) can be attributed to the use of Consolidation Social, Cognitive and Metacognitive learning strategies. Thus, from these results it can be inferred that the use of Consolidation Social, Cognitive and Metacognitive learning strategies, as proposed by Schmitt (1997), can significantly predict up to 23 percent of the variance in the scores on the vocabulary size test among the participants in the advanced-level group (F = 4.1, p <.001).

VII. DISCUSSION

The results from the VLQ point to a slight increase in the number of VLS used by students as they progress from beginning (19 VLS) through intermediate (24 VLS) and advanced (25 VLS) Spanish FL proficiency levels. The literature on L2 VLS suggest that more proficient L2 learners successfully use a variety of VLS significantly more often and with more efficiency than inexperienced, less proficient L2 learners (e.g. Barcroft, 2009; Borer, 2007; Catalán,

2003; Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Fan, 2003; Gu, 2002; Schmitt, 1997; Tseng & Schmitt, 2008). Furthermore, there is a strong relationship between strategy use and L2 proficiency. According to research, proficiency level can explain between .30 and .78 of the variance in strategy use (Anderson, 2005). The results from the present study support these previous findings; experienced FL students tend to use more strategies for learning vocabulary than novice learners. Among both beginner- and intermediate-level students, there was a lack of significant correlations between the independent variables and the vocabulary test results. This lack of relationships between VLS and vocabulary size among less experienced Spanish FL learners, although somewhat unexpected, is not surprising. Based on these results, it could be inferred that the VLS that beginning and intermediate Spanish FL students report using have little to no effect on their vocabulary size. There are several plausible explanations for this finding. One possibility, the literature suggests, is the theory that language learning strategies are higher-order cognitive and metacognitive processes that require additional cognitive skills or resources that less-proficient or less-experienced L2 learners may not have at their disposal (e.g. Ellis, 1995; Laufer, 1997; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Pulido, 2004, 2009). Research findings suggest that using language learning strategies may not ensure success in language learning, especially if learners do not have the knowledge and experience to be able to metacognitively connect their learning strategies and their language use (Vann & Abraham, 1990). The demographic survey in this study revealed that, on average, participants in both the beginning and the intermediate groups had studied Spanish for less than two years and only three percent had studied a language other than Spanish or their L1. This information reveals the participants in these two groups are in fact inexperienced FL learners who may have not yet developed the advanced metacognitive learning skills to manage their FL vocabulary learning more effectively. According to some studies (e.g. Ellis, 2002; Pulido, 2009), less-proficient language learners use their available cognitive resources and skills for lower-level linguistic processes and have fewer resources available to effectively monitor and evaluate their learning through the use of more sophisticated metacognitive language learning strategies. Research on L2 learning strategies consistently shows that inexperienced and less successful L2 learners use the same learning strategies repeatedly even if they make no significant progress in their tasks (Anderson, 2005). Furthermore, similar research findings (e.g. Nassaji, 2003, 2004; Nation, 1997; Prince, 1996; Qian, 2002) also reveal that novice L2 learners lack the basic L2 vocabulary foundation necessary to take advantage of more sophisticated language learning strategies such as inferencing from context, extensive L2 reading, social interaction with target language speakers, and other *deeper-processing* (Ellis, 2002) learning strategies used by more proficient L2 learners. According to the vocabulary size test, the beginning group in this study had receptive (or higher) knowledge of only 34 percent of the 2000 most-frequently-used Spanish words (45 percent of 1000-level words and 24.5 percent of 2000-level words) while the intermediate group had receptive (or higher) knowledge of 49 percent of the 2000 most-frequently-used Spanish words (61.6 percent of 1000-level words and 37.8 percent of 2000-level words) (see Table 2). Thus, the evidence suggests that inexperienced L2 learners may have to resort to popular memorization strategies in order to build that basic vocabulary foundation necessary to engage in more cognitively-demanding learning strategies (Meara, 1995, 1996).

Yet another plausible explanation is related to other learner-dependent and external factors influencing their learning. The SLA literature informs us that there are many factors that can influence L2 learning other than target language proficiency and learning strategies, particularly at the beginning stages of L2 acquisition and development (Gass & Selinker, 2008). These factors may include the learning environment; FL versus L2, gender, motivation, anxiety, beliefs about L2 learning, the learning tasks, and learners' cultural background. All these factors are relatively stable and can determine to an extent how a language learner approaches vocabulary learning (Gu, 2003). Thus, since most FL students at schools around the U.S. do not receive explicit instruction on FL vocabulary learning strategies (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002; Folse, 2004; Schmitt, 2000), it may be possible that the less-experienced FL learners in this study have never been taught or have not fully developed effective language learning strategies and techniques that may enhance their learning efficiency and vocabulary gains. Instead, other learner-dependent and external factors (such as the ones mentioned above) may be playing a more significant role in their vocabulary development than the learning strategies they use. Future studies should examine how much instruction learners have received on VLS in order to analyze their effectiveness. These findings also highlight the positive influence that explicit training on effective cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies can have on inexperienced or novice FL learners.

In order to determine whether differences in VLS preferences exist between participants with high and low vocabulary size test scores (research question three), the VLS used by students in the top one third of vocabulary test scores in each group were compared with those in the bottom one third. The results, however, show no significant differences in the patterns of VLS used between high- and low-scoring participants in the beginning or intermediate groups. Again, suggesting perhaps that less-experienced FL learners lack the metacognitive knowledge to manage their vocabulary development more effectively.

Perhaps the most interesting and significant findings in this study were among the participants in the advanced proficiency group. Results from this group suggest that advanced-level FL students have acquired a larger repertoire of VLS than beginning- and intermediate-level FL students. The demographic survey reveals that the participants in the advanced group had studied Spanish for an average of five years prior to this study. This may suggest that the strategic learning habits of more experienced FL learners are more effective in overcoming the negative effects that other external and learner-dependent factors may have on FL vocabulary acquisition. In addition, Pearson correlation

analyses showed that significant differences in VLS use exist even with participants within this advanced group—those with high vocabulary scores differed in the VLS they claimed to use from those with low vocabulary test scores. These findings revealed an interesting trend, both sets of participants within the advanced group, those with the highest and the lowest vocabulary test scores, report using the same number of VLS (21). However, six of the 21 VLS used by advanced students were unique to the high-scoring group while five were unique to the low-scoring group. Those with low vocabulary scores relied more on memorization and cognitive strategies while those with higher vocabulary test scores relied more on social and metacognitive strategies. This finding supports Ellis' (1995) conclusions that experienced and successful language learners "use sophisticated metacognitive knowledge to choose suitable cognitive learning strategies appropriate to the task of vocabulary acquisition" (p. 117). Among the low-scoring group, four of their five unique VLS had significant negative correlations with their vocabulary test scores: grouping words together (-.228), using the keyword method (-.253), creating wordlists with L1 translations (-.306), and memorizing the vocabulary section of their textbooks (-.211). In contrast, three of the six VLS unique to the high-scoring group had significant positive correlations with their vocabulary test scores: using the word in interactions with Spanish speakers (.353), listening/watching Spanish media—music, videos, TV, film (.416), and reading Spanish texts (.297). These results suggest that, among advanced, more experienced FL learners, social and metacognitive learning strategies may be more effective at improving vocabulary gains, while learners that rely heavily on memorization techniques such as the keyword method and the use of wordlists may not be as effective at learning vocabulary. Again, one must be cautious not to infer a cause and effect relationship based on these correlations. This study does not provide empirical evidence to imply that the use of these strategies significantly improves or deteriorates vocabulary knowledge. Merely, it points to the fact that there are significant positive and negative correlations between the use of certain learning strategies and vocabulary size test scores among advance Spanish FL learners.

Research suggests that memorization strategies are common and popular among L2 learners (Fitzpatrick, Al-Qarni, & Meara, 2008; Folse, 2004; Milton, 2009; Read, 2000). Many researchers in the field of SLA (Fitzpatrick, et al., 2008; Lawson & Hogben, 1996; Meara, 1995; Pulido, 2009; Schmitt, 2000) believe that at lower proficiency levels, learners using memorization techniques will have better results, whereas more advanced learners will benefit more from the context found in more cognitively-demanding tasks. However, previous studies with Spanish FL learners (including the present study) have shown that the use of memorization strategies for vocabulary learning are less effective strategies among Spanish FL vocabulary learners (Barcroft, 2009; Sagarra & Alba, 2006; Scribner, 2000). Sagarra and Alba (2006), for example, found that the Spanish FL students in their study who used more involved metacognitive learning strategies improved significantly more than those who relied on rote repetition and other memorization techniques. Scribner (2000) also concluded that rote memorization was the least effective learning method for all three Spanish FL proficiency groups in her study. Most recently, Barcroft (2009) also found that the lowest proficiency scores in his study were attained by Spanish FL learners who used L2-L1 translation and repetition techniques. Thus, the negative results from the use of memorization strategies among advanced learners in previous studies, as well as results from the present study, may suggest that memorization strategies may arguably be better suited for beginning-level FL learners who are in the initial receptive knowledge-building stage of vocabulary growth, and not for more experienced and proficient FL learners who may benefit more from cognitively-demanding social and metacognitive strategies that promote long-term productive knowledge of vocabulary.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The results from this research study add to the body of literature related to the use of VLS in FL vocabulary learning. It is clear that for most FL students, learning vocabulary is the most common activity in the language learning process and perhaps the most frustrating one as well. There is little doubt that FL learners want to have greater control over their own vocabulary development. Unfortunately, inexperienced language learners are not always aware of the benefits of conscious and continuous use of effective learning strategies for making learning quicker and more effective, and many FL teachers are not savvy on language and vocabulary learning strategy instruction and/or techniques at different levels of proficiency. FL VLS research, however, is still in its infancy, and as Oxford (2003) pointed out, the categorization of learning strategies is still fluid and open to debate.

Findings from the present study support the argument that novice Spanish FL learners may lack the metacognitive knowledge, skills and experience to better manage their vocabulary learning. Future research should continue to evaluate the effectiveness of explicit instruction on the use of learning strategies and its effect on FL vocabulary acquisition. Perhaps future research will also result in a more standardized and valid model for FL VLS which takes into account language proficiency, experience and metacognitive knowledge of language learning.

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Kanji Learning by FL Students from Character and Non-character Based Language Backgrounds – Report from a Foreign Language Class

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Abstract—**This is classroom-based action research to develop a subject syllabus. The subject aims to improve the *kanji* learning of learners from both character (CB) and non-character based (NCB) language backgrounds. This paper reports the first phase of a three year long project to develop the proposed subject. It investigates the performance of CB and NCB learners at the beginning and end of a pilot course of the subject. The objectives of the study is to obtain a broad picture of the CB and NCB speaker groups' *kanji* performance in order to locate possible areas of difficulty for the further examination. The findings indicate advantages of a character based language background for learning *kanji*. However, the two groups did not show much difference in reading *kanji* which had been formally introduced in class. Neither group could easily correct *kanji* reading or writing errors by themselves.**

Index Terms—**Japanese written system, kanji learning, character background, non-character background**

I. INTRODUCTION

Kanji learning does not seem to be an easy task at all. Even in Japan, where *kanji* are part of the mother tongue's written system, there has been a constant effort to keep the number of *kanji* under control. *Joyo-Kanji*, literally *Kanji* for Common Use, is designed to "serve as a yardstick so that her public media uses a limited number of *kanji* more effectively to facilitate day-to-day communication among her people" (Encyclopaedia Britannica's Japanese International Dictionary). The list of *Joyo-Kanji* has been published since 1923 (e.g., Sato, 1989; Tamaoka, 1991; Wikipedia: *Joyo-Kanji*[1]), when they were first set by the Ministry of Education (文部省臨時国語調査会[2]). They were reduced to 1,856 characters in 1931. The number was increased to 1,945 in 1981, and the Cultural Advisory Committee (文化審議会) further increased them to 2,136 in 2010. In the process, some old *kanji*[3] used with the old *kana-zukai* (old hiragana written system) were officially simplified (mostly because these complex characters had been largely replaced by their abbreviations in everyday usage) (Sato, 1989).

China, from which Japanese adopted *kanji* into the Japanese written system, also simplified their characters for common use. Since 1956, simplified characters were introduced several times (i.e., 1959, 1977, 1980, and 1986). Characters were simplified in many ways, but mainly by reducing the overall number of characters and the number of strokes per character (Ingulsrud & Allen, 1999).

If *kanji* are not easy for native speakers, how hard is it for non-native speakers, especially speakers of alphabetic languages? This is the starting point of this classroom-based research. In Japanese as a foreign language (JFL) class, a common belief among teachers and learners is that *Kanji* learning is notoriously hard for speakers of non-character based (NCB) languages and is not as easy for character based (CB) language speakers as it appears. The JFL teachers observe that although CB speakers sometimes outperform NCB speakers, sometimes they underperform them. This paper investigates how students from CB and NCB backgrounds progressed in the same tertiary JFL course where the focus is on *kanji* learning.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Literature Review

Kanji are a large part of Japanese vocabulary and particularly of content words, such as nouns, verbs, adverbs, etc. Thus *kanji* knowledge and comprehension is very important for word recognition in Japanese. Research findings suggest there are possibly different models of word recognition by the speakers of an alphabetic language (English) and a logographic language (Chinese).

The Interactive-Activation Model (McClelland & Rumelhart,1981) originally developed for the English language system has been modified to explain recognition of Chinese character words (Taft, Liu & Zhu, 1999). The model

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[1] http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E5%B8%B8%E7%94%A8%E6%BC%A2%E5%AD%97
[2] Special Committee on National Language organised by the Ministry of Education
[3] The number appears to vary from 254 to 274.

includes orthographic, phonological and meaning/semantic units which interact with each other. In the orthographic units, visual input is processed at three levels to be recognised as a word, i.e., feature, letter, and word levels. Alphabetical orthographic features such as \, |, c, --, correspond to the character strokes of a logographic language. The letter level of English language corresponds to radicals (part of characters) to whole single characters (morphemes) of Chinese language, which eventually form words.

Taft, Liu & Zhu (1999) add abstract units "lemmas" (Levelt, 1989) as the interface for the interaction between orthographic and semantic or phonological units in Chinese word recognition. The abstract units contain the same semantic information repeatedly reoccurring with the same form. Thus the units accumulate a correlation between form and meaning over time. This allows the model to explain how the correct meaning of single characters with multiple meanings can be activated in the comprehension of compound words. (Figure 1)
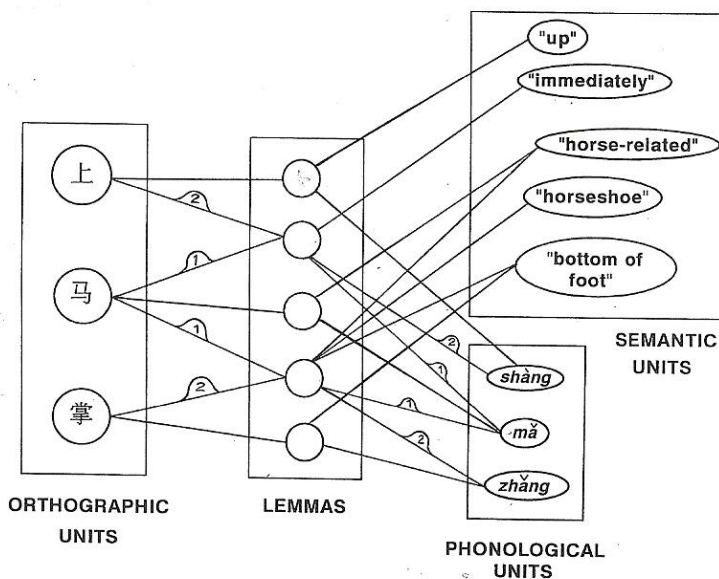
FIG. 5.2. A modification to the interactive-activation model whereby lemma levels exist and there are no orthographic or phonological representations of complete compound words.

Figure 1 Interactive-activation model for Chinese From Wang, Inhoff, & Chen, (1999, p.107)

Access to word meaning is essential not only for word recognition but also for comprehension of larger linguistic units, such as sentence, paragraph, etc. Word meaning can be directly accessed visually (orthography to meaning) and indirectly via a phonological path. *Kanji* words normally consist of a single character plus *okuri-gana* (*hiragana*) to make verbs, adjectives, and adverbs (e.g., 食べる、静かな、急いで). Characters are often compounded to make nouns (e.g., 食事、歓迎、休暇).

Compound *kanji* words can be processed in the same way as Chinese words, using both semantic and phonological access. Zhou et al (1999) argue that direct meaning access from orthographic units is predominant. In their view, the orthographic, phonological and semantic units are not all interactive with each other. Only the orthographic and semantic units interact, and the phonological units are mainly activated after the other two units.

B. JFL Course Structures in General

JFL courses at tertiary level normally offer content which promotes a balanced four skill development – dividing the course into components each of which focuses either on one skill or on some combination of the four skills (such as listening and speaking, reading and writing, listening and reading, reading and speaking, writing and speaking, etc). *Kanji* learning (recognition, comprehension in text and use in writing) tends to fall within areas such as script recognition, comprehension of text and writing. A relatively small portion of the course hours is normally allocated directly to *kanji* learning.

History and derivation of *kanji* are normally introduced to students during beginner's courses. Once students have learned around 200-250 single characters, they might be introduced to *kanji's* internal structure: radicals (*hen, tsukuri*). They may also learn some compounds such as *kango* words, 食事する (*shokuji-suru*: to eat) as well as their *Wago* counter part, 食べる (taberu: to eat), and four character words such as 前代未聞 (*zendai-minon*: unparalleled). Most of the class hours allocated to *kanji* learning are spent on explanation of *kanji* and *kanji* related matters (such as internal structure, meaning, pronunciation of *kanji*, and vocabulary including the *kanji*), or testing students' *kanji* learning. Very little time is left for students to practice *kanji* in class, and a large part of *kanji* learning is left to students' self-study.

C. Principle behind the Course Syllabus

It came to our notice that *kanji* were not- yet-taught or practised systematically after their initial introduction at the beginning of the course, and tended to be introduced and practised simply in relation to the topic in each lesson. Thus, if we deliver a subject which provides 1) an overview of *kanji* script, 2) explanation of *kanji* structures, and 3) practice to assist the learners to develop *kanji* learning strategies, it should promote the students' *kanji* acquisition. In practice, we need to teach character background (CB) and non-character background (NCB) learners not only in the same course but also in the same class. Therefore we need to develop a *kanji* subject which caters to both groups.

This study reports the first phase of a three year long project to develop such a *kanji* subject course. The study aims to obtain a broad picture of what each group's *kanji* performance was like at the beginning and end of a pilot course of the subject, in order to identify possible areas of difficulty for each or both CB and NCB learners. The picture should also assist with the selection of subject content better adapted to the *kanji* learning needs of both/each group.

III. THE STUDY

A. The Subject Course and Cohort

The subject course in this study was offered to intermediate learners of Japanese co-currently with their core subject (Level 3 Japanese) which includes practice of the four language skills. The new course presents students with a summary of the current Japanese writing systems, and provides practice to develop *kanji* learning strategies and opportunities to see *kanji* from a logographic perspective. The course also intends to promote autonomous learning and voluntary vocabulary building among the learners besides their *kanji* learning.

The student cohort consisted of 22 CB and 31 NCB speakers. Among them, 13 CB and 23 NCB speakers participated in this study. The course ran for 12 weeks and the class consisted of one hour lecture and 1.5 hour tutorial per week. The lectures presented an overview of *kanji* script as part of the Japanese writing system and explanation of *kanji* structures. The tutorials provided exercises intended to assist the learners to develop *kanji* learning strategies.

Refer to Table 1 for lecture and tutorial topics. The tutorials provided exercises related to each week's topic. The worksheets used in tutorials were a mixture of lecture materials and pages from Basic *Kanji* Books (Kano et al 1989).

The students were also required to undertake an independent *kanji* project (20% of the course assessment). The aim of the project was to improve their *kanji* learning and build vocabulary. They were expected to discover their best personal methods for remembering *kanji* as well as utilising the strategies they learned in class. The ultimate goal of the project was mastery of '*kanji* on the list'. These *kanji* were a) previously-taught *kanji* taught (target *kanji* in Levels 1 and 2) and b) target *kanji* for Level 3. Due to individual differences (such as CB or NCB background, how much each student had learned *kanji* before taking this course, etc), students were instructed to determine their own specific goals. Some students decided their goals were less than complete mastery of the '*kanji* on the list', and some set more ambitious goals.

TABLE 1
THE COURSE OUTLINE

Weeks	Lecture	Tutorial
Week 1	Introduction: Explanation of course objectives, activities and assessments	*Kanji* Quiz Revision of leant *kanji*
Week 2	History of Japanese writing systems	Reading exercise Revision of Japanese writing systems
Week 3	Hira*gana* and kata*kana* (Japanese *kana* writing systems)	Reading and writing exercises kata*kana* words
Week 4	Japanese sound system and phonetics (vowels, mora, etc)	Revision of the learnt homophones
Week 5	Structures of Japanese words	Practice of radicals
Week 6	*Kanji On* and *Kun* reading	Exercises with *On* and *Kun* reading and use
Week 7	Structures of *kanji*	Exercises with *kanji* structures
Week 8	Compounding *kanji*	Learning *kanji* compound characteristics
Week 9	*Kanji* compound use in sentence	Exercise with *kanji* compounds, adjectives, affixes
Week 10	Homophones	Learn homophones and accent Antonyms, Verbs
Week 11	Revision: recognizing *kanji* words	*Kanji* recognition exercises Presentation of *kanji* project
Week 12	Summary: how to learn and remember *kanji*	Discussion Presentation of *kanji* project

B. The Purpose of the Study

This is the first phase of a larger project which ultimately aims to discover more effective ways to teach *kanji* to a mixed student cohort of CB and NCB speakers. The project seeks approach(es) to motivate both groups, improve their *kanji* learning and a set of assessments which enables evaluation of their learning through the course. The immediate purpose of the current study is to examine the differences between the CB and NCB speaker groups in terms of *kanji* learning, particularly regarding:

1. How well CB learners adjusted to *kanji* learning compared to NCB learners in the same level Japanese language class,

2. Each group's test performance at the beginning and end of the course, and

3. Fundamental differences in *kanji* learning between the groups.

C. The Methods

To find out the differences between the two groups, the outcomes of two tests were examined and analysed. The first test was given as a *kanji* quiz at the very beginning before subject teaching started. The second test was given when the course was over, after 12 weeks of instruction.

The initial *kanji* quiz included *kanji* previously-taught in Levels One and Two, and new *kanji* to be introduced. The quiz intended to find out how much the CB and NCB speakers knew about the target *kanji* for the course. The quiz consisted of two parts: A and B (50 questions each), each of which was divided into reading and writing *kanji* sections (25 questions each). For Part A the twenty-five words (either *kanji* compound or *kanji-kana* words) to be tested in each section were chosen randomly from a pool of 376 single *kanji* (taught in Levels 1 and 2). The twenty-five words to be tested in each section of Part B were selected in the same manner from a pool of not-yet-taught *kanji* (*kanji* for Level 3). All *kanji* words were tested in sentences (not as stand-alone single words) in the quiz.

TABLE 2
CONTENTS OF THE FINAL EXAMINATION

PartA/B	scores	what was tested
A	40	*kanji* **words reading and writing**
B-1	10	remembering **radicals**
B-2	10	*kanji* **writing**
B-3	5	*kanji* **reading** and **vocabulary** knowledge
B-4	5	**vocabulary** knowledge
B-5	10	**vocabulary** knowledge/ *kanji* **recognition**
B-6	5	**radical**
B-7	5	**radical recognition**
B-8	5	**meaning of** *kanji*
B-9	5	**meaning of** *kanji*, parts of *kanji* **recognition**
B-10	5	how to use prefix *kanji*, **vocabulary** knowledge
B-11	10	*kanji* **meaning and** *kanji* **component recognition**
B-12	10	key word comprehension

N.B> all vocabulary tested above included kanji.

The final examination was held around four weeks after the teaching period was over. The examination was basically an achievement test, divided into Parts A and B. Part A had the same format as the *kanji* quiz at the beginning, and *kanji* compound or *kanji-kana* words were chosen randomly in the same manner (40 questions). Thus the cohort performance should provide some indication about how much and to what depth the cohort has learnt the *kanji* on the list over the twelve week course.

Part B involved 11 different questions, including three questions (B-1, 6, and 7) related to radicals but not directly testing *kanji*, and a key word comprehension question (B-12) which tested comprehension of lecture content but not *kanji* directly.

IV. STUDENT PERFORMANCE

To answer the research questions, the test performances by the CB and NCB speakers of the cohort were quantitatively examined.

A. Analysis of Student Performance on Quiz

The participants (36), a mixed cohort of CB (13) and NCB (23) speakers, took a *kanji* quiz consisting of 100 questions divided into 25 questions for each of:

Part A-reading; Part A-writing (Levels 1 & 2 *kanji*): reading and writing test on already introduced *kanji,* and

Part B-reading; Part B-writing (Level 3 *kanji*): reading and writing test on not yet introduced *kanji*.

The purpose of the quiz was primarily to understand what sort of *kanji* vocabulary knowledge each speaker group might have before taking the course. The quiz was given to the participants in class and they did it in their own time; however no one took more than 40 minutes. Once the quiz papers were collected and their answers checked, the participants were allowed to take the quiz home and A) correct their answers and B) add new answers if they wished, provided both the original and new answers were clearly shown.

Each part of the quiz was marked twice to find out a) *kanji* they-thought-they-knew and b) *kanji* they-actually knew on the list. The first marking was after the in-class test and the second after the participants took the quiz home and self-examined their answers. The scores for the *kanji* they-thought-they-knew were generated by giving one mark for any attempted answers, and the scores for the *kanji* they-actually-knew were generated by giving one mark for correct answers only.

Two markers scored the quiz and any discrepancy in the two markings was corrected by discussion between the two markers.

(A) *KANJI* THEY-THOUGHT-THEY-KNEW: QUESTIONS THEY RESPONDED TO

The cohort response averages for reading and writing the taught *kanji* were nearly 80%, which demonstrates that the learners were reasonably confident with this (Table 3). The CB speaker group (86.8%: average for reading and 87.4% for writing) were more confident with the taught *kanji* but NCB speaker group also showed good confidence (75.3% for reading and 70.1% for writing). Regarding the *kanji* never formally introduced to class, the picture was very different. The CB speakers still believed that they knew the *kanji* reasonably to fairly (66.8% for reading and 48.3% for writing), whereas the NCB speakers recognised less than a quarter of the *kanji* at best (26.4% for reading and 9.9% for writing).

When we compare the two groups (One-way ANOVA), the rather large *F* numbers with low *p*-figures (critical value of *F* for *p*=.01 is 7.44) suggest that the CB and NCB groups definitely differ in perceived knowledge about the new *kanji* (see Table 4: shadowed columns) and possibly about the taught *kanji*.

TABLE 3
COMPARISON (1): *KANJI* THEY- THOUGHT-THEY-KNOW: IN CLASS PERFORMANCE

Quiz		Whole cohort (39)	CB speakers (13)	NCB speakers (23)
A-reading (25)	Taught *kanji*	79.4%	86.8%	75.3%
A-writing (25)		76.1%	87.4%	70.1%
B-reading (25)	*Kanji* to learn	41.0%	66.8%	26.4%
B-writing (25)		23.1%	48.3%	9.9%

TABLE 4
COMPARISON (2): KANJI THEY- THOUGHT-THEY-KNOW: IN CLASS PERFORMANCE

Part	df	*F*	Sig.
A-Reading Between CB and NCB	1	7.434	.010
A-Writing Between CB and NCB	1	8.311	.007
B-Reading Between CB and NCB	1	19.663	.000
B- Writing Between CB and NCB	1	21.843	.000

The participants were allowed to take the quiz home to correct or add new answers. 17 participants changed their answers (5 CB and 12 NCB speakers). The summary of answers by participants (Table 5) shows that the take home option increased answer rates for *kanji* writing more than reading, and particularly writing not-yet-taught *kanji* (in bold).

TABLE 5
COMPARISON (1): ANSWER RATES AFTER TAKING THE QUIZ HOME

Quiz		Whole cohort (39)		CB speakers (13)		NCB speakers (23)	
		in class	take home (17)	in class	take home (5)	in class	take home (12)
A-reading (25)	Taught	79.4%	83.3%	86.8%	89.5%	75.3%	79.8%
A-writing (25)	*kanji*	76.1%	85.9%	87.4%	91.7%	**70.1%**	**82.6%**
B-reading (25)	*Kanji*	41.0%	48.0%	66.8%	72.3%	26.4%	34.3%
B-writing (25)	to learn	23.1%	37.6%	**48.3%**	**64.3%**	**9.9%**	**22.4%**

(B) *KANJI* THE PARTICIPANTS REMEMBER CORRECTLY

The participants' answers in the quiz were then examined for correct answers. Table 6 shows the summary of the cohort/group scores for 1) answered in class; 2) increased answer rate after taking home; 3) correct answers in class; and 4) correct answers after self-check.

Taking the quiz home provided both groups with an opportunity to increase their answer rate noticeably (about 10% or more: e.g. A-writing: whole cohort: from 76.1% to 85.9%, NCB group: from 70.1% to 82.6%; B-writing: CB group: from 48.3% to 64.3%) (refer to Table 5 or Table 6 columns (1) Answered in class and (2) Answer rate after taking home). However, there was little difference between (3) correct answers in class and (4) correct answers after self-check.

The CB and NCB groups were compared in terms of how correctly they remembered the *kanji* reading and writing in the quiz. The internal consistency of the four quiz sections was reasonable (Cronbach's α = .855). Within each group in this study, *kanji* performance variance was reasonably homogeneous except for B-writing section (the-not-yet-taught) (see Table 7).

TABLE 6
COMPARISON (1): PARTICIPANTS' ANSWERS IN KANJI QUIZ

		Answered in class (%) (1)	Answer rate after taking home (%) (2)	Correctly answered in class (%) (3)	Correct answers after taking home (%) (4)
A-reading	Whole cohort	79.4	83.3	63.4	63.7
	CB-group	86.8	89.5	68.6	68.9
	NCB-group	75.3	79.8	60.5	60.7
A-writing	Whole cohort	76.1	**85.9**	46.4	47.3
	CB-group	87.4	91.7	60.6	61.8
	NCB-group	70.1	**82.6**	38.4	39.1
B-reading	Whole cohort	41.0	48.0	25.7	25.8
	CB-group	66.8	72.3	42.5	42.5
	NCB-group	26.4	34.3	16.2	16.3
B-writing	Whole cohort	23.1	**37.6**	12.8	13.1
	CB-group	48.3	**64.3**	27.7	27.7
	NCB-group	9.9	**22.4**	4.3	4.9

TABLE 7
HOMOGENEITY OF VARIANCES WITHIN EACH GROUP

	Levene Statistics	df1	df2	Sig.
A-reading	.002	1	34	.968
A-writing	.283	1	34	.599
B-reading	.022	1	34	.883
B-writing	20.697	1	34	.000

The correctly answered *kanji* ratios were definitely different between the CB and NCB speaker groups for three of the sections: previously-taught *kanji* writing, not-yet-taught *kanji* reading and writing ($F > 7.44$: Table 8). Mean test revealed that the *kanji* performance scores in the quiz were not associated with the independent variable (CB or NCB) for the taught *kanji* reading (Eta value $.259 < 0.5$). However they may or may not be associated with whether participants belonged to CB or NCB groups (Eta value around .5) for the other three sections: taught *kanji* writing, not-yet-taught *kanji* reading and writing (Table 9: next page).

TABLE 8
COMPARISON: PARTICIPANTS' CORRECT ANSWERS IN KANJI QUIZ (ANOVA)

		df	*F*	Sig
A-reading	Between CB and NCB Groups	1	2.438	.128
A-writing	Between CB and NCB Groups	1	13.213	.001
B-reading	Between CB and NCB Groups	1	11.441	.002
B-writing	Between CB and NCB Groups	1	14.964	.000

TABLE 9
MEASURES OF ASSOCIATION BETWEEN GROUP IDENTITY AND PERFORMANCE

	Eta	Eta Squared
A-reading * CB=1, NCB=0	.259	.067
A-writing * CB=1, NCB=0	.529	.280
B-reading * CB=1, NCB=0	.502	.252
B-writing * CB=1, NCB=0	.553	.306

B. Student Performance in the Final Examination

Part A was in the same format as the *kanji* quiz and questions were constructed in the same manner from the same pool of single *kanji*. Part B consisted of questions testing *kanji* words (with a focus on *kanji* learning strategies that were introduced and practised through the previous twelve weeks).

The participants' scores for the final examination were quantified and grouped as follows: 1) Part A: *kanji* reading and writing in text, and 2) Parts B-2, B-3, B-4, B-5, B-8, B-9, B-10, and B-11: questions testing *kanji* words (refer back to Table 2 for details). As seen in Table 10, the CB speaker group outperformed the NCB speaker group in both Parts A and B. The internal consistency of 1) and 2) was good (Cronbach's α = .907), and the correlation between the cohort performance in Parts A and B was (rho = .883, p =.000).

TABLE 10
COMPARISON: PARTICIPANTS' CORRECT ANSWERS IN FINAL EXAMINATION

		Whole cohort (36)	CB group (13)	NCB group (23)
Part A (out of 40)	Mean	26.24 (65.6%)	32.69 (81.7%)	22.59 (56.5%)
	Std Dev	7.96	4.14	7.27
Part B (out of 60)	Mean	39.19 (65.3%)	49.65 (82.8%)	33.28 (55.5%)
	Std Dev	11.40	6.94	8.89

Lastly when the participants' *kanji* performance in the quiz and final examination were placed together, the gap between the CB and NCB speaker groups became more distinct (Table 11). All *F* figures became larger (critical *F*

figure was 7.44) and significance levels became statistically significant. In particular *F* figures for the final examination were larger than those in the quiz. Eta values for Part A and B were .618 and .700 respectively and showed even stronger connection between the scores and group identity than in the quiz.

TABLE 11
COMPARISON: PARTICIPANTS' COMBINED KANJI PERFORMANCE (ANOVA)

			df	*F*	Sig
Final Examination	Part A	Between CB and NCB Groups (combined)	1	21.063	.000
	Part B	Between CB and NCB Groups (combined)	1	32.660	.000
Kanji Quiz	A-reading	Between CB and NCB Groups (combined)	1	3.814	.056
	A-writing	Between CB and NCB Groups (combined)	1	15.500	.000
	B-reading	Between CB and NCB Groups (combined)	1	11.872	.002
	B-writing	Between CB and NCB Groups (combined)	1	15.941	.000

V. DISCUSSION

This study was conducted in a pilot course which aimed to assist both CB and NCB speakers with their Japanese learning, with a particular focus on *kanji* learning and subsequent vocabulary building. 13 CB and 23 NCB speakers participated in this study. At the beginning of the course, they were given a quiz of 100 *kanji* word questions in class without any advance notice. For the following 12 weeks, the participants attended lectures where *kanji* were presented formally as a part of the Japanese writing system, and tutorials in which they practised methods/strategies to learn *kanji* systematically (refer back to Table 1). The participants also conducted independent *kanji* learning projects for those 12 weeks. Then they were given another *kanji* test as part of the final examination – Part A: a smaller test (40 questions) made in the same way as the quiz at the beginning and Part B: *kanji* questions requiring methods/strategies practiced in the tutorials (see 3.3. Methods).

The study was conducted to answer three questions (see 3.2 The purpose of the study). The first question asks how well CB learners adjusted to *kanji* learning compared to NCB learners in the same level Japanese language class.

The scores from the quiz at the beginning were examined at two levels: 1) *kanji* participants thought they knew about and 2) *kanji* they remembered correctly. The former included *kanji* which they were very confident they knew to those they recollected well enough to produce answers (they thought their answers might be right).

Comparison of CB and NCB speaker groups at the first level showed that the CB and NCB groups definitely have different perceived knowledge regarding the new *kanji* in class and possibly about previously-taught *kanji*. The low scores by the NCB group for not-yet-taught *kanji* (Part B: reading 26.4% and writing 9.9%) strongly indicated that NCB speakers have little idea about *kanji* which have not been formally introduced to them. On the other hand, the CB speakers believed that they knew not-yet-taught *kanji* to a certain extent (Part B: reading 66.8% and writing 48.3%). The gaps between the scores for reading and writing not-yet-taught *kanji* might indicate writing is harder than reading *kanji* for the both groups when it comes to unfamiliar *kanji*. However, it should be noted that the scores by the NCB speaker group were not much lower regarding previously-taught *kanji* (Part A-reading and writing: CB 86.8% and 87.4% and NCB 75.3% and 70.1%).

Statistical analysis demonstrated the two groups can be similar with reading of previously-taught *kanji* (*F* < the critical value; *p* =. 01) in terms of responsiveness and possibly so for writing previously-taught *kanji*. It is also interesting that the CB speaker group answered slightly more to *kanji* writing questions whereas the NCB speaker group answered more to the reading questions.

When it comes to the correctness of the *kanji* they remembered, Mean test results suggest that participants' performance for reading previously-taught *kanji* was not affected by being a CB or NCB speaker. However their performance for reading not-yet-taught *kanji* and writing *kanji* (both previously-taught and not-yet-taught) may or may not relate to which group they belonged to. In addition, variance within each group was reasonably homogeneous except for not-yet-taught *kanji* writing. Therefore it can be said that the CB and NCB speakers can have similar facility with reading *kanji* which have been formally introduced (i.e, their meaning, pronunciation/reading and orthography). In other words, the more they work on learning *kanji*, the better they can read them regardless of a character or non-character based background. However, CB speakers will likely outperform NCB speakers in writing *kanji*, even if the NCB speakers work equally hard on the previously-taught *kanji*.

The study's second research question asks what each group's test performance was at the beginning and end of the course.

The comparison of the participant group performances in the two tests (Table 6, Column 3 and Table 10) suggested some improvement for both groups. The CB speaker group raised their *kanji* performance in the examination by scoring 81.8 % for remembering *kanji* (Part A: Table 10), which is higher than their group scores for any sections in the quiz (Table 6, Column 3). The CB speaker group did even better with using learnt strategies to recognise both single and compound *kanji* (Part B: Table 10). The NCB speaker group managed to remember 56.5% of *kanji* correctly in the final examination (Part A: Table 10), which was slightly lower than their previous score for previously-taught *kanji* reading, but remarkably higher than the scores for the remaining three sections, i.e., not-yet-taught *kanji* reading and writing and previously-taught *kanji* writing.

The two test combined statistical analysis (Table 11) revealed that the CB and NCB speaker groups in this study differed in their *kanji* learning, except for reading of previously-taught *kanji* (F > critical figure), and that this will very likely be the case for each class we might have in the future ($p \leq .002$).

The third and final research question asks what are the possible fundamental differences in *kanji* learning between the NC and NCB groups.

The large discrepancy between the CB and NCB speaker groups' responses to new *kanji* suggests that having a character background assists the CB learners at the initial stage of *kanji* learning. The CB learners not only already know single characters but also the writing system (and system rules), and have had character learning experience in their mother tongue.

When new *kanji* are introduced into a lesson, CB speakers can sometimes identify the *kanji* by sight, even without knowing the meaning or pronunciation. Firstly, they can recognise the word without going through analysis of strokes, radicals, or (single character) morphemes (refer to Figure 1 in 2.1). Secondly, they know how to assign meaning to the *kanji* from their character learning experience, and can develop abstract units (lemmas: Levelt, 1989) by accumulating form-meaning information.

On the other hand, without a character network in their cognition, NCB speakers have no idea about newly presented *kanji* unless they have seen similar *kanji* before (e.g., analogous shape, components or context). Their word recognition training with alphabetic languages is not easily adapted to their *kanji* learning (Taft, Liu & Zhu, 1999). This two-fold unfamiliarity might cause considerable anxiety as well as difficulty for NCB speakers.

In terms of the correctness of the *kanji* the participants remembered, in both groups a recognizable proportion of their answers in the quiz were either simply wrong or incomplete (compare the rates between Column (2) and (3) in Table 6). Very interestingly, the corrections and additions after taking the quiz home did not much improve the correctness of either *kanji* reading or writing (compare Column (3) and (4) in Table 6).

This indicates self-correction of *kanji* (which have been learnt partially or remembered wrongly) might be very hard, regardless of whether the learner is a CB or NCB speaker. A possible explanation is that the CB learners might have strong interference from their L1. The NCB speakers might not have enough information in lemmas to reach a threshold to activate a link between appropriate orthographic representation and semantic or phonological elements.

The *kanji* performance of both groups (particularly the CB speakers) appears to have improved after completing the lectures and tutorials, and conducting their own *kanji* learning project. The validity or reliability of two tests has not been confirmed yet, and it is not certain to what extent the knowledge introduced in the course was utilised by the participants. No measurement of each participant's time and effort though the semester was available, so in this study the improvement cannot be reliably connected to any particular factor(s).

However, at least it may be said that both groups can improve their *kanji* learning by increasing exposure to *kanji*. The difference between the two groups became more distinct when the two test results were combined (Table 11). This suggests that the gap between the two groups may become larger when they are given the same instruction and opportunities for *kanji* learning. In other words, NCB speakers require more assistance, resources or time to catch up with CB speakers in class.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the analysis can be summarised around the research questions as follows.

Before taking the course, CB speakers as a group performed better overall on both previously-taught and not-yet-taught *kanji*, in terms of both recognition and correctness. The difference between the groups could likely be attributed to whether they were CB or NCB speakers, except for reading previously-taught *kanji*.

When the CB and NCB speaker groups' test performance was examined at the end of the course, the difference observed at the beginning appeared to intensify. Even though both groups improved their performance noticeably, the improvement made by the CB speaker group was greater.

The findings provide support for the argument that a character based background is overall beneficial for *kanji* learning. However, the findings that there is little difference between the groups in reading previously-taught *kanji* and the poor rates of self-correction need to be explored further to understand *kanji* learning by both learner groups.

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"My Country in Europe": A Content-based Project for Teaching English as a Foreign Language to Young Learners

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Abstract—**The present paper outlines the process of introducing a pilot EFL (English as a Foreign Language) project, which integrates content and language learning. It aimed at developing young learners' language skills in English, through integrating English language learning with the subject of Geography. The project was piloted in two fifth grade (5th) classrooms of a Greek primary school. The results of the intervention project indicated the positive effects of the project on students' oral and written skills and their attitude towards foreign language learning.**

Index Terms—**foreign language learning, content-based learning, project, young learners**

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper outlines the design and implementation of an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) project, which integrates content and language learning. Young learners are involved in a number of activities with the aim to enhance students' foreign language skills through another subject- Geography. Over the last years, an interest has spread to EFL classrooms around the world regarding Content Based Instruction (CBI), which "refers to the concurrent teaching of academic subject matter and second language skills" (Brinton et al, 1989, p. 2). CBI integrates foreign language with content learning, putting great emphasis on learning about something rather than learning about language. In such a context, where learners' needs and interests are put in the center of the learning process, learners are provided with a variety of opportunities for stimulating motivation and expressing themselves creatively while learning English at the same time.

Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis (1983) provides a rationale for CBI (Cummins, 1994), where language teaching is integrated with content. A number of benefits seem to accrue to foreign language learning by implementing CBI. Firstly, language learning becomes more interesting, motivating and meaningful. Secondly, students gain knowledge in various subjects, develop their cognitive and study skills, and become more independent learners. In addition, students are engaged in meaningful communication with classmates (Met, 1991; Griva, Semoglou & Geladari, 2010). However, CBI alone does not guarantee success. Factors such as students' needs in content area classes as well as their needs in language skills instruction are among the most important (Grabe & Stoller, 1997).

One of the approaches that can be integrated into CBI is the project approach, as one of its primary goals is to foster independent learning. Studies in the EFL field have highlighted the advantages of learning a foreign language through a project (Beckett, 2005; Gu, 2002). It is often stated that Project Based Learning (PBL) is clearly an instructional method centered on the learner, which allows an in-depth investigation of a topic worth learning more about (Erdem, 2002). A review on the existing literature on EFL project-based instruction indicates that it connects the development of skills and content knowledge with language (Beckett & Slater, 2005). Working on a project allows the integration of skills (Fried-Booth, 2002) and provides students with opportunities to communicate, therefore enabling them to develop their communicative competence. It is often observed that incorporating project work in the foreign language classroom results in increased self-esteem (Stoller, 2006) and autonomy (Skehan, 1998) on the part of the students. Learners develop their cooperative skills (Coleman, 1992) and have increased engagement and enjoyment (Lee, 2002) due to the fact that learning becomes a meaningful experience which stems from their interests. Responsibility for learning and evaluation of the learning process and learning outcomes moves from teacher to student, who needs to adopt an active role, to be critical and able to cooperate, while the role of the teacher during project work is that of the coordinator and advisor and, at the same time, of the one responsible for creating the optimum opportunities for successful language learning (Clark, 2006; Levy, 1997).

II. THE STUDY

A. Rationale and Purpose of the Study

The basic purpose of this study was to implement a Content Based Language Teaching project in order to teach EFL to young learners. Moreover, an attempt was made to evaluate the outcomes of foreign language learning through the specific project implemented in a state primary school in Northen Greece. Recent studies have highlighted the advantages of foreign language learning at early stages (Edelenbos et al., 2006; Edelenbos & de Jong, 2004; Johnstone, 2002). EFL research underlines the benefits in children's linguistic, cognitive and emotional development, since the use of their cognitive strategies (Moon, 2005) as well their metacognitive skills (Nikolov, 2009) are enhanced.

More precisely, the present project aimed at:
- developing students' basic reading, listening, writing, speaking skills and improve their vocabulary by using English as a foreign language for communicative purposes in authentic situations;
- providing students with ample opportunities to learn about Europe through a cross curricular project and to develop their intercultural skills;
- enhancing students' sensitivity regarding cultural differences in the European context as well as human and children's rights;
- stimulating their motivation for EFL learning by enhancing their involvement in experiential learning activities.

B. Sample

The intervention was piloted on a small scale, in two fifth (5th) grade primary school classrooms in northern Greece. In Greece, English as a FL is taught as a compulsory subject in the primary school curriculum from the 3rd grade onwards.

Twenty-two (22) Greek-speaking students (mean age=10.85 years-old) participated in this study, 8 boys and 14 girls. The students, who attended a different classroom of the same school, were assigned to two groups. Twelve (12) students composed the control group and ten (10) students composed the experimental group .

Both groups were taught English as a foreign language by the same teacher-researcher for a long time before the intervention. The experimental group participated in the CBI project, while the control group was taught English in a conventional way, in the PPP (Presentation-Practice-Production) framework. Each group was taught English 3 hours per week. The students represented a wide range of ability levels (Table I, II). Each student is represented by a number from 1 to 12 for the control group and from 1 to 10 for the experimental group as shown below.

TABLE I
STUDENT DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE LEVEL (CONTROL GROUP)

Language Level	Frequency	Student	Rate %
High	3	students: 2, 7, 11	25,00
Medium	8	students: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12	66,66
Low	1	student: 9	10,00
Very low	0	-	0,00
Total	12	12	100,00

TABLE II.
STUDENT DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE LEVEL (EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)

Level	Frequency	Student	Rate %
High	2	students: 1, 7	20,00
Medium	4	students: 2, 3, 5, 6	40,00
Low	3	students: 4, 8, 10	30,00
Very low	1	student: 9	10,00
Total	10	10	100,00

C. Project Procedure

Approximately the same number of sessions (38-40) was spent on teaching English as a foreign language to the two groups (experimental and control). As already mentioned, the control group was taught English in a PPP framework.

In the control group, planning and teaching was the responsibility of the teacher, always done in advance, while emphasis was placed on using the correct forms during written and oral activities. On the contrary, teacher's role during project based learning was different (Levy, 1997). Lesson planning for the experimental group was not teacher directed, in the sense that the project was conducted in cooperation with the students, according to their needs and interests. Therefore, planning and teaching was an ongoing process which was coordinated and facilitated but not directed by the teacher, based on the principles of the project approach. It is worth mentioning that the students have never worked on a project before, so the teacher explained to them the basic principles of project work during a teaching session at the beginning of the project. Students were made aware of the need to work both individually and in groups in order to accomplish inquiry based activities, which included collecting, analyzing, synthesizing and reporting data both orally and in writing. The students of the experimental group were provided with opportunities to interact, to investigate and use resources, to answer questions, and to learn more autonomously. Thus, the focus was on successful communication rather than correctness of the language in a game-based context (Hadfield, 1990).

The stages of the project

Many scholars focused on the stages of project work, in an attempt to sequence project procedures and activities. The following stages were used in order for the specific CBI project work to be successfully implemented (Stoller, 1997):

Stage 1: Speculating on a topic

The students of the experimental group discussed with the teacher and agreed on the topic of the project: "*My country in Europe*", which was based on the content of the subject-area of Geography. Then, the students elected a coordinator for the project. A supportive atmosphere was created, in order to arouse interest and enable students to engage in individual and cooperative tasks during the following project stages.

Stage 2: Structuring the project

At this stage the participants were asked to draw on their previous experiences regarding the project's topic and think of what they would like to learn about it. Then, they set their goals and decided on the ways they could achieve them. The participants formed two groups, each consisting of 5 students. It is mentioned that the teacher knew her students well enough before the implementation of the project and was aware of their needs, their strengths and weaknesses as well as of their social relationships with classmates. The participants assigned roles and activities, decided on their methodology, and designed their research process, thinking of the inquiries they need to make and the ways they can gather and analyze information. Each group member was allocated certain responsibilities, so that everyone could contribute to the final outcome of the project.

Stage 3: Conducting research

At this stage the groups gathered information from a variety of sources and critically processed it. They worked cooperatively in order to organize, categorize and synthesize information gathered from the Internet, magazines, encyclopedias and the school library. They were asked to take notes, summarize and extract key information from texts. The teacher regularly checked the progress of the students' work with the members of each group, providing feedback when needed. At the end of this stage the final products of the project were produced.

The students, in cooperation with the teacher, decided to group the activities into 5 broad subject areas, each one consisting of several subsections. The subject areas were the following:

1) The European countries (geographical features, languages, currency, population, flags)

2) The climate in the European countries (weather, clothes, natural disasters)

3) The sights in Europe (10 European sights of interest)

4) European customs and traditions (festivities, myths and legends, traditional costumes, traditional music and songs, food)

5) Children of the world (children's rights, school life, everyday routine).

A cross curricular approach was used during the study of the issues related to each subject area of the project. Foreign language learning was integrated with the specific subject matter (Geography) on the basis of the CBI principles. The students managed to create and present the following products:

- A European morphological map;

- The European flags;

- Posters with pictures, photographs and comments related to the topic of the above mentioned subject areas;

- Crafts made of plasticine (e.g. The Eiffel Tower made of plasticine);

- Short written reports, e mails (exchange e mails with children attending a multicultural school), postcards, brochures;

- A tourist guide;

- An English-Greek dictionary project.

Stage 4: Evaluation

At this final stage the students organized an end of the school year event, where they displayed the final products of the project in the school and the wider community, making their   school-mates, teachers and parents aware of their work. Moreover, both the students and the teacher-researcher assessed the project products and speculated on the process followed, the experiences and the knowledge gained, the attitudes adopted, as well as on whether the initial goals were achieved. The teacher praised the students for their good work and helped them identify their errors, so that students can avoid them in a future project. The aim was to reflect on language and content mastered and the activities used (Stoller, 2002) and identify whether the teaching methods used motivated the students to learn and develop their language skills and learning strategies.

III. EVALUATION OF THE FEASIBILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EFL PROJECT

Evaluation Instruments

In order to evaluate the achievement of the goals set and the impact of the intervention on the development of students' language skills in EFL, a tripartite study was conducted. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used, based on the ontological assumption that human beings, and consequently research participants are active agents, capable of assessing situations (Harré, 1993). The use of more than two methods to collect data allowed the triangulation of research findings and assured research validity (see Bird et al, 1999). Data was collected by means of:

a) A pretest and posttest. The test consisted of two parts. In the first part a text was given to the students (text length: approximately 100 words) and four (4) open ended questions, to which students were asked to respond freely. The

students had the opportunity to listen to and read the text before they answered the questions in written form. In the second part of the test they were asked to summarize the text orally. The test was administered to both the control and the experimental group, before and after the experiment was conducted, to assess the improvement of students' writing and oral communication skills.

b) A teacher-researcher journal, which was kept once a week during the implementation of the project in order to record and reflect on the impact of the intervention on the learners, the teaching and the learning outcomes.

c) Interviews conducted with the students of the experimental group to record their interest and the degree of their satisfaction the project, the difficulties they encountered, and their views on content based language learning.

Moreover, a collection of work samples (writings, completed worksheets, drawings, collages) created during the project was taken into account for the analysis, in order to get a complete picture of children's progress.

IV. RESULTS

A. Pre-test and Post-test

The statistical package SPSS for Windows was used for the analysis of the data collected from the pre- and posttest. The pretest was distributed in the end of January, while the posttest in the beginning of June.

First part of the pre- and posttest

The analysis of the data collected from the first part of the pre- and posttest was made on the basis of the following five (5) criteria:

1) Length of the produced texts (number of words);
2) Students' communicative competence (1-10 assessment scale);
3) Inappropriate pragmatic and/ or semantic use of words;
4) Syntactically inaccurate and/ or elliptical phrases produced;
5) Spelling mistakes.

The results for each one of the aforementioned criteria are shown in the following tables.

1) Length of produced texts

TABLE III.
PRETEST DATA ON LENGTH OF PRODUCED TEXT (NUMBER OF WORDS) IN THE WRITTEN QUESTIONS (EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)

Student	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Total number of words
Student 1	62	27	27	23	139
Student 2	17	17	12	19	65
Student 3	19	14	12	13	58
Student 4	17	20	14	12	63
Student 5	24	33	22	17	96
Student 6	21	21	7	10	59
Student 7	20	21	19	11	71
Student 8	10	22	10	8	50
Student 9	27	11	10	10	58
Student 10	19	10	10	14	53

TABLE IV.
POSTTEST DATA ON LENGTH OF PRODUCED TEXTS (NUMBER OF WORDS) IN THE WRITTEN QUESTIONS (EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)

Student	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Total number of words
Student 1	44	41	18	29	132
Student 2	20	14	16	14	65
Student 3	25	23	8	16	73
Student 4	18	16	8	14	56
Student 5	21	20	10	12	63
Student 6	36	18	18	11	83
Student 7	30	21	17	14	82
Student 8	22	13	7	13	55
Student 9	15	8	8	10	41
Student 10	25	19	12	26	82

TABLE V.
PRETEST DATA ON LENGTH OF PRODUCED TEXT (NUMBER OF WORDS) IN THE WRITTEN QUESTIONS (CONTROL GROUP)

Student	Question1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Total number r of words
Student 1	28	21	21	23	93
Student 2	30	32	25	28	115
Student 3	20	17	15	13	65
Student 4	16	23	9	15	63
Student 5	20	15	11	14	60
Student 6	19	22	8	11	60
Student 7	22	16	11	15	64
Student 8	20	11	8	12	51
Student 9	20	18	9	16	63
Student 10	28	15	11	12	66
Student 11	46	35	41	52	174
Student 12	34	19	9	25	87

TABLE VI.
POSTTEST DATA ON LENGTH OF PRODUCED TEXT (NUMBER OF WORDS) IN THE WRITTEN QUESTIONS (CONTROL GROUP)

Student	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4	Total number of words
Student 1	29	19	17	23	88
Student 2	21	21	19	24	85
Student 3	23	22	18	20	83
Student 4	23	23	9	13	68
Student 5	21	19	16	13	69
Student 6	21	20	15	14	70
Student 7	27	17	16	16	76
Student 8	28	14	11	11	64
Student 9	21	19	9	11	60
Student 10	30	27	17	19	93
Student 11	54	59	36	55	204
Student 12	27	19	18	23	87

The analysis of the data presented above led to the following results.

TABLE VII.
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION (EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	71,20	10	27,071	8,561
	Posttest	73,20	10	24,818	7,848

TABLE VIII.
MEAN   AND STANDARD DEVIATION (CONTROL GROUP)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 2	Pretest	80,08	12	34,608	9,990
	Posttest	87,25	12	38,255	11,043

It is noteworthy that there was no significant difference in either the experimental or the control group regarding the length of produced texts between the pretest and the posttest.

2) Communicative Competence

The results presented in the Tables IX, X and XI, XII indicated that there is significant difference in communicative competence for both the experimental and the control group between pretest and posttest. As far as the experimental group is concerned, the mean score was m=5,70 before the intervention while m=7,40 after the intervention (t= -7,965 df=9 p < 0.005). These data suggested that CBI provides students with opportunities to interact and become engaged in purposeful communication, thus improving their communicative competence. Significant difference in the communicative competence was also observed between pre-test (m= 8,08) and posttest (m=8,67) for the control group (t=-2,548 (df=11 p <0.05).

TABLE IX.
MEAN   AND STANDARD DEVIATION (EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	5,70	10	1,767	,559
	Posttest	7,40	10	1,713	,542

TABLE X.
STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRE- AND POSTTEST (EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				Sig.
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	(2-tailed)
Pair 1	Total	-1,700	,675	,213	-2,183	-1,217	-7,965	9	,000

TABLE XI.
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION (CONTROL GROUP)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 2	Pretest	8,08	12	,996	,288
	Posttest	8,67	12	,985	,284

TABLE XII.
STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POSTTEST (CONTROL GROUP)

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				Sig.
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	(2-tailed)
Pair 2	Total	-,583	,793	,229	-1,087	-,080	-2,548	11	,027

3) Inappropriate pragmatic or semantic use of words

A significant improvement was observed regarding the correct semantic and pragmatic use of words for the experimental group in the posttest (t=4,204 (df=9 p<0.005). As presented in the tables XIII. and XIV., the mean score was m= 6,25 pragmatic and/or semantic mistakes before the intervention, while m=3.37 after the intervention. Statistically significant difference was recorded between pre- and posttest for the control group students, (t=2,972 (df=11 p< 0.05); fewer pragmatic and/or semantic mistakes were recorded in the posttest (m=1,67) compared to those in the the the pretest (m=2,64).

TABLE XIII.
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION (EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	6,2530	10	3,68215	1,16440
	Posttest	3,3770	10	2,51479	,79525

TABLE XIV.
STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRE- AND POSTTEST (EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				Sig.
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	T	Df	(2-tailed)
Pair 1	Total	2,87600	2,16356	,68418	1,32828	4,42372	4,204	9	,002

TABLE XV.
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION (CONTROL GROUP)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 2	Pretest	2,6475	12	1,13111	,32652
	Posttest	1,6792	12	,85327	,24632

TABLE XVI.
STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRE- AND POSTTEST (CONTROL GROUP)

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				Sig.
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	T	Df	(2-tailed)
Pair 2	Total	,96833	1,12884	,32587	,25110	1,68557	2,972	11	,013

4) Dictation mistakes

No significant difference was revealed regarding the spelling mistakes made by the students for both the experimental and the control group. However, it is worth mentioning that the difference observed between the pre- and posttest mean of dictation mistakes for the experimental group was greater than that for the control group. As presented in the tables below, the mean score of spelling mistakes was higher (m= 4,82) before the intervention than the score after the intervention (m=3,15). As far as the control group is concerned, the mean score of spelling mistakes was higher (m= 3,16) before the intervention than the score after the intervention (m=2,93).

Second part of the pre- and posttest

The analysis of the data collected for the second part of the pre- and posttest was made on the basis of the following five (5) criteria:

1) Length of the orally produced texts (number of words)
2) Students' overall communicative competence (1-10 assessment scale)
3) Inappropriate pragmatic and/ or semantic use of words
4) Syntactically inaccurate and/ or elliptical phrases produced
5) Pronunciation (1-10 assessment scale).

The processing of the data collected from the transcriptions led to the results presented in the following tables for each of the above mentioned criteria.

1) Length of the orally produced texts (number of words)

TABLE XVII.
PRE- AND POSTTEST DATA ON LENGTH (NUMBER OF WORDS) OF THE ORALLY PRODUCED TEXT (EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)

Student	Pretest	Posttest
Student1	60	74
Student 2	28	47
Student 3	25	41
Student 4	28	43
Student 5	27	44
Student 6	33	42
Student 7	11	47
Student 8	30	35
Student 9	23	42
Student 10	29	30

TABLE XVIII.
PRE- AND POSTTEST DATA ON LENGTH (NUMBER OF WORDS) OF THE ORALLY PRODUCED TEXT (CONTROL GROUP)

Student	Pretest	Posttest
Student 1	49	77
Student 2	60	87
Student 3	32	38
Student 4	23	25
Student 5	27	39
Student 6	27	26
Student 7	69	47
Student 8	26	39
Student 9	39	26
Student 10	74	54
Student 11	32	57
Student 12	24	40

The results presented in the Table XIX. and XX. show the statistically significant difference observed for the experimental group in relation to the length of their orally produced texts between the pretest and the posttest.

TABLE XIX.
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION (EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	29,40	10	12,285	3,885
	Posttest	44,50	10	11,597	3,667

TABLE XX.
STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRE- AND POSTTEST (EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Total	-15,100	9,492	3,002	-21,890	-8,310	-5,031	9	,001

Statistically significant difference was revealed between pretest and posttest for the students of the experimental group, t=-5,031 (df=9 p< 0.005); however no statistically significant difference was revealed between pretest (m=40,17) and posttest (m=46,25) for the students of the control group.

2) Overall communicative competence

Significant difference was observed between two paired groups (t test for paired groups) regarding the overall communicative competence for both the experimental and the control group. As shown in the tables below (Table XXI., XXII.) the overall communicative competence of the experimental group was improved, t=-7,746 (df=9 p<0.005). Significant difference was also observed for the control group (Table XXIII. and XIV.), t=-4.180 (df=11 p< 0.005).

TABLE XXI.
STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POSTTEST (EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)

	Paired Differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Total	-2,000	,816	,258	-2,584	-1,416	-7,746	9	,000

TABLE XXII.
STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POSTTEST (CONTROL GROUP)

	Paired Differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 2 Total	-,750	,622	,179	-1,145	-,355	-4,180	11	,002

TABLE XXIII.
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION (EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	5,20	10	1,549	,490
	Posttest	7,20	10	1,229	,389

TABLE XXIV.
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION (CONTROL GROUP)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 2	Pretest	6,83	12	1,337	,386
	Posttest	7,58	12	1,564	,452

Concerning the experimental group, a greater improvement was recorded in relation to their communicative ability, since they performed better in the post-test (m=7,20) compared to their performance in the pre-test (m=5,20). (Table XXIV.). It is indicated that, although there was a greater difference in the pretest between the mean of the experimental and the control group, the difference did not remain the same after the intervention. It is indicated that the students of experimental group made a greater improvement of their overall communicative competence after the implementation of the intervention.

3) Inappropriate pragmatic and/ or semantic use of words

The results shown in the tables below are related to the inappropriate pragmatic and/ or semantic use of words of the two groups in the pretest and the posttest.

TABLE XXV.
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION (EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	10,45	10	6,745	2,133
	Posttest	4,3730	10	2,49910	,79028

TABLE XXVI.
STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POSTTEST (EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)

	Paired Differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Total	6,07700	6,53666	2,06707	1,40095	10,75305	2,940	9	,016

Significant difference was observed between pretest and posttest for the experimental group (Table XXVI.), t=-2,940 (df=9 p< 0.05), since there was a greater number of mistakes (m=10,450 in relation to the pragmatic and/ or semantic use of words before the intervention than those (m= 4,37) after the intervention (Table XXV.).

No significant difference was observed between pretest and posttest for the control group (Table XXVIII.). It is therefore indicated that there was greater improvement between pre- and posttest for the experiment group in comparison with the control group (Table XXV. and XXVII.).

TABLE XXVII.
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION (CONTROL GROUP)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 2	Pretest	6,0692	12	3,42988	,99012
	Posttest	5,0917	12	3,70624	1,06990

TABLE XXVIII.
STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POSTTEST (CONTROL GROUP)

	Paired Differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 2 Total	,97750	3,19828	,92326	-1,05459	3,00959	1,059	11	,312

4) Syntactically inaccurate and/ or elliptical phrases produced

Tables XXIX. and XXX. present the results from the analysis of the data collected regarding the syntactically inaccurate or elliptical phrases that the students of each group, experimental and control, produced. Tables XXX. and XXXII. indicate that there was statistically significant difference between pretest and posttest for both the experimental and the control group.

TABLE XXIX.
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION (EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	11,6630	10	7,54816	2,38694
	Posttest	3,2200	10	2,36182	,74687

TABLE XXX.
STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POSTTEST (EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)

	Paired Differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Total	8,44300	7,68667	2,43074	2,94428	13,94172	3,473	9	,007

Concerning the experimental group, statistical differences (t=3,473 (df=9 p<0.05) were produced between the pretest results (m=11.66) in relation to syntactically inaccurate and/ or elliptical phrases and those produced after the project (m=3,22). Regarding the control group, statistical differences (*t=4,461 df=11 p<0.005*) were revealed between the pretest results (m=4,01) in relation to syntactically inaccurate and/ or elliptical phrases and those produced after the project (m=1,86).

TABLE XXXI.
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION (CONTROL GROUP)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 2	Pretest	4,0138	12	1,92433	,55551
	Posttest	1,8642	12	1,40468	,40550

TABLE XXXII.
STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POSTTEST (CONTROL GROUP)

	Paired Differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 2 Total	2,14958	1,66935	,48190	1,08893	3,21024	4,461	11	,001

5) Pronunciation

The results of t test for paired groups are presented in the following tables XXXIII., XXXIV. for the experimental group and 11.3, 11.4 for the control group.

TABLE XXXIII.
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION (EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	6,80	10	1,229	,389
	Posttest	8,20	10	1,033	,327

TABLE XXXIV.
STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRE- AND POSTTEST (EXPERIMENTAL GROUP)

	Paired Differences							
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1 Total	-1,400	,699	,221	-1,900	-,900	-6,332	9	,000

As indicated in the tables above, there was a considerable improvement between pretest (m=6,80) and posttest (m=8,20) in the pronunciation of the experimental group (t=-6,332 (df=9 p<0.005) (Tables XXXIII., XXXIV.). It is also indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest for the control group, regarding their pronunciation in English as a foreign language.

B. Teacher-researcher Journal

The teacher-researcher kept ten (10) journal records during the project. The qualitative analysis of the researcher journal records led to the creation of four typologies, and several categories and subcategories under each typology (Table XXXV.).

A) Teaching Process, where the following categories are included:

1) Goals, 2) Techniques, 3) Teaching aids, 4) Classwork

B) Teacher's role, where the following categories are included:

1) Communication in class, 2) Ways to provide students with help

C) Student's Attitude, where the following categories are included:

1) Students' attitude toward the project 2) Participation in project 3) Difficulties faced during the project

D) Overall assessment of the intervention, where the following categories are included:

1) Problems faced during the project, 2) Learning outcomes, 3) Broader development of values and attitudes, 4) Possible changes to improve the teaching/ learning process.

TABLE XXXV.
JOURNAL RECORDS: TYPOLOGIES, CATEGORIES, SUBCATEGORIES AND FREQUENCIES

Typologies	Categories	Subcategories	Frequency
A) Teaching Process	*1.Goals*	i. development of linguistic skills	10
		ii. development of cognitive skills and strategies	10
		iii. development of social emotional skills and strategies	8
		iv. time management (completion of tasks, activities)	6
		v. students' understanding of learning goals	5
	2. Techniques	i. narration	2
		ii. dialogue	3
		iii. discussion	7
		iv. brainstorming	4
		v. teaching with multimedia	8
		vi. experiential learning (role plays, drama)	9
		vii. inquiry-learning activities	9
	3.Teaching aids	i. objects	6
		ii. posters	4
		iii. books	3
		iv. projector	7
		v. pictures	7
		vi. drawings	8
		vii. computer	8
		viii. various materials (paper, plasticine, colorful cardboard)	9

		ix. photos	4
		x. photocopies	4
		xi. maps	4
	4.Classwork	i. pair work	6
		ii. group work	8
		iii. working individually	2
		iv. cooperation between teacher-class	5
B) Teacher's Role	5. Communication in class	i. use of mother tongue (L1)	3
		ii. use of second language (L2)	10
		iii. nonverbal communication (facial expressions, gestures, immitation)	7
		iv. use of visual aids to convey meaning	8
		v. use of L1 to give instructions/ clarifications	7
	6. Ways to provide students with help	i. encouragement	7
		ii. instructions for the activities	7
		iii. decreasing anxiety	7
		iv. reminding initial goals	6
		v. organizing students' work	3
		vi. tasks directed by students' interests	8
		vii. differentiated activities (according to students' needs)	6
		viii. focus in creativity	6
		ix. differentiation in feedback	7
C) Student's Attitude	7. Students' attitude toward the project	i. learning as a pleasurable experience	8
		ii. interest for experiential learning activities	8
		iii. interest for inquiry learning activities	5
		iv. active participation during teamwork	7
		v. taking responsibility	7
		vi. taking initiative	7
		vii. development of management skills	8
	8. Participation in the project	i. participation in creative activities (handicrafts)	9
		ii. participation in role plays, drama	9
		iii. participation in inquiry learning activities	5
		iii. participation in information processing	5
		iv. participation in presentations	9
	9. Difficulties faced during the project	i. difficulty in understanding inquiry learning activities	4
		ii. difficulty during pair work/ group work	2
		iii. difficulty when working individually	3
		iv. difficulty in listening comprehension	4
		v. difficulty in reading comprehension	2
		vi. difficulty in speaking	2
		vii. difficulty in writing	5
		viii. difficulty in processing information	5
D) Overall evaluation of the intervention	10. Problems encountered during the project	i. class management by the teacher	2
		ii. noise during group work	3
		iii. cooperation problems among students	3
		iv. allocation of time by the students	4
		v. students being indifferent	3
	11. Learning Outcome	i. use of second language for communication	9
		ii. vocabulary consolidation	9
		iii. acquiring new vocabulary	10
		iv. social skills development	9
		v. inquiry skills development	5
		vi. self-assessment skills development	5
		vii. use of new technologies during learning	10
		viii. pleasure and enjoyment	9
	12.Broader development of values and attitudes	i. interactive activities	8
		ii. assisting each other	7
		iii. cooperation	9
		iv. self confidence	6
		v. taking responsibility for learning	6
		vi. positive attitude toward second language	7
		vii. self-acting in learning (using dictionaries, reading maps, etc)	9
		viii. accepting and respecting difference (cultural, linguistic, religious)	7

	ix. development of social sensitivity	3
13. Suggestions for the improvement of the teaching/ learning process	i. discussing cooperation problems during group work	4
	ii. decreasing competition among students	6
	iii. better processing of information by students	4
	iv. using second language more often	4

C. Students' Interviews

The interviews were conducted with the students of the experimental group in their mother tongue at the end of the intervention, to record their attitudes towards the project. It is noted that each student could give more than one answers for each of the following categories.

1st Question

In the first question *"What did you like most about the project?"* most students (90%) answered that they liked cooperating with their classmates, dealing with topics of their interest (80%) and creative activities (80%). Students said that *"I liked working in a group. We sometimes had problems...but it was nice and fun working with others and doing things together"* (student 1), *"I liked working in a group. When you cooperate with others you learn more and you are not alone"* (student 9), *"I liked learning new things that I was interested in...I know about these topics really well now"* (student 3).

In addition, some students (30%) referred to the pleasure and enjoyment they derived during project work. They said that: *"I liked everything about the project..It was not like having a class. We learned a lot but it was so much fun"* (student 2), *«...I liked the role plays...At first I didn't know how to communicate in English but then I learned"* (student 9).

2nd Question

Most students, despite the fact that they liked working in a group, seemed to encounter difficulties with cooperating in the group (40%) (see 1st Question). A student noted that: *"..It was difficult to cooperate with others..We sometimes had problems because some students didn't do what they had to or missed the deadlines.."* (student 3).

Some other students said that: *"It was difficult for me to write sentences and texts.. but I learned how I can do it"* (student 8), *"It was difficult for me to learn how to find information for various topics..."* (student 6), *"..I had difficulties in finding information and organizing it in order to present it.."* (student 4), *"..It was difficult for me to write summaries and then to present my work in class"* (student 5).

3rd Question

In the 3rd question *"What would you like to do in another/ different way?"*, students were asked to report what they would like to do in another or different way in the project process. The majority of them (80%) expressed their enjoyment and satisfaction with the project. It is worth mentioning that two students did not give any specific answer to that question, since they could not think of an alternative way.

4th Question

In the question "What did you learn in the foreign language that was new?", most students (70%) reported that they learned new vocabulary when asked what they think they have learned at the end of the project. Five out of ten students (50%) mentioned that they developed their writing skills. Specifically, they said: *"I learned a lot of new words.. I really improved my English.."*, (student 7), *" I learned new vocabulary.. and I really wanted to learn more.."* (student 2), *" I learned how to write sentences and texts. I was not used to writing texts in English during previous courses.."* (student 2).

Some students also referred to the positive impact of the project on the development of their speaking skills; specifically a student reported: *"I learned how to communicate in English..how to give directions, how to answer questions.."* (student 5).

5th Question

In the last question, students were asked if they would like to participate in a project in the future. All students were enthusiastic about participating in a project again, and they mentioned various reasons for their positive replies. Most of them (80%) referred to the fact that learning was a pleasurable process when working on a project. Moreover, students said that language learning through a project helped them learn new things (60%) and learn how to cooperate in a group (40%). Some (20%) also mentioned that they were able to improve their English. *"Learning English through using a textbook is more difficult.....working on this project is easier and more fun.."* (student 7) ..*"I would like to participate in a project again. There are no textbooks, it is more fun..and we can work in groups"* (student 2). *"I would like to participate in a project next year in order to learn more new things.."* (student 8).

V. Discussion

This paper aimed at presenting the design and implementation as well as the evaluation of the feasibility of a content-based project aiming to develop young learners' skills in English as a foreign language.

The general overview of the data illustrated that students favor the integration of content and language. Consistent with other studies the results seem to confirm that Content-based projects help to foster students' positive attitudes

towards language learning (Lasagabaster & Sierra 2009), since they seem to motivate students to learn the target language in real-life settings (Infante et al. 2009; Naves, 2009). In the specific project, it was indicated that working on a project was a pleasurable learning experience which included several benefits regarding language learning, stimulated learners and helped them create positive attitudes to foreign language learning.

The journal records and the interviews conducted with the experimental group led to the conclusion that the participants experienced learning in an enjoyable way, as they used the foreign language for authentic communication, by combining learning with having fun. It was revealed that the students of the experimental group showed continuous enthusiasm and interest in the learning process from the beginning to the end of the intervention. Their motivation was stimulated and resulted in making them feel more confident and use the English language for purposeful communication in a relaxed learning context. The learners had the opportunity to interact and cooperate in order to achieve common goals, as well as to share ideas and learn from one another by working in a group (Krechevsky & Stork, 2000).

In the existing literature it is often stated that Content Based Instruction and Project Based Learning can enhance the development of skills in the foreign language, as there is often considerable improvement observed in all four skills and especially regarding students' communicative competence, their listening comprehension and speaking skills (Fried-Booth, 2002), as well as their management skills (Gardner, 1995; Coleman, 1992). The results of this study support the aforementioned observations. More specifically, the results of the pre- and posttest for the experimental group indicated students' progress concerning both their ability in reading and writing and their communicative competence (improvement in length of orally produced texts, improvement of their pronunciation and less syntax or pragmatic/ syntactic mistakes). In addition, there was significant improvement in all students' writing skills. Students avoided mistakes and were able to convey meaning after the end of the intervention. In comparison with the control group, it was observed that the students of the experimental group made a greater progress compared to the control group. In addition, the experimental group had the opportunity to access authentic material, to use both oral and written speech purposefully, always dealing with topics of their interest.

The students who participated in the project felt that they enjoyed learning through a project, and they were proud of their contribution to the final outcomes of the project as well as of their work and learning in the field of the foreign language. They were given stimuli and opportunities for creative thinking and participation in a game-based context, where students realized that learning a foreign language can be more than a boring process. In addition, they were involved in metacognitive strategies strategies, such as making inquiries, managing their time, planning and evaluating their learning. Even hesitant students gradually had active participation in group activities and felt more self-confident and positive towards foreign language learning.

Nevertheless, the students encountered some difficulties due to the fact that they were not familiar with 'project' work. During the first sessions the students often felt confused in relation to identifying and processing specific information; even when collecting it, it was difficult for them to summarize or synthesize it. The teacher assisted the students by illustrating ways and providing them with examples for critical processing of information. In addition, students were not used to working in groups before the implementation of CBI project; however, they gradually learned how to listen to their classmates' views and how to cooperate, assigning different roles.

Concluding, it is noted that the specific EFL project was a small scale project; therefore it is considered necessary to implement it across more primary schools in order to better examine its effectiveness and to validate the positive impact of CBI and PBL in learning English as a foreign language.

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ELT Majors' Cross Sectional Evaluation of Academic Lexical Competence and Performance

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Abstract—**Academic vocabulary knowledge and use are critical for students' language proficiency and academic achievement. Through the constructs of lexical competence and performance, the multidimensional nature of academic vocabulary and its interrelated components could be described better so that students' development of academic vocabulary knowledge through their education could be revealed effectively. Considering this, the present study aimed to examine the university students' academic lexical competence and performance combing all main dimensions, namely receptive (size; how many words), and productive (use) dimensions. In that way, it was aimed to reveal 371 ELT majors' academic vocabulary development in English as Foreign Language environment through cross-sectional evaluation. Applying multi-test approach, the receptive and productive sub-dimensions were investigated. The results indicated that both academic lexical competence and performance developed through the years. Particularly, a salient jump of size of academic vocabulary from the 1st year to the 2nd year indicated the effect of proficiency and education. In spite of promising increase in the students' academic lexical competence, limited use of academic vocabulary in the essays drew attention. It was observed that the students tend to avoid using academic vocabulary while writing. In this study, the reasons underlying these findings were discussed within related literature.**

Index Terms—**vocabulary knowledge, lexical competence, lexical performance, academic vocabulary**

I. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is widely accepted as the most predominant aspect of language competence (Nation, 1990; Schmitt, 1997; Crossley & Salsburry, 2010; Mokhtar, 2010) such that second language acquisition is usually regarded as a matter of learning vocabulary (Read, 2000; Meara, 1996; 2002; Nation 2001). As a result of this ever-increasing interest on vocabulary, many theoretical and empirical studies have been conducted particularly since the 1990s (e.g. Laufer & Nation, 1995; Wesche & Paribakht, 1996; Nation, 2001; 2005; Meara & Alcoy, 2010; Coxhead, 2011). These studies have shed light on the nature of vocabulary and revealed that vocabulary knowledge consists of number of dimensions such as receptive and productive (Nation, 2001; Webb, 2005). Thus, vocabulary knowledge is conceptualized not only as the numbers of words learners know (i.e. vocabulary size) but also how well these words are mastered (i.e. depth of vocabulary) and used (i.e. productive vocabulary) (Read, 2000; Meara, 2002; Schmitt et al, 2010). Along with this enhanced understanding, the concepts of lexical competence and performance in second language have been prominent to describe this multi-dimensional nature of vocabulary knowledge (Meara, 1996; Laufer & Nation, 1999; 1995; Laufer, et al. 2004; Nation, 2001; Henriksen, 1999; Webb, 2005). Through these umbrella concepts, vocabulary knowledge has been described from global perspective, examining different dimensions (Henriksen, 1999; Zareva, 2005). Yet, the focus has been mostly on general vocabulary, particularly high frequent vocabulary that are more common in discourse with 2000th frequency band (Nation, 1990; 2001; Laufer & Nation, 2004; Webb, 2005; Zareva, 2005).

In fact, for the higher education students, advanced students, academic vocabulary is critical for academic achievement as well as understanding the academic discourse at schools (Corson, 1997; Coxhead, 2001, 2011; Nation, 2001; Horst et al, 2005; Hyland & Tse, 2007) but there is a paucity in the studies describing second language learners', especially English as a Foreign language learners', academic lexical competence and performance (Hyland & Tse, 2007; Hancioglu et al, 2008; Coxhead, 2000; Chen & Ge, 2007; Vongpumivitch et al, 2009). These few studies have investigated the academic vocabulary from a limited perspective, focusing on only one or two dimensions. For instance, Zhou (2010) investigated the receptive and productive academic vocabulary of tertiary students but called for more detailed studies on especially academic lexical performance. Thus, it is essential to handle the academic lexical competence and performance combining all main dimensions, namely receptive (size; how many words), and productive (use) dimensions to reveal the academic vocabulary development of students at higher education in detail.

Addressing to this need of global large-scaled investigation of academic vocabulary knowledge and based on the premise that vocabulary is a multidimensional concept; the present study aimed to examine the academic lexical competence and performance of ELT majors in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom setting at Anadolu University in Turkey. In line with this aim, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are Turkish ELT majors' academic lexical competence and performance?
  a. What is Turkish ELT majors' size of academic vocabulary?
  b. What is Turkish ELT majors' academic vocabulary knowledge in terms of receptive and productive dimensions?
  c. What is Turkish ELT majors' academic lexical performance?
  d. Do the participants' academic lexical competence and performance differ during their higher education?

Through this study, it is hoped to get better insight about the multidimensional nature of vocabulary knowledge and thus second language vocabulary learning. Besides, it is hoped to probe the neglected aspects in vocabulary research such as global descriptions of academic lexical competence and performance.

II. ACADEMIC LEXICAL COMPETENCE AND PERFORMANCE

Academic vocabulary is defined as common across academic disciplines (Coxhead, 2000) and they comprise some 8%−10% of running words in academic texts (Nation and Coxhead, 2001). These words are important due to the role they play in *defining, delineating, advancing* and *assessing abstract entities* such as *theories, arguments* and *hypotheses* (the italicized words are AWL words) (Cobb & Horst, 2004). However, academic vocabulary is widely considered to cause difficulties for ESL and/or EFL learners (Chung & Nation, 2003; Cobb & Horst, 2004; Coxhead & Nation, 2001; Coxhead, 2000). The features of academic vocabulary, such as abstractness, polysemy (i.e. one form can have several meanings), and homonymy, (i.e. one meaning can be represented by different forms) (Nation, 2001) can cause troubles for L2 learners to learn and use the academic vocabulary. Especially, abstractness and polysemic nature of academic vocabulary can be problems. Specifically, regarding abstractness, the problem occurs when the meanings of new academic words do not match with the ones in L1, for which semantic representations have already developed. Additionally, the learners can have difficult to learn and use the academic words due to polysemy and homonymy (Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997). In spite of all these probable difficulties, learners attempt to build a repertoire of specialized academic words in addition to their existing basic or general service vocabulary for their academic achievement (Hyland & Tse, 2007).

Referring the crucial role of academic vocabulary knowledge, variety of vocabulary lists have been compiled from corpora, or collections, of academic texts to identify the most valuable words in academic contexts. For decades, University Word List (Xue & Nation, 1984) has been cited and then the Academic Word List (AWL) (Coxhead, 2000) has been used as the most recent compilation in literature. The AWL contains 570 word families, beyond the first 2000 words of English in General Service List (GSL) described by West (1953). This list is accepted as contributory and even authoritative in academic vocabulary research. Many studies have been conducted in different aspects such as the features, distributions and functions of words in the AWL and the usefulness and high coverage of the list have been widely agreed (Murphy & Kandil, 2003; Hyland & Tse, 2007; Vongpumivitch et al, 2009; Ming-Tzu and Nation, 2004; Tsubaki, 2004; Hyland & Tse, 2007; Billuroglu & Neufeld, 2005; Hancioglu et al, 2008). Moreover, the applicability of AWL to specific fields has been examined (Chung & Nation, 2003; Chen and Ge, 2007; Mudraya, 2006).

As a result of such studies, it has been agreed that academic vocabulary, specifically the ones from the AWL, has key role on the academic achievement for L2 students at the tertiary level (Coxhead & Nation, 2001; Cobb & Horst, 2004; Laufer & Nation, 1995). The findings of these studies commonly pointed out that the students who could use academic vocabulary effectively, achieved good academic performance. Thus, to determine academic lexical competence and performance could be a valuable step forward to evaluate teaching and learning processes.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The present study aimed to describe the overall state of advanced Turkish ELT majors' academic lexical competence and performance. In line with this aim of the study, the quantitative research design was used. To obtain the best data that can address each research question, under the principles of descriptive research method, cross-sectional design was preferred. This design is considered as appropriate to the scope of the present study since academic lexical competence and performance are apt to develop over a period of time across varying L2 learning stages. Moreover, through cross-sectional data collection procedure, different learners can be studied at different stages of development, different points of progression through time, which can be considered as if they were cross-sections of the same learners spread out through time (Creswell, 2005).

B. Participants

The population of this study consisted of Turkish students attending to the 1st year first semester, 1st year second semester, 2nd year, 3rd year and 4th years at Education Faculty, at the Department of English Language Teaching at Anadolu University in Eskisehir. Including two semesters from the 1st year, it was aimed to reveal the development of the participants' academic lexical competence and performance from the very beginning to the end of their higher education. It was considered that the findings obtained from the students who just enrolled to the university can reveal the Turkish ELT majors' starting vocabulary knowledge level before higher education and make sense of any possible

vocabulary development till 4th year throughout higher education. These students were the candidates of English teachers and they had been learning English as a Foreign Language.

To describe the academic lexical competence and performance of ELT majors comprehensively, the instruments were delivered to all students. Out of 400 students, 371 students completed all instruments and included in the analysis.

C. Instruments

To have better insights of interrelated dimensions of lexical knowledge, it is essential to use different measures (Laufer & Nation, 2004), thus, 'multiple test approach' was adapted in this study. Using a battery of tests, different aspects of academic vocabulary knowledge were measured in order to provide a comprehensive picture of learners' vocabulary at different stages of language development.

In this sense, three different instruments were used to address each dimension of academic lexical competence and performance. Firstly, to measure the receptive dimension of academic lexical competence, namely the size, the academic vocabulary section of the new version of Vocabulary Level Test developed by Schmitt et al. (2001) was applied. This test involves all five word frequency levels ranging 2000th, 3000th, 5000th, 10000th as well as academic vocabulary. The academic words questioned in the test were selected from the AWL and the test items are arranged into clusters containing six words and three definitions to be matched. For scoring the VLT, each correct definition is scored as one point. Each of the four frequency level section and academic vocabulary section contain 30 target items. Therefore, the maximum score for the academic vocabulary section is 30 (i.e. 6 x 5).

To evaluate the participants' academic lexical performance, argumentative writing task was given and lexical frequency profile (LFP) analysis was conducted. Considering the operability, functionality, practicality of Lexical Frequency Profile and accounting of the findings related to its reliability and validity (Morris & Cobb, 2004; Laufer, 2005), in this study, Vocabprofile, which is available on www.lextutor.ca/ was used to determine the participants' lexical use. To operate the LFP test, Vocabprofile, a text was typed into the computer program and text analysis, consisting the percentages of type/token ratio and word families, were supplied according to four frequency levels, according to 1k (1 to 1000), 2k (1001 to 2000), off-list and AWL words. For the scope of the study, the results on the use of academic vocabulary were taken into account but the distributions of 1k + 2k and off-list were discussed to make sense of the proportion of academic vocabulary use.

The measurements that are explained above have specific sections addressing to the academic vocabulary. However, to further discuss the academic lexical competence and performance, a test measuring the receptive (i.e. recognition) and productive (i.e. use) dimensions together was developed by the researchers for this study. Through this test, it was aimed to evaluate participants' recognition and production of academic vocabulary with one accord. The results of this test were considered to bridge the academic lexical competence and performance. Adapting the format of the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale developed by Wesche and Paribakht (1996), a Test of Academic Vocabulary (TAV) with 30 academic words, which were selected systematically from the AWL, were developed and validated (.80 coefficient value). A sample item from the test was given in the following:

e.g. resolution
a. I have **never** seen this word before
b. I have seen this word before but I **don't know** what it means
c. I have seen this word before and I think it means
d. I can use this word in a sentence (if you answer this part, also answer part c)

D. Data Collection and Analysis

The tests were applied at a regular class time with the permission of the class teacher by the researcher. Before the applications, the aim and content of the study were explained and the students were asked to sign the consent form to participate in the study voluntarily. After all instruments were collected in 2009-2010 spring academic term, the data preparation procedure was started. Firstly, all collected data was classified into five groups according to the year the participants attend. Then, all four instruments were matched together for each participant. In this way, the missing cases; the one who did not complete all four instruments and/or wrongly completed, were extracted. As a result, 29 cases were discarded from the total sample of 400 students so four instruments collected from 371 students were analyzed in the present study.

The distribution of the number of participants explaining the collected data and the ones involved in the analysis are given in the Table 1.

TABLE 1.
DISTRIBUTION OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN TERMS OF YEARS AND COLLECTED INSTRUMENTS

	VLT	TAV	ESSAY	In the Analysis
1st year first sem	49	52	50	49
1st year second sem	70	75	78	70
2nd year	83	84	83	83
3rd year	89	95	89	89
4th year	80	86	83	80
TOTAL	322	323	326	371

The collected data was analyzed through 15.0 version of Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS). In line with the research questions, statistical calculations were performed. By means of descriptive statistics, a general picture of the participants' academic vocabulary size (VLT), receptive and productive academic vocabulary knowledge (TAV), lexical use (LFP) were determined, then one-way ANOVA analysis was used for between and within group comparisons. As a post hoc test to determine the group causing any significance, Tukey HSD test was employed.

IV. RESULTS

A. Academic Lexical Competence

Regarding the participants' academic lexical competence, firstly their size of academic vocabulary was investigated through the academic vocabulary section of Vocabulary Level Test (VLT). The obtained findings are presented and illustrated in Table 2 and Figure 1.

TABLE 2:
MEANS AND SDS OF THE FIVE FREQUENCY BANDS FOR ALL GROUPS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

	1st year first sem. (n=49)		1st year second sem (n=70)		2nd year (n=83)		3rd year (n=89)		4th year (n=80)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
AWL	24,71	5,362	26,91	3,082	27,90	3,055	26,96	3,766	27,40	2,791
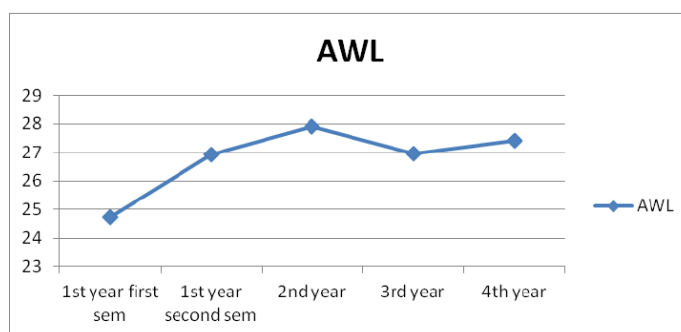
Figure 1. The Distribution of Size of Academic Vocabulary for all groups

The findings related to the size of vocabulary knowledge indicated that there is a salient increase in the academic vocabulary size from the 1st year first semester to the 2nd year, yet a decrease occurred at the 3rd year and followed with a kind of plateau at the 4th year. The outperformance of the 2nd year students (mean=27,90) was followed with slight difference by the 4th year students (mean=27,40). With close values, the 3rd year (26, 96) and the 1st year (26, 91) students were in pursuit of these two groups. Among these groups, the 1st year first semester students were detected to know less academic words in the test.

To further examine whether the differences among groups are statistically significant, one-way ANOVA analyses were employed with the mean scores. Accordingly; there is a significant difference among the five groups of participants since $P=,000 < ,05$. Thus, it could be claimed that the participants' size of academic vocabulary differed significantly in terms of years. Tukey HSD test was also applied as post hoc analysis in order to make comparisons across the five groups to detect the source of significant difference. The results indicated that the 1st first semester students got the lowest score from other groups and this caused significant difference.

To deepen the investigation on the academic lexical competence and to touch upon the academic lexical performance in terms of sentence-based use of academic vocabulary, the scores of Test of Academic Vocabulary were analyzed. The obtained findings across the five participant groups are presented in Table 3 and Figure 2.

TABLE 3.
MEANS AND SDS OF TEST OF ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Test of Academic Vocabulary	N	Mean*	SD	Min	Max
1st year first sem.	49	18,71	11,498	0	54
1st year second sem.	70	34,06	9,570	15	53
2nd year	83	34,76	6,402	18	55
3rd year	89	35,12	5,703	20	54
4th year	80	36,69	8,881	20	54
TOTAL	371	33,01	9,992	0	55

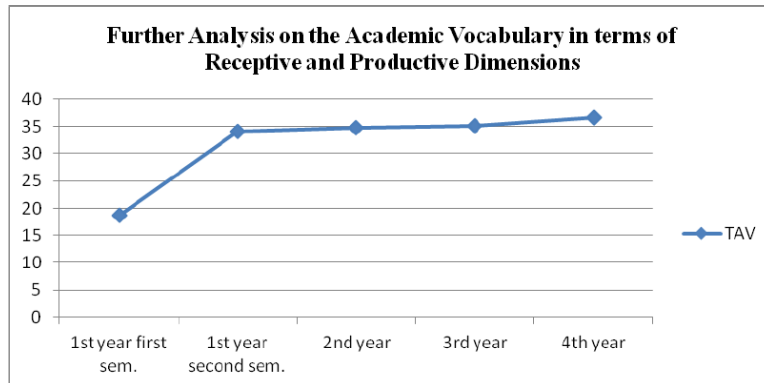*The mean score is calculated out of 60 as the maximum score of TAV

Figure 2: Development of Academic Vocabulary in terms of Receptive and Productive Dimensions across the years.

As can be seen at Table 3 Figure 2, there was again a gradual increase at the participants' academic vocabulary. The 1st year first semester students got the lowest score (18, 71), after a sharp increase, it was followed with 1st year second semester students (34,05). On contrary to the participants' size of academic vocabulary, a plateau was observed at 2nd and 3rd year with quite close mean values. At the 4th year, a slight increase at the participants' academic vocabulary knowledge was seen. This finding implied that the university education increased the participants' academic vocabulary knowledge receptively and productively, particularly the increase at the 1st year first semester indicated that the exposure to academic vocabulary yielded enhancement at academic vocabulary knowledge. However, the plateau at 2nd and 3rd years as well as slight increase at 4th year implied that the participants' academic vocabulary knowledge remained more or less the same throughout their education.

For further analysis on these findings, one-way ANOVA was conducted. The findings on between and within group comparison also supported that the participants' academic vocabulary knowledge was sensitive to the years they attend, since it was found that the differences were statistically significant ($F=43,070$, $P= ,000 < ,05$). In other words, the participants' academic vocabulary knowledge differed in terms of the years they attend. As a result of Tukey HSD test, 1st year first semester was found to be the source of difference ($P= ,000 < ,05$). The mean values of this group indicated that the lowest performance of this group caused the difference.

B. Academic Lexical Performance

In addition to the participants' sentence-based use of academic vocabulary in TAV, the outputs of participants' essays were analyzed in detail as indicator of their academic lexical performance. After all essays were submitted to software program, the outputs involving mean values for lexical frequency profile of each participant were obtained and an overall mean value for each year was calculated. To discuss the use of academic vocabulary in the essays more thoroughly, the proportions of high frequent vocabulary (K1_K2) and off-list vocabulary (i.e. low frequent and jargons) were also analyzed. Accordingly, the descriptive data on the participants' lexical use are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4:
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ACADEMIC VOCABULARY USE OF ALL GROUPS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

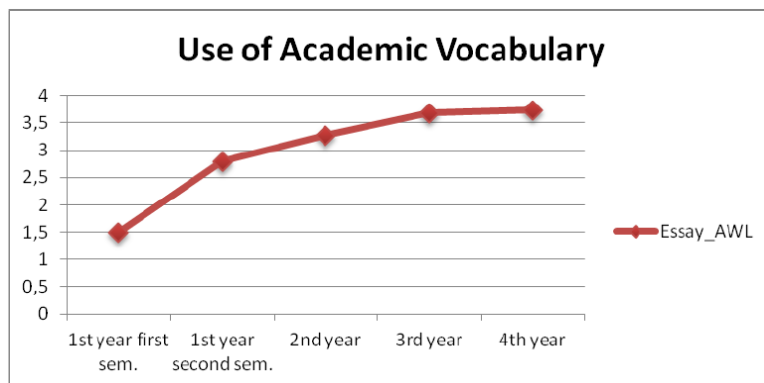|	1st year first sem. (n=49)		1st year sec. sem. (n=70)		2nd year (n=83)		3rd year (n=89)		4th year (n=80)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
K1_K2	87,30	29,797	95,18	1,788	95,10	2,534	94,65	2,184	94,93	2,137
ESSAY_AW	1,50	1,181	2,79	1,131	3,27	1,879	3,68	1,710	3,73	1,646
OFF_LIST	,86	,786	2,09	1,165	1,44	1,212	1,79	1,161	1,67	1,245

Figure 3. Development of Use of Academic Vocabulary across Five Participant Groups

As the mean and standard deviation values in Table 4 show that there is an almost gradual increase in use of vocabulary types across the years. The overall picture the analyses have revealed is that there was an overwhelming use of high frequent vocabulary in the essays while the increase in academic and off-list vocabulary was in very small proportion.

However, the results about the use of academic vocabulary seem promising as there was a constant increase in the use of academic vocabulary across the years. Starting from the very low proportion at the 1st year first semester (mean=1, 50), it increased incrementally at 1st year second semester (mean=2, 79), 3rd year (mean=3, 27), 3rd year (mean=3, 68) respectively and received the peak at 4th year with 3,73. Thus, it can be tentatively claimed that the increase in the productive academic vocabulary is the reflection of the language improvement and academic vocabulary knowledge. As participants' proficiency in language use increased through their tertiary education, they used more academic words.

To determine whether the differences at the mean values for each vocabulary category are statistically significant or not, one-way ANOVA was employed. The results of one-way ANOVA indicated that there were significant differences on each vocabulary category across five participant group ($P=, 000 < ,05$). This finding showed that the lexical use of the vocabulary types (i.e. high frequent, academic vocabulary and off-list) differed in terms of the years the participants attend. The 1st year first semester was again found as the group caused this difference as a result of post hoc test.

Overall, the findings on Turkish ELT majors' academic lexical competence and performance indicated that there were increases in the participants' academic vocabulary knowledge in terms of three indices, namely; size, receptive and productive dimensions as well as use. However, the saliency of these increases differed in a way that the development of receptive and productive of academic vocabulary was more striking. As the common point among three indices there was a plateau at 1st year second semester, 2nd year and 3rd year, even a decrease at 3rd year for size of academic vocabulary. Comparing the values for 1st year first semester with 4th year, it could be claimed that the participants' academic lexical competence and performance increased throughout their university education. These findings were also supported with the results of one-way ANOVA tests as explained for each dimension above.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Within a conceptual three-dimensional framework of second language academic lexical competence and performance, the learners' academic vocabulary knowledge profiles as well as the development of the academic vocabulary dimensions are investigated through multiple test approach.

The findings of academic vocabulary size revealed a jump from the 1st year first semester to the 1st year second semester and intervened with the decrease at 3rd year. Thus, it could be claimed the effect of proficiency throughout education is salient for the development of academic vocabulary. This growth of vocabulary size could be also explained with the increasing language proficiency as in Fan's (2000) study and repeated exposure to the target vocabulary as in Goldberg et al.'s research (2008). Although this growth proportion is too ambitious for academic vocabulary, these empirical findings on the vocabulary growth could explain the jump from the 1st year first semester to 2nd year in the present study.

Moreover, many researchers studying on the L2 learners' academic vocabulary knowledge emphasized the effect of exposure to learn academic vocabulary (Coady, 1993; Laufer, 1997, 1998; Laufer & Nation, 1995). If students read less, they will encounter fewer words, and it will eventually hamper their development of academic vocabulary. Thus, it can be claimed that the acquisition of academic vocabulary is concerned with what words learners are exposed to. For instance, despite the gaps in learners' frequent vocabulary knowledge, in an academic learning context, this leaner might primarily acquire words that are generally less frequent but more frequent in the academic setting (Chapelle, 1998; Coxhead, 2000). In the same vein, Milton (2007) explained how L2 learners could learn academic and/or less frequent words while having knowledge gaps in high frequency words with the issue of language exposure in foreign language contexts. Then, he suggested that in such language contexts, words are not acquired according to frequency of occurrence but learned thematically from course books, reading texts and lectures. In this respect, the participants' linear increase of academic vocabulary throughout their education can be explained. In case that the learners are not willing to learn or the instructors or the content of the courses do not force to learn and use more vocabulary, vocabulary acquisition, can be hampered. Moreover as Aziez' (2011) study revealed that textbooks have a low coverage of the words beyond 2000 (i.e. high frequent ones). So the learners' exposure to the academic vocabulary and/or low-frequent vocabulary remains limited. The learners could not get more input to improve their academic vocabulary knowledge. This could explain the decrease of academic vocabulary sizes of the learners at the 3rd and restricted increase at the 4th year. It may be the case that he learners at these years did not encounter new/more academic vocabulary that could enhance their vocabulary size.

Regarding the academic lexical performance, it could be claimed that there was a consistent increase across the five participant groups. The use of academic vocabulary gained acceleration from the 1st year first semester to the 4th year. The effects of academic language exposure and requirements of the courses contents, as valid for academic lexical competence, could be also considered for this issue. The participants got motivated and in fact they were required to use academic vocabulary more and more throughout their education; either in their courses for demos, presentations, and participations; or in their exams for writing essay types. In spite of promising increase of academic vocabulary across

the years at the 2nd year, their lexical use appeared very limited. This finding is not surprising at all since similar cases have been observed in other studies. For instance; Laufer (1991) found that university students did not significantly increase their productive vocabulary when there was no systematic instruction to vocabulary learning. She emphasized that learners tend to favor simple, general and frequent words in production. In addition, Laufer and Nation (1999) stated that a learner may be able to produce a sentence with an infrequent word when required to do so by the teacher but be reluctant to use when left to his own devices, as in composition writing task and choose to use a simpler more frequent word of a similar meaning. Such reluctance is often a result of uncertainty about the word's usage and lack of confidence caused due to limited L2 vocabulary. In this regard, Read (2000) also pinpointed the learners' avoidance and paraphrasing strategies not to use low frequent vocabulary. Crossley (2009) explained the reliance of high frequent vocabulary in writing referring the discrepancy between L1 and L2 vocabulary knowledge. Due to limited vocabulary knowledge in L2 in comparison to their native tongue, the learners tend to use more words of general rather than specific meaning. The discrepancy between the academic receptive and productive vocabulary in this study was also observed at Horst and Collins' (2006) study in which learners did not incorporate less frequent vocabulary into their written productions in spite of intensive instruction.

Thus, in the context of the present study, the participants preferred to explain their arguments mostly with high frequent vocabulary, in spite of tendency at 1st and 2nd year, the 3rd and 4th the participants did not take risk although their exposure to academic vocabulary and ELT specific words are supposed to be higher through their courses and requirements. Nonetheless, the consistent increase of academic vocabulary use across the years implied promising development of lexical use. Considering the fact that there was no special explicit academic vocabulary teaching in the courses, the increase in the use of academic vocabulary; 1, 29 points from 1st year first semester to 1st year second semester, and approximately 0, 5 points per year) throughout the years seemed promising.

CONCLUSION

Through the cross-sectional investigation of academic vocabulary in terms of lexical competence and performance dimensions, the present study attempted to reveal the English majors' academic vocabulary development through their education. Considering the findings, it could be concluded that both academic lexical competence and performance developed through the years. Thus, the salient effect of proficiency was observed for academic vocabulary development. However, the findings on the fluctuation at academic lexical competence, that is; there was a jump of academic vocabulary size and receptive-productive knowledge from the 1st year first semester to the following years but an intervention at 3rd and 4th year, was striking. These findings could motivate the revision of academic vocabulary exposure and instruction at these years. In addition, the development of academic lexical performance of the participants through the years was obtained as more consistent, yet the proportion of academic vocabulary use in academic essays appeared very limited. Thus, the findings pointed out the ELT majors' tendency to avoid using academic vocabulary while writing. Although they could recognize most of the academic vocabulary, they did not use them; they preferred to explain their arguments with higher frequent words.

The findings of this study pointed the ELT majors' limited academic vocabulary use and hesitating development of academic lexical competence. Considering the critical role of academic vocabulary for the university students, especially the English Language teachers, the explicit and implicit instruction on academic vocabulary or integrating academic vocabulary practice into academic writing and reading courses could be suggested. Moreover, the findings of the present study could contribute to revise and improve the EAP programs since the academic vocabulary is one of the basic component of such programs.

Additionally, it should be claimed that this study is just one step to grasp the nature of vocabulary, particularly academic vocabulary. Further studies on academic vocabulary in conjunction with general vocabulary knowledge could shed more light on the vocabulary development of university students. Besides, other components of academic vocabulary such as semantic and discourse, could be involved to step further the research on academic vocabulary.

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Exploring a Literacy Development in Young Korean ELLs with Online E-books

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Abstract—**The purpose of this study is to explore ELL students' improvement of reading comprehension and vocabulary after using online animated e-books, and to investigate the change of students' attitudes and interests in the use of e-books. Total 78 Korean elementary ELL students participated in this study for 12 tweeks of instruction, and online animated e-books were provided as a main reading material in an after-school reading class. To assess the change of students' reading comprehenstion and vocabulary, pre- and post-tests were conducted with 25 questions. Also, a pre- and post-survey, and students' written comments were used in order to measure the changes of affective factors. The major findings of this study can be summarized as follows: 1) to use online animated e-books in the class improved students' reading and vocabulary ability, 2) the affective factors such as motivation and interest on further reading have increased. This study suggests that to make use of an e-book in an EFL reading class, or to teach English with an e-based material can be of benefit to enhance interest and motivation of ELL learners.**

Index Terms—**literacy development, reading education, e-book, teaching vocabulary**

I. INTRODUCTION

The current trends in teaching English to young leaners in an ESL/EFL situation have placed an emphasis on learning English for a communicative purpose. And much research has already revealed that most of the ELL learners can expand to productive use of language which includes speaking and writing after starting with receptive understanding of the new information (Ashworth & Wakefield, 2004; Cappellini, 2005; Parker & Paradini, 2006). In this regard, reading competence to ELL learners is considered to be one of the most important skills to acquire, and how to teach reading to ELLs can be the first step in order for them to achieve the ultimate goal of acquiring communicative skills in the process of learning English. According to Nutall (1996), one of the best ways to learn English, other than living among its speakers, is reading a lot in it, and that reading is the most important factor in language learning (Grabe, 1991; Grabe & Stoller, 2002). DEST (2005) stressed that "the development of reading serves the major foundational academic ability for language learning". In the end, the opportunities for academic success in learning a foreign language are limited without the ability to read. However, despite this recognition of the importance of reading, reading itself has been regarded as a boring process and task to elementary ELL students in Korea. Although there is a need for teaching various reading skills and strategies using multiple reading resources in order for ELL learners to develop their reading abilities, to teach reading still concentrates on acquiring merely linguistic competence and most of reading materials used in the English class are based on the paper-based textbooks.

Therefore, the majority of English teachers and ELL students have agreed that there must be another way of teaching and learning reading with multiple authentic reading materials, such as English newspapers, online stories and cartoons based on the Internet. This is probably because they think that, unlike the textbooks, the materials are flexible, interesting, and entertaining. Teachers also agree that for effective reading, learners need to be actively involved in an interesting and entertaining way in the reading process (Cromley & Azevedo, 2007; Nation & Angell, 2006; Snow, 1991; Stauffer, 1970).

Taking this into account, this paper is designed to examine elementary school students' response who are beginning to learn English as a foreign language. Based on the previous researches on the reading effect using the Internet stories, this study explores an effect of an e-book reading. The primary purpose of this study is to ascertain that an e-book reading contributes to leading to comprehension of the given texts and the vocabulary increasement. The second purpose is to survey the extent an e-book reading can influence on ELLs' affective factors, like motivation and attitude toward reading and English learning.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Importance of Reading

It has been perceived as a fact that when electronic devices like computers, or DVDs were not in existence, reading was a premier spare time activity. Many of the people would spend hours reading books and feel excited and thrilled, or happy and sad. With passion and interest in reading, it offers a productive approach to improving vocabulary and word

power (Coiro, 2011; Fry & Kress, 2006; Hiebert, 2005; Lapp, et al., 2008). It is well-known that to indulge in at least half an hour of reading per day will keep the reader abreast of the various styles of writing and new vocabulary.

It is examined by many researchers that children with an interest in reading have, comparatively, both a higher intelligence quotient (IQ) and a higher emotional quotient (EQ). Teale (1984) reported that young children are more creative and do better in school, so that it is recommended that parents need to inculcate the importance of reading to their children in the early years. Reading is said to be remarkable in assisting in the development of vocabulary, and reading-aloud techniques help to build a strong emotional bond between parents and children. Besides, this fact is observed that children who start reading from an early age have good language skills, and they grasp the variances in phonics for better (Harrison, 2004; McKeown & Beck, 2006).

When it comes to mental development, reading is known to stimulate the muscles of the eyes. According to Cain & Oakhill (2004), reading is an activity that involves greater levels of concentration and adds to the conversational skills of the reader. It is an indulgence that consistently enhances the knowledge acquired. The habit of reading also makes it possible for readers to decipher new words and unknown phrases which they may come across either in books or conversations in daily life. The habit can become a healthy addiction and adds to the information available on various topics. It helps us to stay in-touch with contemporary writers as well as those from the past, and makes us sensitive to global up-to-date issues.

B. The Change of Reading

The major stream in an English teaching method for the last couple of decades was GTM (Grammar-Translation Method). What is accounted for this method is, as Brown (2001) indicated, that "focus on grammatical rules, memorization of vocabulary and of various declensions and conjugations, translation of texts, and doing written exercises"(p. 18). In fact, students' English ability was measured either by his or her knowledge of vocabulary or by the ability of analyzing and translating sentences. However, as the importance of communicative competence has been on the rise since the 1970's, approaches and methods in language teaching have been changed, apart from grammar-translation method, or one of the traditional learning approaches. Instead, communicative language teaching and cognitive psychology were watched with deep concern. It had been emphasized that the alternatives were of distinguished feature; the focus on teaching, for example, has turned from being teacher-centered into student-centered, and process-centered rather than product-centered (Bowyer-Crane & Snowling, 2005). This new phenomenon finally ended up affecting English language teaching. Later, it was also applied to actual reading class; that is, a reading class was naturally focused on text-based into reader-based. Students were encouraged not only to understand the simple texts, but also to analyze and evaluate the given information (Roe, et al., 2011; Stein, 2008; Teale, 1984). Furthermore, they were even taught strategies to help themselves become strategic readers with diverse opportunities presented in the classroom.

Consequently, reading has turned its view from a simple process only to grasp the given texts, to a more complex and diversified one (Anderson, et al., 2006). Readers are now required to construct a meaning from a written text, starting simply from that it is something we do with books and other materials printed or published online. Also, reading is not only to figure out the meaning of vocabulary, understand the grammatical rules and translate perfectly into L1, but it is also to seize the general meaning with given information in the text (Cha, 2004, pp. 83). In other words, reading ought to place focus on synthetic comprehension of the given texts, aside from understanding the single glossary.

C. Characteristics of an E-book

Recently, as the tremendous growth on the information and communication technology has held up with the Internet, the new terminology in reading comes into being; that is 'e-book', or 'eBook' (electronic book), beyond the whole concept of traditional printed books so that it adds a few remarkable concepts as well as the existing definitions of traditional counterpart. Cambridge advanced learner's dictionary 3rd edition (2008) defines an e-book as, "a book that is published in electronic form, for example, on the Internet or on a disk, and not printed on paper, and an e-book reader or player is a small electronic device with a screen which allows people to read an electronic book, perform searches, add notes." In other words, an e-book is a digital format text file which displays on an e-book reader, electronic device or computer. The term, "e-book", also may include such concepts as a text in digital form; a book converted into digital form; digital reading material; a book in a computer file format; or an electronic file of words and images to be displayed on a computer screen (Leu et al., 2007; Wallace, 2004). Besides, an e-book is immediately read on a computer over a network, or viewed on a desktop, notebook and dedicated portable devices after downloading, read on all types of computers, or formatted for display on an e-book reader (Rao, 2001). In summary, the definition of an e-book is simply to be considered as follows:

1) it is published and downloaded through the Internet.

2) it is viewed on the screens of diversified portable electronic devices (e.g. Smartphones & Tablet PCs, BlackBerry Play Books, Galaxy Tab, Kindle, etc. as well as desktops or laptops with digital contents downloaded from the Internet)

3) it is instantly purchased with no shipping costs and no waiting.

D. Pedagogical Application of an E-book

Unlike traditional printed books, e-books have more advantages in educational application. Due to the multimedia linkage, an animated e-book can also make the learning environment easier and funnier (Walsh, 2007). There are four major pedagogical benefits with an e-book. In terms of an animated e-book, the first one considered is the music sound and effect, which people of all ages listen to. It was revealed that reading with a sound, or with background music can encourage readers to be more involved in reading (Kiger, 1989), and this is related to a suggestopedia that Lozanov (1978) had first proposed. He explained that "There is no sector of public life where suggestology would not be useful" (Lozanov & Gateva, 1988). As a matter of fact, the concept of applying suggestopedia proves that the readers of early ages especially tend to get very involved and remain undistracted during the reading process. This is because music, as Lozanov mentioned, can be an assistant tool for readers, who in particular, are of a young age. They can focus on what they are reading and facilitate learning in natural atmosphere. There cannot, therefore, be any doubt that these sound effects or music may contribute to the pleasure of reading, in comparison with printed books.

Secondly, as mentioned earlier, an e-book is simply based on the Internet, which is very suggestive of using multiple electronic devices. In accordance with their efficiency and performance, for example, the resolution of the monitors, or how many picture elements, shortly called 'pixels' are composed of might provide readers with enormously splendid graphics as well as clear images through the screen that could never have been imagined in traditional paper book (Coyne et al, 2004). In the same manner, with suggestopedia, as stated above, it is definitely clear that this does apply to children of early ages in terms of motivation, which is followed by triggering their interest and zest for reading activity.

And thirdly, due to the development of information technology, one remarkable benefit an e-book holds is its portability that makes it possible for readers to enjoy the pleasure of reading at any place or at any time, in spite of the unsolved problems.

III. METHODOLGY

A. Research Questions

This study is designed to examine students' improvement of reading ability and vocabulary after using online automated e-books in the English language classroom, and to investigate the change of students' attitudes and interests in the use of e-books. Therefore, the main research questions to be investigated are as follows:

1. In which ways does to use an e-book in EFL classroom contribute to improving students' reading comprehension and increasing vocabulary?

2. By reading an e-book, is there any changes in students' attitude and interest toward further reading and general English learning?

B. Research Subjects

This experiment was conducted to a treatment group without any control group. The total participants of this study were 78 ELL students from fifth grade classes in a public elementary school located in Eastern Gangwon province, South Korea. They were consisted of 40 male (51%) and 38 female (49%). Clustering sampling was used for selecting participants, which refers to a sampling method that has the following properties - the population is divided into N groups called clusters and the researcher randomly selects *n* clusters to include in the sample (Freeman et al, 2007). All of the students voluntarily took English reading class, as after-school program, and the research was carried out from May to July, 2010. The reason of selecting the fifth grade ELL students for this research was because students at this developmental stage basically learn and develop both basic computer literacy skills, and English reading skills as ELLs.

C. Research Instruments

In this present study, five instruments were used: a background survey, a reading comprehenstion test, a vocabulary test, a e-book survey and a student's written comment. A background survey was distributed in order to collect participants' basic information about English learning backgrounds and an e-book reading experience. And to find the development of the students' reading comprehension and vocabulary, pre- and post-tests were conducted. Besides, to investigate the change of the students' general thinking and attitude toward reading an e-book, two surveys were admnistered before and after the class. Plus, all the students were encouraged to write a comment or thought about reading e-books after the whole research period was over.

D. Research Procedure

After-school English reading program was carried out for forty minutes twice per week for twelve weeks. In the first step, after setting up the theme of the research, the researcher found related references and previous studies, established research questions and planned the lessons using an e-book. In the second step, a website for an e-book reading(http://www.starfall.com) was chosen for the research and for the sake of students' appropriate level and interest. In the third step, the reseacher taught a reading class based on the readings from *www.starfall.com*. To examine students' development and improvement in reading comprehension and vocabulary, two tests were conducted as a pre- and post-test. In addition to such tests, two survey were administered to figure out the change of the students' attitude and interest on e-books. In the final step, students wrote their thinking about a reading class using an e-book. After that, the research questions were verified and the results and conclusion were drawn.

E. Data Analysis

In this present study, collected materials consisted of quantitative and qualitative data, so the data analysis for these two was conducted seperately. First, the results from the survey were collected and every student's character, interest and attitude toward studying English were described. The students' comments about an e-book reading were also gathered in order to verify students' opinions about the use of an e-book reading more in depth. After finishing the whole class, the questionnaire was also analyzed to see the differences of before and after the class. Second, to find out whether reading an e-book affects the improvement of overall reading comprehension and vocavulary increasement, T-test using IBM SPSS (version 19) was used.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

A. Results of Background Survey

The results of the personal background survey show that first, with regard to previous English learning backgrounds, the average amount time of English study was 4.5 years, and only 13% of the total participants have experienced in staying in English speaking countries. Regarding the most common reading practices outside the classroom, 74% answered that they have been more familar with paper-based materials, but 88% of all responded that they have experienced to use online reading materials before which they felt were helpful for learning English and gaining interest. And it was leaners' interest and curiousity that led the majority of students to try reading online reading materials.

Second, with regard to experiencing an e-book, all participants had access to the Internet at both home and school. 95% the students mentioned that they knew what e-books are. In addition, nearly a half of them (49%) reported that they habitually kept using an e-book in the reading time. For the question about preference of additional learning resources from the teacher, 64% of participants preferred animated e-books to a plain paper textbook. Also, more than half of all participants (52%) anticipated that to use an e-book in English reading class would be useful for improving their English. Overall, the participants were accustomed to using e-books and had preference of using them to their counterpart, particularly on additional English learning outside the classroom. In addition, they showed high degree of expectation on the learning effects of using e-books in their English studying.

B. Results of Pre-and Post-reading Comprehension & Vocabulary Test

There was a positive difference between the results of the pre- and post-reading comprehension and vocabulary tests. Total 25 multiple questions from e-books students read in the class were adpated and modified by the researcher. As can be seen at Table 1, the mean score of the reading comprehension test was improved as nearly five points, from 75.70 to 80.22.

TABLE 1
RESULTS OF PRE- AND POST-READING COMPREHENSION TEST

Reading	N	Mean	t	p
Pre-test	78	75.70	1.965	0.85
Post-test	78	80.22		

Plus, pre-and post-vocabulary tests were conducted to monitor the vocabulary improvement. In total, 30 words (half in the main texts and half in other source) were selected to take a test to measure how much the vocabulary had been enriched at the end of the study. Table 2 shows the mean score of the two vocabulary tests.

TABLE 2
RESULTS OF PRE- AND POST-READING VOCABULARY TEST

Reading	N	Mean	t	p
Pre-test	78	73.05	-1.895	0.160
Post-test	78	77.40		

As the result indicated above, there was an evidence for the efficacy of an e-book reading instruction. With the increase of the mean score, this result can be deducted that using an e-book with a program-external glossary led to the increase in vocabulary. And it is clear that an increased vocabulary not only improved overall academic aptitude, reading comprehension, critical thinking and problem solving skills, but also triggered students' imagination and exposed them to new experiences and concepts.

C. Results of E-book Survey

Regarding the use of an e-book, twenty five items on the survey questionnnaire were asked using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 'strongly agree (5)' to 'strongly disagree (1). Descriptive statistics for the questionnaire is presented in Table 3 below. The mean scores of all parameters were ranging from 4.01 to 4.21, indicating that the students were satisfied with using online animated e-books in the reading class.

TABLE 3
MEAN SCORES OF EACH PARAMETER

Item	Parameters	Mean	SD
1	Features of e-book	4.02	.81
2	Promoting motivation by e-book	4.05	.88
3	Learning effectiveness with e-book	4.02	.80
4	Attitude change after e-book reading	4.12	.78

Tables from 4 to 7 present the results of satisfaction survey analyzed by mean scores and standard deviations of responses for each item based on the four parameters: 1) features of e-book, 2) promoting motivation by e-book, 3) learning effectiveness with e-book, and 4) attitude change after e-book reading.

TABLE 4
PARAMETER 1- FEATURES OF E-BOOK

Item	Parameters	Mean	SD
1	It is easy and fun to use an e-book in learning English.	4.26	0.75
2	It is great to be able to access the e-book site anytime, regardless of time and space.	4.12	0.78
3	It is convenient to buy or to download e-books for learning English.	3.77	1.02
4	It is helpful to repeat the reading activity depending on the needs.	4.00	0.81
5	It is useful to practice language skills(reading, listening, speaking)	3.90	0.98
6	It motivates learners by providing graphics and sounds.	4.11	0.76

As shown as Table 4 above, Parameter 1 inquiried about opinion about the platform of an e-book, and obtained considerably high mean scores, ranging from 3.77 to 4.26. Particularly, an item number 1, "It is easy and fun to use an e-book in learning English." obtained a high mean score of 4.26. In the other hand, item number 3, "it is convenient to buy or to download e-books for learning English," obtained the lowest mean score of 3.77.

TABLE 5
PARAMETER 2 – PROMOTING MOTIVATION BY E-BOOK

Item	Parameters	Mean	SD
7	It is possible to choose e-books based on each proficiency level.	4.21	0.65
8	It is fun to do activities using drag and drop function.	4.00	0.79
9	High graphic and music sound make e-book reading more pleasant.	4.07	0.66
10	Listening activities using e-books are helpful for learning English.	4.10	0.86
11	Speaking activities using e-books are helpful for learning English.	3.90	0.70
12	Reading activities using e-books are helpful for learning English.	4.11	0.81
13	Vocabulary activities using e-books are helpful for learning English.	4.02	0.89

Above Table 5 shows that Parameter 2, "promoting motivation by e-book" also gained reasonably high mean scores ranging from 3.90 to 4.21. In particular, the mean score of question No. 7 was 4.21, suggesting that in choosing an e-book, students had an option to select a appropriate book based on each proficiency level. And they were highly satisfied with the multimedia features on e-books which included sound, TTS, drag & drop activity and so on. Specifically, the tasks types that students thought were helpful for their learning English were listening (4.10) and vocabulary practice (4.02) .

TABLE 6
PARAMETER 3- LEARNING EFFECTIVENESS WITH E-BOOK

Item	Parameters	Mean	SD
14	I like the instant feedback and answer from the online activities.	4.06	0.66
15	I can control my learning process by simply clicking.	4.13	0.81
16	I gain self-confidence in learning English by using e-books.	4.07	0.78
17	I think e-books help me to broaden creative and critical thinking.	3.89	0.92
18	I can practice not only reading and wring but also listening and speaking with e-books.	4.00	0.79
19	I think to use e-books boost my English learning.	3.98	0.89

As displayed in Table 6, Parameter 3, "learning effectiveness with e-book" obtained high mean scores ranging from 3.89 to 4.13, indicating that the students felt to use an e-book was effective to improve their English skills and to gain self-confidence in studying English. Especially, it was revealed that the participants were highly satisfied with self-controlled study which obtained mean score of 4.13, and with repeated practice of a learner (4.01).

TABLE 7
PARAMETER 4 – ATTITUDE CHANGE AFTER E-BOOK READING

Item	Parameters	Mean	SD
20	I think it is interesting and pleasant to study English using e-books.	4.25	0.65
21	I think to use e-books in English learning promotes interest.	4.22	0.64
22	I feel more confident in English after using e-books.	4.13	0.81
23	I want to read more e-books for further study.	3.84	0.89
24	I think e-books motivate my overall English learning.	4.30	0.79
25	I want to recommend friends to use e-books for their self-study.	4.02	0.72

According to Table 7, Parameter 4, "attitude change after e-book reading" gained high mean scores 3.84 to 4.25. Specifically, an item number 20, statement of "I like using e-books for learning English more than using the paper textbook," got mean score 4.25, indicating the students highly preferred using online e-books to paper based materials. Also, an item number 21, " I think to use e-books in English learning promotes interest," obtained mean score of 4.22, and showed that students had highly a positive attitude about using e-books for their English learning.

D. Results of Students' Written Comments

The students' common opinions which were responded by at least more than ten students for each question were catergorized as following. First, for the parts of an e-book which they liked most regarding learning English, the most frequent response (58 of frequency) was that learning through an e-book was more interesting and fun than learning through paper based materials. The reason of this can be deducted from the fact that they could use multimedia resources in an e-book for their English learning, which was not available in the form of a paper book. The second (51 of frequency) most frequent response was that to use an e-book was more convenience than to do a paper book. This is in accordance with the positive responses for the statement of the satisfaction survey that using an e-book is helpful for English learning because it has no limitation of time and space. The third (43 of frequency) most frequent opinion was that to use an e-book helped them improve their English skills, which is consisted with the result that 62 of 78 students got higher score in the post-test than in the pre-test. The fourth (34 of frequency) and fifth (29 of frequency) most common thoughts were that they could get control their learning progess by going back and forth. Due to the multimedia feature, it was also possible for them to repeat reading activities based on their needs. The sixth (23 of frequency) most frequent answer was that the background music and sound effect in an e-book were very interesting and helpful to trigger their pleasant reading. This showed their preference of learning through multimedia, especially songs that had rarely been possible to use for their self-study in offline learning environment. The last (12 of frequency) most frequent opinion was that the amount of time for studying English has been increased. A comment from student A presented below describes how well an e-book worked in students' reading class.

I think I gained more interested in English and its learning because of e-books. Because there are a lot of interesting contents to do in e-books, I wanted to read more and to use more frequently. And I became to like to study English and have more interest, and it's just like playing a game (Dahyun[1], July 2010).

In conclusion, it was revealed that the students thought using online e-books for learning English was convenient and interesting. They also presented that to read e-books helped them improve their English skills in terms of reading comprehension and vocabualry enhancement. In addition, it was found that the students had positive attitudes about the features of an e-book, and such remarkable functions encouraged them to have a sense of pleasure in learning.

V. Conclusions

The summarized results of the present study and discussion for each result are as following. First, in order to find out whether reading an animated e-book affects on the improvement of the participants' reading comprehension and vocabualry, the mean scores of the pre- and the post-tests were compared. As a result, the participants' mean score of reading and vocabualry test had been enhanced. The reason for the improvement of their reading comprehension and vocabualry is regarded that the students were able to have more opportunities to get involved in an online reading activity. However, the experimental instruction had carried out for ten weeks and it was rather short for the participants to get sufficient opportunity to practice English and to show meaningfully higher degree of improvement in their general English proficiency test.

And for the purpose of investigating the degree of participants' satisfaction of reading an e-book, an e-book pre- and post-survey and students' written comments were employed. The results of two survey explain that the participants were highly satisfied with using an e-book, showing the mean score of over 4 out of 5, especially in that an e-book helped them improve their English skills of reading and vocabulary, which was also supported by the students' responses in written comments. In written comments, what the students liked most of an e-book was fun, and students thought the effectiveness of using an e-book to motivate them to participate actively in English learning through an e-book.

Overall, the results of the e-book survey and the students' written comments indicate that the main characteristics of an e-book, that is, flexibility in access and use of multimedia, motivated the students to enjoy reading and studying English, and therefore, promoted interest and desire for futher study and reading.

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A Study on Language Learning Strategy Use and Its Relation to Academic Self-concept: The Case of EFL Students in Taiwan

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Abstract—The current study investigates the language learning strategy use (LLSU) among EFL university freshmen and its relation to academic self-concept (ASC). Of six strategy categories, compensation strategies were reported as the most frequently used and social strategies were the least used. Participants with low and medium ASC used compensation strategies the most, while the participants of high ASC used metacognitive strategies the most. A significant positive relationship between strategy use and ASC was identified. All six strategy categories were found to be significant regarding different ASC of the research participants while only three particular strategy items were not. Among the strategy categories, metacognitive and cognitive strategies were found to have the highest correlations with ASC. Among the two components of ASC, academic effort was more highly related to overall strategy use than academic confidence. Educational implications and suggestions from the current study are presented to benefit the promotion of ASC and LLSU.

Index Terms—learning strategy use, academic self-concept, strategy category, language learning strategy

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning strategies are the conscious thoughts and actions that learners take to achieve their learning goals. Effective learners are able to select learning approaches that suit them better and they also have the competence to orchestrate the strategies that best meet both the task demands and their own learning preferences. Much research has reported the close association between language learning strategy use (LLSU) and various factors including age (Ehrman & oxford, 1989; Oxford & Ehrman, 1995; Lan & Oxford, 2003), gender (Oxford, 1993; Green & Oxford, 1995), proficiency level (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Chamot, Barnhart, El-Dinary & Robbins, 1999), and motivation (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989, 1990; Wharton, 2000). Yet little attention has been given to the relationship between LLSU and academic self-concept (ASC), which is proven to be an important predictor to academic performance (Choi, 2005; Liu, 2008; Muijs, 1997). The current study is, therefore, designed to investigate the relationship between LLSU and ASC and by having an overall understanding of the triangular relationships among LLSU and the two components of ASC, academic confidence and effort, pedagogic implications can be drawn to benefit English language learning. Results from the current study can also provide suggestions for effective language instruction and sustainability of language learners' autonomy.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Language Learning Strategy

Learning strategies are procedures that facilitate learning tasks (Chamot, 2005), and they also allow learners to become more independent and autonomous lifelong learners (Allwright, 1990; Little, 1991). The importance of language learning strategies (LLSs) is that they are procedures that learners take to manage their own learning and achieve individual desired goals.

Early research into LLSs was concentrated on the establishment of what good LLSs might be (Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975). Later work by Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, and Todesco (1978), Rubin (1981), and O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper, and Russo (1985) were focused on the identification of good LLSs. Rubin (1981) identified strategies that contribute directly and indirectly to L2 learning. Six direct strategies are: (a) clarification/ verification, (b) monitoring, (c) memorization, (d) guessing/inductive inference, (e) deductive reasoning, and (f) practice; and two indirect strategies are: (a) creating opportunities for practice, and (b) production tricks. Oxford (1990) defines LLSs in general terms as specific methods or techniques used by individual learners to facilitate their comprehension, retention, retrieval and application of information in the second or foreign language.

As well as the various ways of defining LLSs, there are also different approaches of categorizing identified LLSs. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) outlined a scheme including cognitive, metacognitive, and social/affective strategies

based on research conducted in the 1980s. According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990, pp.44-45), cognitive strategies work with information to enhance learning; metacognitive strategies are higher order executive skills that involve planning, monitoring, or evaluation of a language learning activity, and social/ affective strategies are the interaction with others or control over affect. Oxford (1990, pp.18-21; 2001, pp.167-68) produced a classification system based on much of her previous work, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and defined six categories of learning strategies are as follows.

(1) Cognitive strategies: processing information and structuring it, e.g. analyzing, summarizing.

(2) Memory strategies: remembering information via making connections between it, e.g. grouping, and using keywords.

(3) Metacognitive strategies: managing the learning process and dealing with the task, e.g. planning, identifying and selecting resources.

(4) Compensation strategies: compensating for knowledge gaps, e.g. guessing, gesturing.

(5) Affective strategies: identifying one's affective traits and knowing how to manage them, e.g. reducing anxiety, encouraging one's self.

(6) Social strategies: learning from and/or with others, e.g. asking for cooperation, working with peers.

Oxford's SILL has been regarded as the most comprehensive classification of LLSs (Ellis,1994), and it has been used extensively to collect data on large numbers of language learners around the world (see Green & Oxford, 1995; Park, 1997; Wharton, 2000; Hsiao & Oxford, 2002; Lan & Oxford, 2003). Oxford's SILL is a standardized instrument with different versions for language learners of a variety of languages. It has been used to collect data on large numbers of mostly foreign language learners (see Olivares-Cuhat, 2002; Wharton, 2000; Cohen, Weaver & Li, 1998; Oxford, 1996, 1990; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Nyikos & Oxford, 1993). It has also been employed in studies that correlate strategy use with variables such as learning styles, gender, proficiency level, and culture (Bedell & Oxford, 1996; Bruen, 2001; Green & Oxford, 1995; Nyikos & Oxford, 1993; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Wharton, 2000). The current study was designed to correlate language learning strategy use with ASC. Results of the study may provide educational implications to promote language strategy use among learners with different degrees of ASC.

B. Academic Self-concept

Marsh and Shavelson (1985) defined self-concept as "a person's perceptions of him- or herself." Byrne (1988) noted that social comparison plays a significant role in the formation of one's self-concept. As noted by Marsh (1986), students may evaluate their performance in a specific subject in relation to their performance in another school subject. However, they may also compare their self-perceptions of performance with the perceived performance of their peers (Capper, Foust, Callahan, & Albaugh, 2009; Rinn, Plucker, & Stocking, 2010; Rost, Sparfeldt, Dickhäuser, & Schilling, 2005). Self-concept is shaped by an individual's experiences and interactions with significant people (Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976). According to the hierarchical model of self-concept posited by Shavelson et al. (1976), self-concept should be viewed as multidimensional since it is comprised of nonacademic (e.g., social, emotional) and academic (e.g., math, English) components. Marsh and Shavelson (1985) revised the model by proposing two higher order academic factors, math/academic self-concept and verbal/academic self-concept, which are nearly uncorrelated (Marsh, Kong, & Hau, 2001). The latter can be further broken into different subject domains, including English and foreign language (Marsh, Byrne, Shavelson, 1988).

A number of studies by researchers in different disciplines have demonstrated the correlation between ASC and achievement when subject specific self-concept is matched with achievement in the corresponding area (Drysdale & Milne, 2006; Hansford & Hattie, 1982; Liu, 2008; Marsh, Byrne, & Shavelson, 1988; Marsh, Parker, & Barnes, 1985; Marsh, Relich, & Smith, 1983; Marsh & Yeung, 1998; Muijs, 1997). A reciprocal-effects model, whereby academic self-concept and academic achievement serve as a predictor of one another, is strongly supported by many researchers (De Fraine, Van Damme, & Onghena, 2007; Marsh, 1990; Marsh, Hau, & Kong, 2002; Marsh, Trautwein, Lüdtke, Köller, & Baumert, 2005). Marsh, Hau, and Kong (2002) conducted a large scale six year longitudinal study using Hong Kong high school students as the sample to investigate the relations among academic self-concept, academic achievement, and language of instruction (Chinese and English). The findings provided support for the reciprocal-effects model, although the effects of prior academic self-concept on subsequent related achievement tended to be stronger than the other way around. They concluded that the relation between academic self-concept and academic achievement is reciprocal and "mutually reinforcing" regardless of what language of instruction is used. The improvement of one construct depends on the enhancement of the other; otherwise, the improvement may be a short-term effect. In another longitudinal causal ordering study conducted by Marsh, Trautwein, Lüdtke, Köller, and Baumert (2005) to examine the relations among academic self-concept, academic interest, and academic achievement, they reached a similar conclusion that academic self-concept can be both a cause and effect of academic achievement. More recently, a new conceptual model posited by Guay, Rateele, Roy, and Litalien (2010) indicated that academic motivation plays an important mediating role in the relation between academic self-concept and achievement. It should be noted that although the academic achievement/self-concept relation has been reported in extensive studies by many researchers, such as Marsh and his colleagues (Marsh et al, 1988; Marsh et al., 2001), few have centered on the relationship between English self-concept and language achievement.

The operational definition of academic self-concept used in the present study is based on the research of Liu and Wang (2005). In a study that examined gender differences in academic self-concept among Singaporean secondary school learners, they identified students' confidence and effort as two first-order factors of academic self-concept. They defined academic confidence as "student's feelings and perceptions about their academic competence" and academic effort as "students' commitment to, and involvement and interest in schoolwork" (p. 22).

C. Research Questions

The present study aims to investigate the strategy use of EFL college students and its relation with their ASC. The major research questions are as follows:

(1) For the full sample, what are the broad profile of overall strategy use, the frequency of strategy use in six categories, and the most and the least used strategy items?

(2) Is there a significant relationship between strategy use and leaner ASC?

(3) Are there significant differences by different degree of positive academic self-concept in terms of overall strategy use, any of the six strategy categories and strategy items?

III. METHOD

A. Participants

The sample was 163 university freshmen, 75 (46%) males and 88 (54%) females, enrolled in different majors in central Taiwan. They were assigned to different levels of English classes for completing university-wide required English courses according to their GEPT (General English Proficiency Test, an official English proficiency test commissioned by Taiwan Ministry of Education) scores. The same series of teaching materials were used in all of these classes. Participants of the study included three classes of students from each ability level, including basic, intermediate, and advanced levels. They were administered the questionnaires a few weeks after the start of the 2010-2011 academic year.

B. Instruments

To measure learner strategy use, Oxford's (1990, version 7.0) 50-item version of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), designed for learners of English as a second or foreign language, was used in current study. The SILL has been extensively used and checked for reliability and validity in multiple ways (Oxford and Burry-Stock, 1995). In the present study, reliability of the strategy use questionnaire was measured at .94 using Cronbach's alpha.

The SILL used in the current study consists of 50 items and has been classified into six categories: (a) memory strategy items (items 1 to 9), (b) cognitive strategy items (items 10 to 23), (c) compensation strategy items (items 24 to 29), (d) metacognitive strategy items (items 30 to 38), (e) affective strategy items (items 39 to 44), and (f) social strategy items (items 45 to 50). They are assessed on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. The number indicates the frequency of strategy use, ranging from 1 (never or almost never) to 5 (always or almost always).

The instrument used to measure student ASC was adapted from Liu, Wang and Parkins's (2005) ASC scale. It is composed of two subscales, the academic confidence subscale (9 items) and the academic effort subscale (10 items), to assess students' academic self-confidence and their involvement and interest in schoolwork. Each item was scored on a six-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The questionnaire demonstrated satisfactory internal reliability, achieving an alpha coefficient of .89. Reliability coefficients for the AC and AE subscales were .87 and .83, respectively. All of the above-mentioned instruments used in the present study were modified and translated by the first author into a Chinese version for use in the study.

C. Procedures

To address the first research question, the mean scores for the overall strategy use, the frequency of use of the six strategy categories, and the 50 strategy items were all computed. To investigate the relation between learners' strategy use and ASC, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients of all the related variables were obtained and analyzed. Furthermore, the use of language learning strategies among students of different degrees of positive ASC was closely analyzed to address research questions 3 and 4. Before statistical analyses were conducted, subjects were divided into three groups according to their scores on the ASC scale. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed on (1) the overall strategy scores, (2) the six strategy category scores, and (3) individual item scores to examine the differences in strategy use by students at three different levels of positive ASC. All the negative worded items in the scale were scored in reverse before any of the above statistical analyses were performed.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Strategy Use of the Full Sample

The means and standard deviations were computed for the use of each of the six strategy categories (see Table 1). According to Oxford's (1990) key to understanding students' mean scores on strategy use, overall the participants of the current study had medium use of language learning strategies (2.8). That is, they "sometimes" used the learning

strategies (ibid., p.291). Strategies in the compensation, metacognitive, and cognitive categories were the most used types of strategies, while social strategies were the least used, followed by memory strategies.

TABLE 1.
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS INDICATING OVERALL STRATEGY USE OF THE FULL SAMPLE

Strategy Category	Rank Order of Usage	Mean	SD
Compensation	1	2.90	.64
Metacognitive	2	2.83	.70
Cognitive	3	2.81	.62
Affective	4	2.72	.68
Memory	5	2.70	.64
Social	6	2.56	.75
Overall		2.76	.59

The findings of the current study support findings from previous studies on the EFL language strategy use (LSU) in which compensation strategy category (SC) was the most used SC by EFL learners (Chang, 2010; Lee & Oxford, 2008; Chen, 2005; Lan & Oxford, 2003; Mochizuki, 1999; Klassen, 1994).

To identify the most and least frequently used strategy items, the mean of each strategy item was calculated. Descriptive statistics of the five most frequently used and the five least frequently used items are presented in Table 2 and Table 3, respectively. As Table 2 shows, two items scored at the higher end of the medium-use range, namely, items 15 and 10. Both of these strategies were classified in the cognitive categories. Item 15 of watching English TV shows or going to movies in English provides an opportunity for both recreation and learning purposes. It is the most used SI by the research participants. Item 10 asks the learners whether they "say or write new English words several times." The other three most frequently used items (29, 1, 32) were all in the medium-use range.

TABLE 2.
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE FIVE MOST FREQUENTLY USED LEARNING STRATEGIES

Strategy No.	Strategy	Mean	SD	Strategy Category
15	I watch English language TV shows or go to movies in English.	3.42	1.04	Cognitive
10	I say or write new English words several times.	3.37	.90	Cognitive
29	If I cannot think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	3.15	.96	Compensation
1	I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.	3.09	.85	Memory
32	I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	3.08	.97	Metacognitive

Table 3 shows the least frequently used learning strategy items, including items 43, 7, 49, 14, and 17. The mean scores ranged from 2.23 to 2.34. They were all in the low-use range, but mostly in different categories. Participants in the current study presented a reluctant use of affective strategy item 43, likely due to the influence of a cultural component on strategy use. It has been reported that learners of Chinese ethnic background have a disinclination to use affective strategies (Wharton, 2000).

TABLE 3.
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE FIVE LEAST FREQUENTLY USED LEARNING STRATEGIES

Strategy No.	Strategy	Mean	SD	Strategy Category
43	I write down my feelings in a language learning journal.	2.23	.98	Affective
7	I physically act out new English words.	2.26	.84	Memory
49	I ask questions in English.	2.33	.96	Social
14	I start conversation in English.	2.34	.92	Cognitive
17	I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.	2.34	.98	Cognitive

B. Relationship between Strategy Use and Leaner Academic Self-concept

To explore the relationships between strategy use and ASC, correlation analysis was performed on the full sample. Finding the predictor relationship will ultimately assist teachers to help students promote strategy use and to use strategies properly. As shown in Table 4, all of the related variables were significantly and positively correlated. The results establish that students with better positive ASC had higher use of strategies in the language learning process. All strategies in the six categories had moderate correlation coefficients with the important affective variable. Among all

strategy categories, metacognitive and cognitive strategies were consistently found to have the highest correlations with ASC (.646 and .645, respectively), while compensation strategies had the lowest correlation with ASC (.444). It is, therefore, important for language instructors to promote both the use of metacognitive and cognitive strategies to consolidate ASC.

TABLE 4.
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN STRATEGY USE, MOTIVATION, AND ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPT FOR THE FULL SAMPLE

Strategy Category	ASC		
	Confidence	Effort	Overall
Memory	.503**	.586**	.611**
Cognitive	.563**	.591**	.646**
Compensation	.412**	.383**	.444**
Metacognitive	.509**	.638**	.645**
Affective	.461**	.526**	.554**
Social	.507**	.564**	.601**
Overall	**.570****	**.636****	**.676****

Note. ASC = Academic Self-Concept; Confidence = Academic Confidence; Effort = Academic Effort
** $p < .01$

It should also be noted that both components of ASC, academic confidence and effort, are highly related to overall strategy use. However, among the two components of ASC, effort was more highly related to overall strategy use (.636) than academic confidence (.570). Overall, the correlation between frequency of strategy use and ASC was at the higher end of a medium range (.676).

C. Differences in LLSU by Different Degree of Positive Academic Self-concept

In order to more closely examine the strategy use of students who have different degree of positive ASC, subjects were grouped into three ASC levels according to their scores on the ASC scale. Students grouped into the high and low ASC levels accounted for about 25% on each end of the score distribution while the medium ASC level students accounted for about 50% of the total score distribution. The means and standard deviations of each of the six strategy categories were calculated for each group and the findings are reported in Table 5.

As shown in Table 5, for those with the most positive ASC, the most often used language strategy was metacognitive strategy (mean = 3.35). Cognitive and compensation were the next two most frequently used strategies. Compensation strategy was the most often used strategy by students grouped into the medium level (mean = 2.91) or low ASC level (mean = 2.52), followed by metacognitive and cognitive strategies.

TABLE 5.
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS INDICATING STRATEGY USE OF THE SAMPLE BY DIFFERENT DEGREE OF POSITIVE ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPT

Strategy Category	Low ASC		Medium ASC		High ASC	
	Rank Order	Mean	Rank Order	Mean	Rank Order	Mean
Memory	5	2.19	4	2.74	4	3.12
Cognitive	3	2.31	3	2.83	2	3.27
Compensation	1	2.52	1	2.91	3	3.27
Metacognitive	2	2.26	2	2.86	1	3.35
Affective	4	2.23	5	2.72	5	3.18
Social	6	1.94	6	2.63	6	3.07
Overall		2.25		2.80		3.22

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed on (1) the overall strategy scores, (2) the strategy category scores, and (3) individual item scores to investigate whether there were significant differences in strategy use by students at three different levels of perceived ASC (see Table 6). The findings established that differences in either the overall strategy scores or the six categories scores were highly significant among students of different ASC levels. Post hoc tests showed that students with high ASC level had significantly higher frequency of strategy use than those with medium ASC level. Similarly, students with medium ASC level had significantly higher frequency of strategy use than those with low ASC level.

TABLE 6.
MANOVA TEST RESULTS OF DIFFERENCES IN THE STRATEGY SCORES BY STUDENTS AT DIFFERENT DEGREE OF POSITIVE ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPT

Source	Dependent Variable	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
ASC	Memory	18.95	2	9.47	31.27	.000**
	Cognitive	19.96	2	9.98	38.15	.000**
	Compensation	12.13	2	6.07	18.03	.000**
	Metacognitive	25.87	2	12.94	38.90	.000**
	Affective	19.26	2	9.63	28.02	.000**
	Social	28.50	2	14.25	36.34	.000**
	Overall	20.53	2	10.26	46.48	.000**

** $p < .01$

The most frequently used strategy items for students at different levels of positive ASC are reported in Table 7. Strategy Item (SI) 15 of watching English TV shows and movies and SI 10 of writing new English words several times were the most used strategy items by the research participants. The participants depended on English TV and movies to compensate the lack of native English speakers in the research site, a university located in the rural area in central Taiwan. Repeatedly writing or saying unfamiliar words was the second most used SI among the participants, in line with a study of Korean students who often used this SI to facilitate their English language learning (Lee and Oxford, 2008).

Further analysis of item scores indicated that for students at different levels of positive ASC, the only three items that did not have significant differences included items 15, 26, and 42 (see Table 8). Such lack of significant differences can be recognized by the fact that, for any one of these three items, most participants tended to either employ it or not to employ it in a similar way.

TABLE 7.
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE FIVE MOST FREQUENTLY USED LEARNING STRATEGIES BY STUDENTS OF DIFFERENT DEGREE OF POSITIVE ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPT

ASC Level	Strategy No.	Strategy Item	Rank Order	Mean	SD	Strategy Category
Low						
	15	I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.	1	3.28	1.10	Cognitive
	10	I say or write new English words several times.	2	3.21	1.17	Cognitive
	42	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.	3	2.84	1.27	Affective
	24	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.	4	2.77	.92	Compensation
	28	I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.	5	2.74	1.03	Compensation
	29	If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	5	2.74	1.16	Compensation
Medium						
	15	I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.	1	3.35	1.05	Cognitive
	10	I say or write new English words several times.	2	3.29	.76	Cognitive
	29	If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	3	3.15	.80	Compensation
	32	I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	4	3.11	.84	Metacognitive
	12	I practice the sounds of English.	5	3.11	.75	Cognitive
High						
	15	I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.	1	3.67	.94	Cognitive
	10	I say or write new English words several times.	1	3.67	.78	Cognitive
	32	I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	2	3.65	.65	Metacognitive
	12	I practice the sounds of English.	3	3.63	.87	Cognitive
	24	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.	4	3.60	.69	Compensation
	38	I think about my progress in learning English.	4	3.60	.73	Metacognitive
	29	If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	5	3.53	.85	Compensation

TABLE 8.
MEANS OF STRATEGY ITEMS THAT DID NOT SHOW SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES

Strategy No.	Strategy	M	F	Sig.	Strategy Category
15	I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.	1.88	1.76	.18	Cognitive
26	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	1.84	1.95	.15	Compensation
42	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.	1.60	1.76	.18	Affective

V. CONCLUSION

The current study revealed that ASC is highly and positively correlated with LLSU of all six strategy categories. Significant relationship between 50 language learning strategy items and ASC was also detected while only three particular SIs indicated no significance with ASC. The compensation strategy category is the most used SC and social is the least. Compensation strategies are much needed for learners to overcome any gaps in the knowledge of the target language (TL) (Oxford, 1990; Magno, 2010) and enable learners to guess the unfamiliar TL items they encountered (Yang, 2007). The positive relationship between ASC and LLSU revealed in this study encourages English instructors to provide positive stimulation to learners to consolidate their TL learning regardless their previous English learning experience or outcome.

It is important that language instructors strive to develop students' own metacognition which will facilitate them to choose the most appropriate strategies for a given task (Chamot, 2004). It is important for learners to learn specific strategy items that have been identified in research. They need to learn how to use strategies that are found to be effective for the tasks they are required to accomplish and sustain in their TL.

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Which One Is the Most Dangerous: a Lion, the Lion, or Lions? A Study on the Acquisition of Generic Reference by Persian Learners

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Abstract—**An interesting area in second language acquisition research is the way the concept of generic reference is expressed in different languages. This study examines the role of the article system in the expression of generic noun phrases in English and focuses on the problems Persian learners face. Analysis of the performance of Persian learners at three levels of proficiency on a grammaticality judgment task and comparing it with that of the native control group shows that Persian learners of English at the advanced level of grammatical knowledge display a native-like knowledge of English generic constructions that include bare plurals or the indefinite NPs. They are, however, unable to show the same knowledge in definite generic constructions. It is discussed that this failure can be traced to be resulted from a strong L1 transfer effect.**

Index Terms—**English article system, acquisition, definiteness, genericity, L1 transfer**

I. INTRODUCTION

Being a teacher of English, one would often hear students complain about the difficulty they face when dealing with the English article system. This difficulty is also experienced and reported by educators as well as researchers in the field (McEldowney, 1977; Master, 1987; Krol-Markefka, 2008; Pashazade & Marefat, 2010 to name just a few). As a result, abundant research exists on different aspects of the article system such as acquisition and pedagogy. However, looking through the bulk of research, one can easily figure out that most studies have so far concentrated on how articles, especially in English, are used to express in/definiteness or, more recently, the concept of specificity (Ionin, 2003; Hawkins et al., 2006; Avery & Radisic, 2007; Hedberg et al., 2009; Atay, 2010).

It is, however, known that articles are also used to express the concept of 'genericity' in English. By definition, a generic noun phrase does not refer to a special or specific entity and so includes all the members of a class. That's why such noun phrases are specified as 'kind-referring' expressions. However, the literature on the article system in relation to the concept of genericity is not as rich as it is on the other aspects of article use. Moreover, most such studies have focused on the semantics of generic sentences or their features in discourse (Carlson, 1980; Carlson & Pelletier, 2002; Juvan, 2005).

This study, in turn, was motivated by a desire to add to the existing literature on the generic reference in relation to the article system. In the following section, a review of studies on second language acquisition of generic reference in English is presented which is followed by a description of how generic reference is expressed in English and Persian. The fourth section provides information on the methodology of the study. The results of the study are presented in part five and then are discussed in part six. The last section concludes the study and presents some pedagogical implications.

II. GENERICITY IN L2 ACQUISITION

Snape et al. (2009) are truly right when they claim that 'little research has been conducted on the L2 acquisition of generic reference'. Most studies in the past three decades have focused on areas of article use other than the generic reference. Such studies have centered on article omission or misuse, access to semantic universals, or cognitive strategies. A few have also focused on pedagogical issues.

One piece of recent research to consult is Perez-Leroux et al. (2004). They investigated the acquisition of generic reference by L1 Spanish children learning English. They only considered bare plural generics in their study since in Spanish both bare plurals and definite plurals can have a generic sense but in English definite plurals cannot be interpreted as 'kind-referring'. They assumed that the definite article is semantically the same in both languages but in English the bare plural blocks the definite plural generic. They predicted that children in both languages would allow

generic interpretations of the definite plural but to different degrees. In other words, the rate of acceptance of generic interpretations for the definite plural nouns would not be identical for both languages. Such interpretations would be fewer for English definite plurals. As for the results, their L1 Spanish subjects showed a 100% preference for the generic reading of definite plurals in English, as they had predicted. The English children showed a reliable discrimination between definites and bare plurals. Nevertheless, they produced high rates of definite generic errors in their L1. The study concluded with highlighting the role of the first language in second language acquisition.

Another study on the generic use of articles is Ionin & Montrul's (2009). Like the previous study, they examined L2 acquisition of generic reference with bare plurals. Their subjects were from an article-less language (Korean) learning English as a foreign language. For an article-less language like Korean, the choice between bare and definite plural generics does not arise. A bare plural typically has a generic reference. It can also have a specific reference when used anaphorically. They hypothesized that L1 Korean learners would, like L1 Spanish learners, overuse definite plurals for generic reference, a hypothesis which was supported by the study. A truth value judgment task and an acceptability judgment task were used to elicit data from the adult Korean participants. As expected, the learners were target-like in accepting definite plurals with a specific interpretation and bare plurals with a generic interpretation, but were for the most part unable to reject bare plurals with a specific interpretation. The researchers, then, presented patterns of transfer from Korean which had caused the wrong interpretation of definite plurals.

The last study to be mentioned here is Snape et al. (2009). They chose learners of English from a variety of language backgrounds (Spanish, Turkish, Japanese, and Chinese) to see the effect of first language on the second language acquisition of generic noun phrases in English. The variety of L1s in their study was significant because the four languages all differed to English. In Spanish, articles are obligatory so both definite and indefinite singular/plural nouns can be interpreted as generic. This is in contrast with English in which definite plural nouns cannot be interpreted as generic. Japanese and Chinese do not have an article system. There is also no count/mass distinction in such languages. In short, bare nominals are used; singular nouns can be interpreted as generic in appropriate context; and plural nouns cannot be interpreted as generic. Turkish has no article system either but there are three ways to express genericity in Turkish: plural nouns, unmarked phrases, and *bir*-phrases. A forced choice elicitation task was used as the instrument. The results were as the researchers had expected. Their Spanish subjects were much more successful than the others because Spanish is a [+article] language like English but as the writers had predicted, Spanish learners at lower levels of proficiency had problems in bare plural cases due to persistent L1 transfer. Again, L1 transfer helped Turkish learners do well in indefinite singular contexts but the definite singular context was problematic for them as Turkish does not have a definite article. This again pointed to a strong L1 transfer effect. Japanese learners overused 'the' in indefinite and plural contexts since bare plurals do not exist in their L1. And finally, Chinese learners produced omission and substitution errors in all singular contexts. Like Japanese, Chinese learners substituted 'the' in bare plural contexts. What this study comes to in the end is that L1 does have a strong influence on the L2 acquisition of English articles.

III. GENERICITY IN ENGLISH AND PERSIAN

Before presenting the study, it is necessary to provide a sketch of generic noun phrases in English and Persian. Genericity is a shared concept in both languages but its realization is somewhat different.

A. Generic Noun Phrases in English

There is a general consensus that the concept of genericity in English can be expressed in three ways:
a. Definite article + singular NP: *The beaver* builds dams.
b. Indefinite article + singular NP: *A beaver* builds dams.
c. Zero article + plural NP: *Beavers* build dams.
It must, of course, be added that for non-count nouns in a generic sense, zero article is used. For example:
d. Zero article + mass NP: *Chocolate* is the major ingredient for most kinds of cakes.
In their article, Smɑ́dska and Rusiecki (1980) discuss differing views on the three types of genericity in English. Whereas a few researchers believe that the above mentioned three forms are the same and, in fact, interchangeable (Robbins, 1970), there are some who believe the forms are not interchangeable and denote different meanings (Quirk et al., 1972; Langendoen, 1970). Also, in most books and research articles that are written on the concept of the generic noun phrase, the examples that are given all show generic NPs in subject position. Examples including generic nouns as object of the sentence are not usually provided. The reason might be that in object position, the three forms of generic nouns are not obviously interchangeable. An example is given below:
1. I don't like dogs.
It would obviously be odd to use the alternative forms of generic NPs for the noun in question (dogs). This seems to support those who believe that the forms are not interchangeable. This line of discussion is not, however, more elaborately presented here as it is not of interest to this study. The present study is based on the concept of generic noun phrases as "kind-referring expressions" that do not refer to a specific referent.

B. Generic Noun Phrases in Persian

The concept of genericity is stated in two ways:

   e. Bare singular NP: shotor   behtærin   væsileh bæraye sæfær dær biyaban æst.
                            camel best-superlative means for travel in desert is.
                            "The camel is the best means for travelling in the desert."
   f. Bare plural NP: golha   be nur ehtiyaj darænd.
                            flower-plural to light need   have-3rd plural
                            "Flowers need light."

Two points are worth attention with regard to the generic NPs in Persian. First, bare plural NPs are not necessarily generic. A bare plural NP can also be interpreted as definite based on the context. An example would clarify the point:

   2. bache-ha   gol   dust darænd.
      child-plural flower like have-3rd plural
      "Children like flowers."

The above sentence would be interpreted as generic. But it is quite common for the speaker to refer to his/her own children in which case the resulting NP would be definite and the equivalent English translation would be "The children like flowers". It is the context, then, which determines the appropriate interpretation of the NP.

   Second, bare plural NPs cannot be used interchangeably with bare singular NPs in all contexts. As an example:

   3. diruz   bærash gol   xaridæm.
      yesterday for-her flower buy-1st singular
      "I bought flowers for her yesterday."

The generic bare singular NP in this sentence (gol) cannot be substituted with its bare plural form:

   4. *diruz bærash gol-ha xaridæm.
      *yesterday for-her flower-plural buy-1st singular
      *"I bought flowers for her yesterday."

Although the English equivalent would be correct, this not the way it is in Persian. In other words, there are restrictions on the use of bare singular/plural generic nouns in Persian.

   Clearly, there are differences between the two languages. For one thing, the first type of generic NP in English that is listed above (definite singular nouns) is not found in Persian due to the fact that there is no equivalent to the English definite article. For another, an NP that is marked by the indefinite article (which is overtly realized in Persian) cannot be interpreted as generic under any circumstances. In other words, the second type of English generic construction that is listed above is impossible in Persian. The only point of similarity that can be observed between the two languages is the third type of generic construction. Bare plurals can be used in a generic sense in both Persian and English. So, in Persian, only bare singular nouns and bare plural nouns can be interpreted as generic.

IV. THE PRESENT STUDY

   Considering the EFL context in which Persian learners study English and the differences in the expression of generic reference in English and Persian, the present study seeks answers to the following questions:

A. Research Questions

   √ Can Persian learners arrive at a native like knowledge of genericity in English as a foreign language?
   √ In which type of generic noun phrases in English do such learners have more problems?

B. Method

   Participants. Forty three Iranian learners and teachers of English at Sheikhbahaee University took part in the present study. Initially, they took the Oxford Placement Test (2011) based on which their level of grammatical knowledge was determined and three groups of grammatical proficiency were identified. In the highly advanced group, learners and teachers who could score 55-60 on the OPT were placed. They had an age range of 25-40. This group included 11 people. The intermediate group consisted of those participants who could score 40-45 on the OPT. They were 14 in number and 19-27 years old. The elementary group included 18 participants who scored 25-30 on the placement test. They had the same age range as the intermediate group. The researchers preferred to include bigger gaps between groups than is considered in the original OPT manual because we wanted to make sure that the groups truly belonged to different levels of L2 knowledge. Fifteen native speakers were also included in the study as the control group. They were 9 males and 6 females and aged 8-34. They all were originally Americans having lived in their home county all their lives.

   Instrument. The measurement in the present study was a grammaticality judgment test. Each item on the test included two sentences the first of which provided the necessary context for the interpretation of the second one. The noun phrase in question was placed in the second sentence. The participants were asked to determine if the second sentence was correct or not in the context of the first. They were also asked to correct the second sentence in case they thought it were wrong. An example item is given below:

   2. Whenever I lose something, my dog finds it for me. *Dogs* are very intelligent. √   *   ?

The test included 56 items 28 of which were of interest to this study. The rest of the items tested other uses of articles (definite, indefinite) and also other aspects of grammar (tense for example) and were included to distract learners' attention from the point being tested. The following table represents the GJ make-up:

TABLE I.
TYPES OF GENERIC SENTENCES ON THE GJ TEST

Test category	Target article	Example
Bare plural, Correct	Ø	Whenever I lose something, my dog finds it for me. *Dogs* are very intelligent.
Definite plural, Incorrect	Ø	Allan has a farm. He grows *the cabbages* there.
Definite singular, Correct	the	Many people like to have pets. But just a few of them keep *the snake* as a pet.
Indefinite singular, Correct	a	The sense of smell is very strong in animals. However, *a dog* has a stronger sense of hearing than smelling.
Bare singular, Incorrect	the/a	People have changed the way they spend their free time. Today, you can find *television* in every house.
Bare mass, Correct	Ø	What would you like best for dessert? Oh, I prefer *ice cream* to the rest.
Definite mass, Incorrect	Ø	Do you know what the most common food in Asia is? I think it is *the bread*.

Data collection and analysis. Data collection took two weeks. The first test to be run was the placement test (OPT) and the participants took the GJ test in the following week. On the GJ test, each correct answer was worth one score and each incorrect one was given a zero score. Also, for each incorrect item on the test, only if the participant had circled '*' and supplied the right answer, s/he was scored 'one'. To put it differently, just circling '*' was not enough to indicate that the sentence was wrong and that the participant necessarily knew which part of the sentence made it ungrammatical. For the correct answers as well, the participants had to mark '√' to merit a 'one' score. They weren't granted any scores if they had left the sentence intact. And the intact sentences were dismissed when scoring.

The coded data was submitted to the Statistical Packages in Social Sciences (SPSS, 16.0) software for the purpose of analysis. For each category on the test, the mean percentage for each individual participant and later for each proficiency group was calculated. Since there were four groups of participants and one independent variable, one-way between groups ANOVA was performed as the proper statistical procedure to see if inter-group differences existed with regard to the feature in question (genericity).

V. RESULTS

To arrive at an answer to the first research question, the participants' performance on the generic items of the test was checked and compared with the native control group. Among the three proficiency groups, the participants were not the same. Furthermore, their performance was quite different from that of the native speakers. This can be observed in Fig. 1.
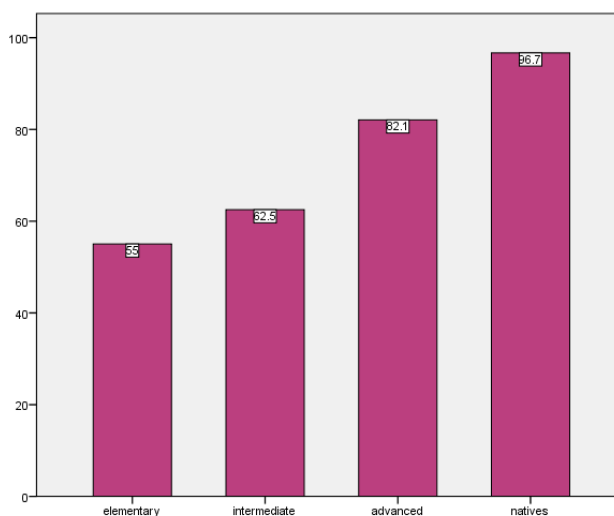
Figure 1. Generic items on the GJ test

One way analysis of variance showed that the difference among the groups was significant at 0.05 level. (Table II)

TABLE II.
ANOVA RESULTS FOR THE GENERIC ITEMS ON THE GJ TEST

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	15494.283	3	5164.761	55.111	.000
Within Groups	4873.194	52	93.715		
Total	20367.477	55			

Further, the Scheffe post-hoc test (Appendix A) revealed that the elementary and the intermediate groups were not significantly different but that the difference in performance was observed to be significant between the native control group and the other proficiency groups. In other words, the highly advanced group did in fact outperform the lower proficiency groups but still could not conform to the native speaker norm.

For the second research question, the generic items on the test were sorted out and classified into the original three groups. Fig. 2 depicts how the participants performed on each item type.
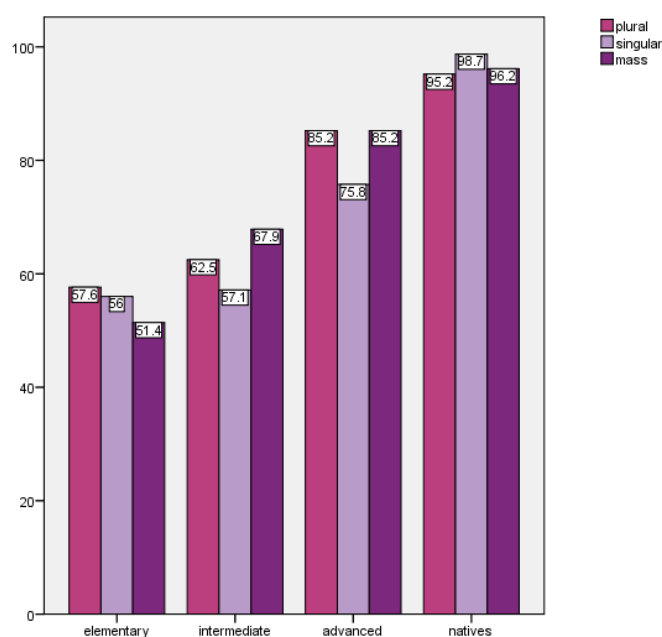
Figure 2. Types of generic nouns

Again, one-way ANOVA pointed to significant differences among groups in all three types of generic nouns. (Table III)

TABLE III.
ANOVA RESULTS FOR PERFORMANCE ON GENERIC TYPES

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
plural	Between Groups	13837.892	3	4612.631	24.370	.000
	Within Groups	9842.354	52	189.276		
	Total	23680.246	55			
singular	Between Groups	16918.526	3	5639.509	27.434	.000
	Within Groups	10689.361	52	205.565		
	Total	27607.887	55			
mass	Between Groups	17379.272	3	5793.091	23.623	.000
	Within Groups	12751.866	52	245.228		
	Total	30131.138	55			

Using a post-hoc Scheffe test (Appendix B), it was observed that the Persian learners did display a native-like knowledge on bare plural generics and mass generics at the highly advanced level. At the lower proficiency levels, the situation was not so. The elementary and the intermediate learners could not do as well as the advanced group or the natives. The other category, that of singular generics, was problematic even for the advanced group and a significant difference existed between them and the native control group.

It seemed, therefore, that the singular generic noun phrases were the source of problem for Persian learners since they could finally display a good-enough knowledge of the other two types (bare plural and mass generic NPs). Looking more closely at the two types of singular generics (Table IV) revealed that Persian learners were not different from the

control group in their performance on recognizing the correct indefinite singular nouns. But the one-way analysis of variance detected a significant difference among the groups in their recognition of the correct definite singular nouns on the test.

TABLE IV.
ANOVA RESULTS FOR PERFORMANCE ON SINGULAR GENERIC NOUNS

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
definite	Between Groups	9469.359	3	3156.453	5.540	.002
	Within Groups	29626.623	52	569.743		
	Total	39095.982	55			
indefinite	Between Groups	1741.349	3	580.450	1.657	.188
	Within Groups	18214.008	52	350.269		
	Total	19955.357	55			

Results from a Scheffe post-hoc test showed that the difference was significant between the control group on the one hand, and the intermediate and advanced groups on the other (Appendix C). It was revealed then, that the major obstacle the Persian learners in this study facing was the definite article. So, the participants did, in fact, accept the indefinite singular nouns as kind-referring in the contexts provided in the test but did not do so for the definite singular nouns. Fig. 3 helps with the visualization.
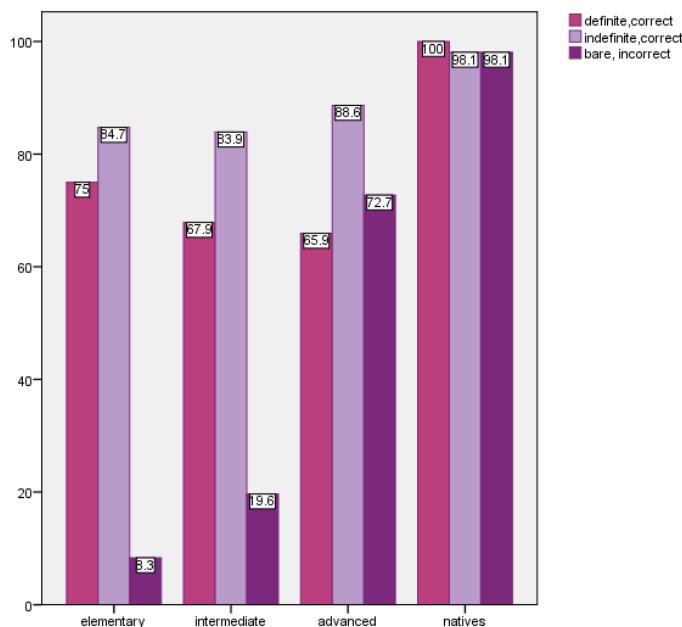
Figure 3. Singular generic noun phrases

One can see, also, that learners at all the three levels did not display a good ability to correct the incorrect items. At the elementary level, they were literally unable to make any corrections as 92% of such incorrect sentences were accepted as correct. Although learners improved at higher levels, there was still a long distance between the advanced learners and the natives. Analyzing the corrections such learners had made showed that they preferred zero article and indefinite article to definite article in their corrections. The following table shows how the advanced group supplied the needed article in the incorrect sentences. We focused on the advanced participants since few corrections had been made by the other two proficiency groups. There were four incorrect sentences on the test.

TABLE V.
ARTICLE SUPPLEMENT BY THE ADVANCED GROUP

			supplied article	
No	correct answers (%)	Ø + plural NP	The + NP	A + NP
1	91	80%	20%	0
2	64	0	0	100%
3	91	60%	10%	30%
4	45	0	0	100%

It is interesting to notice that the advanced learners preferred to change the whole sentence into plural form (so they had to pluralize the noun and consequently change the original singular verb) in order to use the bare plural as expressing the intended generic meaning.

VI. DISCUSSION

The participants in this study showed some progress in the use of articles with generic nouns as their proficiency increased (Fig. 1); but their performance was not still as good as the native speakers in the control group. Even at the highly advanced level of grammatical knowledge, Persian learners could not be said to have arrived at a native-like knowledge of English generic nouns and, so, the answer to the first research question was negative.

It was explained above that generic NPs are not marked with any articles in Persian. Bare singular or plural nouns are used in the generic sense. It can be said, therefore, that although the concept of 'genericity' in English is tied up with that of 'number' and 'definiteness', in Persian it is just tied up with 'number'. So, if one can claim that all three features in question (genericity, definiteness, number) exist in both languages, one would expect learner problems to be of a different nature other than acquisition.

Learners in this study had a native-like performance on generic bare plural and generic mass NPs but only at the advanced level. It would have been quite reasonable to expect such good performance at the elementary and intermediate levels as well since the same constructions are used in Persian. The question remains as to why learners, having acquired those features in their L1, did not show such mastery in lower levels of proficiency (Fig. 2). Analysis of their test results showed that the elementary and intermediate learners were almost perfectly able to recognize the correct sentences containing a generic bare plural noun phrase (94%) or a generic mass noun phrase (80%). That's because they are expressed exactly alike in the two languages. Such noun phrases are preceded by a zero article in English as well as Persian. Their low performance compared with the advanced and the control groups, then, was due to their inability to recognize and correct the wrong sentences on the test. Such sentences included NPs like [the + plural noun] or [the + mass noun]. This showed that learners in our study did not know, at that level of proficiency, that a definite article could not be used with a plural or mass noun when they were to be interpreted as generic. In other words, such learners had not yet learned the functions and interpretations of the definite article in English. If they had, they would have known that a construction like [the+ mass noun] would be interpreted as 'definite' and not 'generic'. So they continued to use 'the' for all types of nouns without knowing the difference it could make.

Looking at Fig. 3 above, some points are worth attention. First, as learners grammatical knowledge developed, they showed a tendency to reject definite singular nouns in their generic interpretation more often though the rate of acceptance was perfect (100%) for the control group. Analysis of the advanced learners' answers on the test showed that when they considered such noun phrases as wrong, they had three options: they preferred a zero article to be used with the singular noun (30%) which is exactly how such nouns would be used in Persian, hence a direct L1 transfer effect. In other times, they supplied the indefinite article instead of the definite one (27%) or used a bare plural (7%). This use of the indefinite article for generic nouns shows that even advanced learners in our study did not know that the definite article can also convey genericity for singular nouns.

Second, learners highly accepted the indefinite article accompanying singular generic nouns from low levels of knowledge. This can be interpreted as showing that when genericity is concerned, using an indefinite article with a singular noun is far more acceptable for Persian learners than using a definite article to show the same concept. The second one takes them a much longer time to learn.

Third, as their level of grammatical knowledge developed, learners showed a better knowledge of generic NPs in English as they were better able to correct the incorrect sentences on the test. Those sentences included a bare singular noun. The very low levels of corrections at the elementary level (9%) and the intermediate level (20%) point to a strong transfer effect for such learners. This effect was still powerful enough to mislead the advanced students since they accepted a good proportion of such sentences as correct (27%) which made them different from the native speakers on the test. When the advanced learners made corrections, they preferred the indefinite article (45%) to the definite article (7%) or the bare plural form (20%). This, again, points to our conclusion earlier that the generic use of 'a' is far sooner learned than that of 'the'.

VII. CONCLUSION

The participants in this study did not show the capability to match up to the native control participants in their recognition and production of generic noun phrases in English. Analyzing their performance on different types of the generic noun phrase, it was revealed that they had a good knowledge of bare plural NPs and indefinite NPs in the generic sense that enabled them to ultimately conform to the norm of the native speakers once they were at the very advanced level of grammatical proficiency. The same highly advanced learners had; however, a very impoverished knowledge of generic singular NPs. Further analysis of their performance revealed that these learners had serious problems in recognition and production of definite singular NPs in generic sentences. L1 transfer effects were considered responsible for such deficiency in learners' knowledge.

It is a well known fact among Persian researchers and teachers that Persian learners have many more problems with the definite article 'the' in English than with the indefinite article. While previous research on the English articles in Iran has almost entirely focused on the concept of 'definiteness' expressed by 'the', this study adds to the literature useful information about the fact that 'the' is also problematic for learning the concept of genericity as well.

The results of this research might hopefully shed some light on such corners of grammatical knowledge that seem to have been neglected by practitioners for so long. Knowing that very few proficient learners and even teachers are aware of uses of 'the' other than 'for expressing definite objects' is a warning to those who would wish to improve the quality of teaching English in language classes. We believe that once the problematic part is pinpointed, many suggestions can easily be made and tested in practice (consciousness raising tasks, implicit techniques, et) to heighten our knowledge in this important aspect of article use in English.

APPENDIX A. SCHEFFE RESULTS FOR PERFORMANCE ON [+GENERIC] NOUNS

(I) proficiency groups	(J) proficiency groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
elementary	intermediate	-7.485	3.450	.208	-17.45	2.48
	advanced	-27.055*	3.705	.000	-37.76	-16.35
	natives	-41.673*	3.524	.000	-51.85	-31.49
intermediate	elementary	7.485	3.450	.208	-2.48	17.45
	advanced	-19.571*	3.900	.000	-30.84	-8.30
	natives	-34.188*	3.729	.000	-44.96	-23.42
advanced	elementary	27.055*	3.705	.000	16.35	37.76
	intermediate	19.571*	3.900	.000	8.30	30.84
	natives	-14.617*	3.966	.007	-26.08	-3.16
natives	elementary	41.673*	3.524	.000	31.49	51.85
	intermediate	34.188*	3.729	.000	23.42	44.96
	advanced	14.617*	3.966	.007	3.16	26.08
*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.						

APPENDIX B. SCHEFFE RESULTS FOR PERFORMANCE ON THREE TYPES OF [+GENERIC] NOUNS

Dependent Variable	(I) proficiency groups	(J) proficiency groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
plural	elementary	intermediate	-4.861	4.903	.805	-19.03	9.30
		advanced	-27.588*	5.265	.000	-42.80	-12.38
		natives	-37.553*	5.007	.000	-52.02	-23.09
	intermediate	elementary	4.861	4.903	.805	-9.30	19.03
		advanced	-22.727*	5.543	.002	-38.74	-6.71
		natives	-32.692*	5.299	.000	-48.00	-17.38
	advanced	elementary	27.588*	5.265	.000	12.38	42.80
		intermediate	22.727*	5.543	.002	6.71	38.74
		natives	-9.965	5.636	.382	-26.25	6.32
	natives	elementary	37.553*	5.007	.000	23.09	52.02
		intermediate	32.692*	5.299	.000	17.38	48.00
		advanced	9.965	5.636	.382	-6.32	26.25
singular	elementary	intermediate	-1.124	5.109	.997	-15.89	13.64
		advanced	-19.739*	5.487	.009	-35.59	-3.89
		natives	-42.699*	5.219	.000	-57.78	-27.62
	intermediate	elementary	1.124	5.109	.997	-13.64	15.89
		advanced	-18.615*	5.777	.023	-35.31	-1.92
		natives	-41.575*	5.522	.000	-57.53	-25.62
	advanced	elementary	19.739*	5.487	.009	3.89	35.59
		intermediate	18.615*	5.777	.023	1.92	35.31
		natives	-22.960*	5.874	.004	-39.93	-5.99
	natives	elementary	42.699*	5.219	.000	27.62	57.78
		intermediate	41.575*	5.522	.000	25.62	57.53
		advanced	22.960*	5.874	.004	5.99	39.93
mass	elementary	intermediate	-16.468*	5.580	.043	-32.59	-.35
		advanced	-33.838*	5.993	.000	-51.15	-16.52
		natives	-44.765*	5.700	.000	-61.23	-28.30
	intermediate	elementary	16.468*	5.580	.043	.35	32.59
		advanced	-17.370	6.309	.068	-35.60	.86
		natives	-28.297*	6.032	.000	-45.72	-10.87
	advanced	elementary	33.838*	5.993	.000	16.52	51.15
		intermediate	17.370	6.309	.068	-.86	35.60
		natives	-10.927	6.415	.415	-29.46	7.61
	natives	elementary	44.765*	5.700	.000	28.30	61.23
		intermediate	28.297*	6.032	.000	10.87	45.72
		advanced	10.927	6.415	.415	-7.61	29.46
*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.							

APPENDIX C. SCHEFFE RESULTS FOR PERFORMANCE ON SINGULAR GENERIC NOUNS

Dependent Variable	(I) proficiency groups	(J) proficiency groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
definite	elementary	intermediate	7.143	8.506	.872	-17.43	31.72
		advanced	9.091	9.135	.804	-17.30	35.48
		natives	-25.000	8.688	.051	-50.10	.10
	intermediate	elementary	-7.143	8.506	.872	-31.72	17.43
		advanced	1.948	9.617	.998	-25.84	29.73
		natives	-32.143*	9.194	.011	-58.71	-5.58
	advanced	elementary	-9.091	9.135	.804	-35.48	17.30
		intermediate	-1.948	9.617	.998	-29.73	25.84
		natives	-34.091*	9.779	.012	-62.34	-5.84
	natives	elementary	25.000	8.688	.051	-.10	50.10
		intermediate	32.143*	9.194	.011	5.58	58.71
		advanced	34.091*	9.779	.012	5.84	62.34
indefinite	elementary	intermediate	.794	6.669	1.000	-18.48	20.06
		advanced	-3.914	7.163	.960	-24.61	16.78
		natives	-13.355	6.812	.291	-33.04	6.33
	intermediate	elementary	-.794	6.669	1.000	-20.06	18.48
		advanced	-4.708	7.541	.942	-26.49	17.08
		natives	-14.148	7.209	.290	-34.98	6.68
	advanced	elementary	3.914	7.163	.960	-16.78	24.61
		intermediate	4.708	7.541	.942	-17.08	26.49
		natives	-9.441	7.667	.680	-31.59	12.71
	natives	elementary	13.355	6.812	.291	-6.33	33.04
		intermediate	14.148	7.209	.290	-6.68	34.98
		advanced	9.441	7.667	.680	-12.71	31.59
*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.							

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Interactive Theoretical Model of Text Processing Reflected in Reading Comprehension: An Experimental Study

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Abstract—Basing on the interactive model of comprehension and learning, this study investigated the teaching of text structure among EFL Iranian students and its effects on their reading comprehension. It was designed with the assumption that readers who already have the knowledge of the organizational patterns of text will be aware of text structure and will use it as a strategy to comprehension. Therefore the use of text structure, or the structure strategy, will enhance their comprehension and learning from text. Fifty six students of intermediate level, divided into two groups of control and experimental, participated in this study. Students attempted a pre and a post reading comprehension tests before and after the training procedure which involved an extra treatment on rhetorical structures for the experimental group. The performance of these two groups was compared using t-test. Study results revealed that experimental students who employed text structure had significantly higher performance on the multiple choice reading comprehension questions than those who did not receive any training on text structure. This indicates that the knowledge of text structure may have facilitated their comprehension and learning from text. Therefore, the explicit teaching of expository text structure knowledge and the effective use of structure strategy could be inserted in the instructional program of second/foreign language learners.

Index Terms—expository texts, formal schema, interactive model, schema theory, structure strategy, text structure

I. INTRODUCTION

"Education is carried out, primarily, through the reading and study of prose text". (Dewalt, Rhyne-Winkler, & Rubel, 1993, p. 93). This statement emphasizes the main goal of reading: reading texts in order to learning from them. Although students learn from texts, they are unable to learn everything printed on the page because of limited memory capacity. Instead, they have to extract main ideas and ignore less important details (Brown & Smiley, 1978). Therefore it seems that they need to use specific reading strategies to comprehend the text effectively.

Since the information printed on the page is not sufficient for comprehension, the knowledge of the world involving background knowledge of the organizational structures of the reading text plays an essential role in text comprehension. Using text structure, or following the rhetorical organization of text while reading, has been recommended as an important strategy to enhance reading comprehension (Spearritt, 1982). As Carrel (1992) mentioned, the schema theoretic view of reading comprehension is associated with the interactive model: a text does not simply carry meaning in itself; instead, it provides directions for the learner to construct meaning from his/her previously acquired knowledge. This statement has been supported by a large number of researches. These researches emphasized the effects of text structure on the ability of first language readers to reconstruct meaning from texts (Meyer, 1982; Meyer, Brandt & Bluth, 1980; Meyer & Freedle, 1984).

On the other hand, fewer researches have been done to examine the effects of the teaching of text structure on second/foreign language reading comprehension. Regarding the limited number of researches in the area of foreign language reading, it seems reasonable to see if second/foreign language readers can also learn knowledge of how text is organized and use it in the comprehension of textual material. Then it is interesting to ask whether or not the knowledge of text structure enhances their comprehension and learning from texts.

Therefore, the present study was designed specifically to investigate the effect of teaching expository text structure on reading comprehension of Iranian EFL students, as measured by their performance on multiple choice reading comprehension questions. It is hoped that the results will clarify not only the role of text structure in English as a Second or Foreign Language reading comprehension, but also the pedagogical implications of teaching reading to ESL/EFL learners, particularly Iranian students.

Specifically, this study will investigate the effect of teaching expository text structure on reading comprehension of Iranian EFL students, as measured by three reading comprehension tests, each specifies with a special kind of rhetorical

structure. The result may confirm the effective role of text structure knowledge in text comprehension. It is hope that the findings of this study may support the positive role of organizational pattern knowledge in reading ability of ESL/EFL students. To improve reading comprehension of foreign language learners, it seems that language teachers, testers and material developers might need to consider the impact of knowledge of expository text structure in preparing appropriate materials and techniques.

Reading specialists have recognized that identifying the structural organization used by the writer is an effective reading strategy. Readers who are aware of such patterns may better understand what they read. Based on schema theory this study tries to show that the structure of a text and how a reader recognizes that structure affect the amount of information the student remembers. It seems that passages are easier to remember when they have a clear organizational structure with related components. When students have learned what is meant by text structure, they may be ready to learn how to recognize the five common expository structures found in many content materials. So it seems that the knowledge of text organization affects comprehension especially in terms of the identification and recall of the most important information in a text.

Taylor and Samuels (1983) found that a significant percentage of students are unaware of text structure; they do not use structure to understand and remember information from the structured texts. Students who lack specific knowledge about text structure and strategies for using it cannot be as successful in comprehension as those who received instruction on text structure.

Since being able to understand and remember information in texts is important for the English learners as they progress through the grades, it is hope that this research clarifies the important role of text structure knowledge in effective reading. To acquire this knowledge, students need strong teacher involvement. English teachers who are themselves knowledgeable about structure in general and about five common expository text structures in particular will provide their students with a starting point in dealing with content materials successfully.

Well-structured text may enhances recall and comprehension for those who have acquired the knowledge of structure and many studies have shown that instruction designed to teach students to recognize the underlying structure of text improves comprehension. The goal of this instruction is for the reader to internalize the strategy so that its use becomes automatic. Then, in situations in which comprehension is a problem, the strategy can be applied. It involves acquiring knowledge about text and using this knowledge strategically. Regarding the students' difficulties with reading comprehension in general and with text structure in particular, It might be expected that there will be great efforts to provide suitable instruction.

Results from the study might suggest effective reading strategies for Iranian students on the one hand, and guidance for improvement of reading instruction for the teachers, on the other hand. Additionally, the study would contribute to research on the effects of formal schemata on reading comprehension in English as a second/ foreign language.

A large number of first language reading research has revealed that teaching of textual organization affects readers' comprehension of text. For instance, good first language readers are able to use text structure better and write better by using the same rhetorical pattern as that of the author of the text and also they can recall the gist of the text better than do poor readers (Meyer, Brandt, & Bluth, 1980; Richgels, McGee, Lomax & Sheard, 1987). However, little comparable research has been done in second/foreign language reading. Because L1 reading is different from L2 reading, results from L1 reading research may not always be true in L2 contexts (Slater, 1985; Grabe, 1991); therefore, research on readers in second/foreign language contexts is necessary. Among the four language skills, reading seems to be the most important one because students need to use it to acquire the knowledge of English texts. Although Iranian students have learned English as a an essential subject since grade 7 in the school, teachers of English as a foreign language usually encounter with students whom fail to comprehend the English expository texts; however, they have adequate linguistic knowledge of English. In most English reading classes, great emphasis has been placed on teaching the knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical structures, while knowledge of text organization has not received any attention. Then, it is questionable if their difficulty in comprehension can be attributed to the fact that they do not have adequate strategies or skills (Carrell, 1988b), one of which is the structure strategy, to help them read and learn from text. Therefore, the present study has been designed to investigate the impact of teaching expository text structure on the reading comprehension of Iranian EFL students.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The schema theoretic view which is related to interactive model of text processing, claims that any given text does not simply carry meaning in itself. Instead, it provides directions for the learner to construct meaning from his/her previously acquired knowledge (Lee, 1986). At first Kant introduced the idea of back ground knowledge in a way that new information is related to what one already knows. According to interactive model and schema theory in reading, comprehension is the result of matching the existing schema with the new information printed on the page. Therefore in order to interpret a text meaningfully, a reader has to use his/her background knowledge effectively. In other words, it is the interaction between the reader and the text that is the foundation of comprehension (Talbot, 2004). Schema theory can be used in the interactive model of reading which mentions that the background knowledge readers bring to their reading is as important as the information in the text. Text by itself does not carry meaning instead; readers construct meaning from their prior knowledge. Accordingly, research on the effects of schemata on reading comprehension of

English readers has examined in several studies.

Hooshmand (1984) examined the role of schemata in comprehension. Students were presented a passage. Some of the students were told the structure and the content of the passage and others were not. Students who were told about the passage recalled more than students who did not hear that knowledge. The study has shown that when subjects are provided with a schema against which to understand and recall a passage, they perform better than when they are not given such a schema.

In another study, Anderson, Reynolds, Schallet, and Goetz (1977) have found that the reader's familiarity with the text affects reading comprehension. This study took two distinct passages with two different structures. The passages were given to subjects from the physical education department whom were taught different kinds of structures and to subjects from the music department. The results showed that subjects interpreted the texts according to their specialized background knowledge; besides, students of physical education over performed the other group.

In order to understand the role of schema or knowledge of text structure, it is important that the meaning of text structure is defined. The terms text structure, rhetorical structure, or discourse structure refer to the organization of text information (Aebersold & Field, 1997). It can also refer to the organization of ideas in text (Taylor, 1982). It "specifies the logical connections among ideas and the subordination of some ideas to others". (Meyer, 1982, P.39). Moreover, schema theory or text structure guides the author during writing and helps the reader to identify the relationship among ideas in the text (Meyer, 1982; Meyer, Brandt & Bluth, 1980). "Passages that are organized contribute to more efficient learning than those that are randomly organized or disorganized" (Meyer & Freedle, 1984, P.142 cited in Meyer, 1982). According to Meyer (1982), passages can be classified into five basic types of expository prose. These five types are collection, description, causation, problem-solution, and comparison.

There are two opposing views on second language/foreign language reading: reading ability in a second or foreign language is the result of either the proficiency in that language or the reading ability in one's first language (Coady, 1979 cited in Carrell, 1988a). Regarding the latter view, researchers argue that some main skills may be transferred to a second language and may compensate for inadequacies in linguistic skills (Carrell, 1988a). Knowledge of organizational structure has been shown to affect what is comprehended and recalled from a text in L1. Compared to ESL/EFL reading, however, there seems to be lots of researches on the effects of the rhetorical structures of expository prose on comprehension by L1 readers.

Although less research has been done to examine the role of background knowledge of text structure in ESL/EFL reading comprehension, some research studies on ESL/EFL readers have also revealed its facilitative effects on comprehension. Meyer and Freedle's (1984) study investigated the effects of four discourse types of expository prose-comparison, causation, problem/solution, and collection of descriptions-on the recalls of native readers of English and found that the more organized discourse types of comparison, problem/solution, and causation facilitated comprehension and recall.

Carrell (1984a), replicated their study in which she investigated the effects of the four English organizational patterns on the recalls of advanced ESL readers from different language backgrounds. Subjects were 80 students who read the texts each with a specific type of formal schema. After that they took a reading test and a delayed reading test. The study results indicated that if ESL readers possessed the appropriate formal schema for processing the text, more information was comprehended. In addition, similar to the findings in Meyer and Freedle (1984), the findings in this study also revealed that different types of rhetorical organizations had different effects on the recalls of ESL readers. The recall of more tightly organized discourse types was significantly better than that of the loosely organized type. Therefore, "devoting reading instruction to the identification of different discourse structures may be effective in facilitating ESL reading comprehension, retention, and recall" (p. 138).

In another study, Carrell (1992) investigated the students' recall of texts which were written in different text structures. Subjects, who were 45 ESL students at high-intermediate proficiency level, read two passages, one written in a comparison/ contrast text structure, and the other, in a collection of description. After reading each passage, they did a test to recall the information they read. Study results revealed that subjects who used the text structure of the passage to organize their mind recalled more main ideas and major topics of the reading passage.

Many students do not develop reading comprehension skills without the explicit teaching of comprehension strategies. Research shows, that the explicit teaching of comprehension is uncommon. Kendeou & Broek (2007), reported a scarcity of comprehension instruction. As Kendeou & Broek pointed out, "we were struck by the almost complete absence of direct instruction about comprehension strategies" (p. 157). Then, many students experience problems in comprehension of written text, especially the more complex expository text. There are many reasons for this, for example they can't see the basic structure of text. Some students get lost in the words and can't see the big picture (Dymock, 2005). Some students require direct instruction in comprehending more complex expository text structures. (Kendeou & Broek, 2007)

Newman (2007), investigated the effect of explicit instruction of expository text structure on reading comprehension. The subjects were third grade EFL students and they were divided into three groups of experimental and a control group. The experimental groups received training on text structure with the use of graphic organizer. The students in the control classroom received regular Guided Reading instruction. The trainer used different reading strategies such as modeling, thinking aloud, and graphic organizers during the treatment of experimental groups. After the post test

subjects of control and experimental groups showed a significant difference in their ability to comprehend expository text.

Piyanukool (2001), investigated the effectiveness of teaching reading through discussion of text structures on students' reading comprehension. The subjects in the study were 126 EFL students who were divided into two control and experimental groups randomly. Students in experimental group received training on using and applying text structure knowledge on the stories. In the training procedure both narrative and expository text structures were used. The control group was asked to answer the questions at the end of stories. After the post test a t-test was used. The results did not reveal any differences between two groups' performance but it was found that the participants liked reading through discussion of text structures more than reading by themselves.

In summary, the earlier studies reviewed here have shown that the training of text structure enhances learners' comprehension, learning, and recall of text. This could be a support to the fact that the knowledge of expository text structure is a valuable strategy which facilitates the reader's reading comprehension and learning from text.

III. METHODOLOGY

To answer the research question: "Does explicit teaching of different kinds of expository text structure affect EFL students' reading comprehension?", this chapter concentrates on the practical side of the present study. Sufficient details about the subjects participating in the study, the instrumentation, the way they were administered and the procedure will be discussed. In addition, the statistical analysis required for conducting this experiment will be presented.

The participants of this experimental research were fifty nine female Iranian learners of English as a foreign language. Their English proficiency could be classified at intermediate level and their age ranged from seventeen to twenty six years old. Students made up a homogeneous group whose similar English proficiency level was approved through an original PET test (preliminary English Test). Since two students did not take the post- test, their data were eliminated from the study. In addition, one subject's score did not fit the homogeneous pattern of the research and was not considered part of the study, though she received the same treatment. The remaining participants, fifty six EFL learners, were divided into control (28 students) and experimental (28 students) groups. The study was carried out during the students' regular English classes in Farzaneh English Institute, where the researcher conducted the study during the summer 2008.

The first instrument used to measure the testee's language proficiency level, was the reading comprehension section of an English proficiency test -PET test- including 35 multiple choice questions. This instrument was used in the research to minimize the individual differences among the participants. It served as a criterion for validating the teacher- made reading comprehension test used in the study as well. It was the original standard test form 100/2031/7 that was distributed to the examinees all over the world in 2004.

The reading comprehension sections in students' text book- third volume of Interchange Third Edition (2005), by Richards - involved different types of expository text structure. Accordingly the researcher taught all these patterns to see their effect on students' reading comprehension and since "description", "comparison-contrast" and "cause-effect" were the most frequent and tightly organized ones in students' text book, they were chosen as rhetorical structure of pre, post reading comprehension tests. At first, the teacher-made reading comprehension test including three passages and twelve questions was administered among a pilot group of thirty students; then, based on the results, the pre-post reading comprehension test supplemented with multiple choice questions was developed.

The main objective of this experimental research was to determine whether instruction focusing on text structure helps students to improve their comprehension of expository text. The procedure used in developing the instruments of the study, the administration of the tests as well as other considerations like reliability and validity of the instruments will be further elaborated in this section.

Regarding the procedure of selecting a sample, the convenience sample –"a sample which is chosen solely from available subjects" -including fifty nine female Iranian EFL learners, was chosen to be treated. (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p.465). Students were informed that their performance in the study would not affect their course grade.

The pilot test, an approval for the teacher-made questions, was conducted among thirty EFL intermediate students at Odaba English Institute where the pilot group answered twelve multiple choice teacher- made questions of reading comprehension. Since preparing appropriate passages was the researcher's main concern, three passages of different expository text structure types with respect to their difficulty level, length, content and readability index were chosen. Researchers argue that lack of control over these factors may account for the inconsistent findings. (Chung, 2000; Geva, 2004; Degand & Sanders, 2002; cited in Abdolahzadeh, 2006). Based on the learners' text book, "description", "comparison-contrast" and "cause-effect" were the most frequently used rhetorical structures; so, they were selected as measures of text structure knowledge. The readability degrees of the reading passages of students' text book were calculated according to the Fog index formula. The average readability of students' text book was 25.11. The readability degrees of the developed reading comprehension passages are demonstrated in table 3.1. According to the table the degrees were almost in the same range of the text book passages readability.

TABLE 3.1
THE READABILITY OF DEVELOPED READING COMPREHENSION TEST

Passages	Readability degrees
Passage 1 (description)	26.48
Passage 2 (comparison- contrast)	22.90
Passage 3 (cause-effect)	25.33

After the teacher - made test administration, the reading comprehension part of an original English proficiency test - Preliminary English Test - as a standard criterion, was likewise given to thirty subjects of the pilot group. To find out how effective the test items were and to find out if they indicated differences between high and low ability test takers, item difficulty and item discrimination were determined. If a particular question in a test is answered in totally different way by the test takers who do well on the test and by those who do poorly, the question is said to discriminate well between the students. (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). Regarding the table 3.2, the questions number 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 and 10 could discriminate well. These items were well- prepared ones and since almost all test items showed high and positive item discrimination, none of them needed revision.

TABLE 3.2
ITEM DISCRIMINATION INDEX

Question Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Item Discrimination	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.40	0.25	0.45	0.40	0.40	0.45	0.40	0.40

Item difficulty is a measure of the difficulty of a test item. The closer the item difficulty to 0.5, the more favorable the test question. (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). Therefore, almost all of the test items are said to be preferable.(table 3.3).

TABLE 3.3
ITEM DIFFICULTY INDEX

Question Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Item Difficulty	0.45	0.55	0.45	0.45	0.50	0.45	0.55	0.40	0.50	0.45	0.50	0.40

To validate the developed test against the criterion (Preliminary English Test), the researcher used the test results to estimate the reliability and validity of the teacher-made test items. KR-21 formula was applied to estimate the test reliability. The results demonstrated a high degree of reliability (0.76) for the 12 item test which was administrated among 30 subjects. To investigate the concurrent validity of the test, the researcher conducted a correlation analysis between the language proficiency test and the developed comprehension test. The result of the variance analysis was also statistically high and preferable. ($r = 0.70$).

This study is an attempt to investigate the effectiveness of teaching expository text structure to EFL learners in their reading comprehension. To achieve this end, the participants of the study were divided into two groups of control and experimental. The experimental group took advantage of receiving extra instruction: expository rhetorical structure awareness. The two groups' performance on a teacher-made reading comprehension tests were compared and the final result revealed whether the training was effective or not. The reading comprehension part of an original English proficiency test- as a standard criterion- was used by the researcher to homogenize the sample under the study. The criterion of sample homogeneity is that their scores set in one standard deviation below and above the mean. The administration of reading comprehension section of PET including thirty five multiple choice items on fifty nine EFL learners was carried out during 45 minutes. According to statistical analysis, since one of the student's score was not set in one standard deviation above and below the mean, she was not considered part of the study and the number of participants decreased to fifty eight.

Being homogeneous through the use of English proficiency test, the participants of the study including 58 EFL learners in two groups of control and experimental, took part in the pre-test, once tried in the pilot group. Before the pre-test administration in both control and experimental groups, the participants were informed that the test result would not be influential in their final performance and those items which were not answered correctly would be given the negative mark. The subjects were informed about the time limitation- 30 minutes- and also about the fact that there was just one correct alternative for each test item. To be sure that all the students understood what they were expected to do, all the instructions were given in Persian. Regarding the reading comprehension test, the researcher organized each test passage over one of three rhetorical structures of "description", "comparison-contrast" and "cause-effect". Moreover, the questions which followed each passage asked about the kind of information each type of rhetorical structure should provide the reader with. In other words, the questions were designed to get at the kind of structure students learnt. Each of the passages contained between 120 to 140 words and 4 multiple choice questions.

To assess the reading proficiency of the subjects in both control and experimental groups, the pre-post reading comprehension tests were used in this research before and after the treatment. The treatment was carried out during students' regular English classes, of each session, a quarter of time was devoted to reading comprehension, along with other three skills. The semester lasted forty five hours in ten weeks. Although the textbook- third volume of Interchange Third Edition (Richards, 2005) - was the same in both groups, the treatment was different and there was not any kind of consciousness raising on expository text structure among the subjects of control group; however, the time allocated to both groups was the same. After the administration of pre-test in both control and experimental groups, the treatment was run. In the control group the same passages were taught without teaching them the logical organization underlying each text. While the experimental group was going through the training sessions, the control group also received training with the same materials. They performed various tasks with the texts, for example, grammar exercises, sentence analysis, work with connectors, cohesion, and vocabulary work. They also focused on the content of the passages and used the texts as the basis for various reading and writing assignments. Subjects of the control group were taught in their reading class with the focus on vocabulary and grammar. There were some stages: First, the text was read by the teacher loudly and word by word as the learners followed. Then all the new vocabularies were written on the board and their meanings were clarified. Next, the grammatical rules associated with the passage were taught by the teacher. Learners worked on the text individually to achieve the comprehension. Along with the students' text book, several reading passages were accessible in both groups of control and experimental. Each passage contained a specific type of expository text structure. It is worth mentioning that in control group the subjects were not dealt with text structure awareness. In other word, the only thing the control group did not receive was the instruction on rhetorical organization and the strategy for using that information as a basis for reading and comprehending expository text.

Students could benefit from direct instruction in the five expository structures with which they encountered frequently. The teacher used strategies for teaching the structure in general and the five common expository text structures in particular. The framework was loosely based on the CORE model of Dymock (2005) – *connection, organization, reflection and extension*. Before teaching text structure, the teacher first taught the general concept of structure and the difference between structure and content. The teacher's first objective was to show students in the experimental group that the content of a passage consists of ideas, facts, and information, while the structure is a framework by which that content is organized. Teacher *connected* students to the content and the text structure. For instance, the teacher may clarify that a content about two different types of birds would be best organized with comparison/contrast rhetorical organization. In other words, connectedness is the link between what the reader knows (the content) and what is being learned (the text structure). In the experimental group, after reinforcing the difference between content and structure, the teacher used *graphic organizers* (visual displays of ideas and their organizations) to present expository paragraphs on different topics. A graphic organizer for a passage is a form of outline that specially represents its organization; a properly constructed graphic organizer presented along with the text, helped students visualize text structure. (McGee & Richgels, 2005). Using graphic organizers shows how text is constructed and enables readers to make order out of the text. Showing how two texts with the same text structure have similar graphic organizer, the teacher emphasized the difference between content and structure. As a class activity, students were presented different reading passages of different structures with the same contents along with their graphic organizers adapted from Mayer and Freedle (1984). These texts made students of the experimental group more sensitive to text structures. The teacher introduced students to the ideas in the organizer (e.g. different types of birds) by the format which is the most appropriate to emphasize its structure (e.g. comparison-contrast), while the students discussed the key ideas in the organizer and especially the way they were related to each other. Therefore, the next strategy the teacher used in explicit teaching of expository text structure was diagramming the text which enabled students to see the structure and to understand and remember it better. Then the trainer could easily name the structure being used. Students were explained that expository texts have different organizational patterns which are called text structures. The teacher taught text structures one by one, as students needed time to master one structure before learning another. Some text structures seemed to be easier for students to grasp. The trainer tried to adjust the instruction of each specific rhetorical structure according to the structure of reading sections in students' text book. To identify structure, the teacher looked through the content materials in the text book for paragraphs which were organized by the five expository structures with appropriate clue words associated with the structure. Clue words help to identify structures by signaling particular relationships among ideas. Then, the teacher read each paragraph, as students followed reading in their own copy. Next, students analyzed the text, focusing on the specific structure. Students identified the sentences that represented the structural organization underlying them. They later circled the entire clue words. They took turns generating sentences associating with the structure. *Reflect* is where students explain or critique content, structures, and strategies (e.g., What kind of text did we analyze today? Why did we diagram the structure?). Then, an opportunity is provided to transferlearning to new topics. This *extension* gives a chance to reflect, as well as an opportunity for meaningful practice. The teacher encouraged them to use well-structured statements, that is, sentences that were based on the correct information from the paragraph and that included a clue word. Since the content material did not cover the five expository text structures well, the teacher also directed students' attention to additional paragraphs using that structure. As an additional strategy the teacher changed the writing sections in the students' text book in a way that the writing topic specified a kind of rhetorical structure though the topic content remained the same. Therefore, students applied

their text structure knowledge in their writings as well. During all the stages, students were encouraged to work in groups and correct their peers.

At the end of the treatment, the same measurement was employed again as the post reading comprehension test for the both groups and the result of their comparison was used to determine whether the teaching of text structure among Iranian EFL students affects their ability to comprehend the main ideas of expository materials. Since two participants did not take part in the post- test, their data were eliminated from the study and they were not considered part of the study anymore; therefore, in the final analysis, the number of participants decreased to fifty six- each group was made up of twenty eight students. It is worth mentioning that, the subjects in the experimental group were not aware of receiving any special instruction until after completing the post test.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The main purpose of this quasi-experimental research is to see the effect of teaching expository text structure on the reading comprehension of EFL learners. In order to describe different sets of scores, indices of central tendency, distribution and dispersion were used. Data obtained from the comparison of the two control and experimental groups were processed and analyzed using the 13th version of statistical package for the social sciences (spss). Since the main aim of this research was to determine the statistical significance of the difference between the means of two sets of scores, deriving from pre/post reading comprehension tests, t-test and correlation were used for the statistical analysis. A t-test was done after the proficiency test to determine whether the two groups were homogeneous; another t-test was run after the post test to reject the null hypothesis. Regarding the scoring procedure for the English proficiency test and teacher-made reading comprehension test in three groups of pilot, control and experimental, each correct response received a score of 1, whereas each incorrect response received a negative mark. Moreover, each item which was not answered received nothing.

In this chapter, first the pilot group performance on preliminary English test and on teacher – made reading comprehension test will be presented. Then, the performance of sample under the study will be shown on the standardized test and developed reading comprehension test which is in the form of pre-post reading tests.

According to table 4.1, subjects in the pilot group were divided into two groups of students with high and low English proficiency level. (15 students in each group). The subjects performance was compared with each other in two groups. (The mean scores are 81.36 and 92.30). A t-test for equality of means was used and the t-value for a two-tailed test at .05 level of significance and 28 degrees of freedom is .00. The performance of pilot group on the preliminary English test served as a criterion for validating the teacher-made reading comprehension test.

TABLE 4.1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF PILOT GROUP PERFORMANCE ON THE PET

group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
low	15	81.36	4.49	1.16
high	15	92.30	3.77	.97

According to table 4.2, the mean scores in two groups of students with high and low language proficiency, were compared. (1.06 and 7.13). The comparison shows a noticeable difference between the groups performance. It implies that subjects with high language ability out performed on the developed reading comprehension test than those with low language proficiency.

TABLE 4.2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF PILOT GROUP PERFORMANCE ON DEVELOPED READING TEST

group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
low	15	1.06	.70	.18
high	15	7.13	2.47	.63

The calculated t-value (.00) is more than the critical value for a two-tailed test at .05 level of significance and 28 degrees of freedom; therefore, the use of t-test revealed that in the pilot group the difference between the performances of students with high and low English proficiency level on the reading comprehension test, was significant.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between scores of proficiency English test and teacher made reading comprehension test, both administered among the subjects of pilot group, was conducted. The correlation was high and positive at .o1 level of significance (0.89). It implies that, the students' English proficiency level highly affected their test performance. In other words, more professional English learners out performed on the reading test and vice versa.

Regarding the samples' last term scores, an initial judgment towards the homogeneity of the sample was formed. The sample under the study consisted of 56 EFL students, of those 26 subjects assigned to control group and 26 subjects assigned to experimental group. The subjects' last term scores were statistically described in the table 4.3.

TABLE 4.3
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF SUBJECTS' LAST TERM SCORES

group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
control	28	84.26	4.25	.80
experimental	28	85.19	4.86	.91

According to table 4.3, the mean scores - the main indicators - are quite close to each other in two groups of control and experimental. (84.2 and 85.1). A t-test was run to determine whether the score difference between these two groups was significant. Since the t-value did not exceed the t-critical value (.477), the students were homogeneous with respect to their last term scores.

TABLE 4.4
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF SUBJECTS' PERFORMANCE ON PET

group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
control	28	20.51	5.85	1.12
experimental	28	21.39	4.84	.91

With the use of indicators such as mean, standard deviation and standard error of mean, the performance of students on the English proficiency test in two groups of control and experimental, was statistically described in the table 4.4.

Since the t-value was less than t-critical value (.123), the difference between subjects' performance on the pre-reading comprehension test in both groups of control and experimental was not significant. Mean, standard deviation and standard error of mean in both groups were compared. They also confirmed the homogeneity of subjects' performance. It implies that in both groups the participants almost reacted similarly to the independent variable (expository text structure).

TABLE 4.5
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF SUBJECTS' PERFORMANCE ON PRE-TEST

group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
control	28	-1.41	1.21	.22
Experimental	28	-.87	1.37	.25

Table 4.6 shows the amount of mean, standard deviation and standard error of mean in both groups of control and experimental. Through the use of descriptive statistics there is about 6.5 degrees of progress in the mean scores of two groups - an indicator of central tendency index.

TABLE 4.6
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF SUBJECTS' PERFORMANCE ON POST-TEST

group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
control	28	-.49	1.26	.23
experimental	28	6.17	2.59	.48

The considerable difference in the performance of subjects on post-test in both groups of control and experimental showed the amount of impact that the independent variable applied.

Descriptive statistics implied a noticeable difference between performances of students in control and experimental groups. The t-value was less than t-critical value (.00); therefore, the difference between two groups' performance after the treatment was significant.

Based on statistics, it is quite obvious that how greatly experimental students improved in their performance on the post reading test. The majority of students who responded correctly are of experimental group; therefore, the null hypothesis would be strongly rejected.

TABLE 4.7
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GROUPS' PERFORMANCE

group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
control	28	.92	1.18	.22
experimental	28	7.04	2.12	.40

The amount of difference between the performance of two groups of control and experimental is statistically described in the table 4.7. The mean score shows 7 degrees of difference between two groups' performances. A t-test was run to indicate that the difference is significant (.00)

TABLE 4.8
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF CONTROL/ EXPERIMENTAL GROUP PERFORMANCE

Group	Test	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control Group	Pre-test	-1.41	1.21	.22
	Post-test	-.49	1.26	.23
Experimental Group	Pre-test	-.87	1.37	.25
	Post-test	6.17	2.59	.48

Descriptive statistics of control and experimental groups' performance on both pre and post reading comprehension tests was demonstrated in the table 4.8. Performance of students in control group in both tests along with performance of students in experimental group in pre - test are highly close together. The experimental students' performance in the post- test is completely different. (Mean = 6.17, Std. Deviation = 2.59, Std. Error Mean =.48).

The correlation coefficient between pre and post scores of control group was high and positive. (0.54). It implied that the control group performance on the post test did not changed significantly. It could be another confirmation for the stability of control group performance from pre to post reading test. As a result of a t-test, since the t-value was less than t-critical value (.00); therefore, the difference between the performance of students in pre-test and post-test in experimental group was significant.

Comparing with the performance of subjects of experimental group in the pre-test, the amount of progress in their performance on the post-test was clarified with the use of graph 4.1. Although there is score progress from pre to post reading comprehension test in control group, it is not as considerable as that of experimental group.
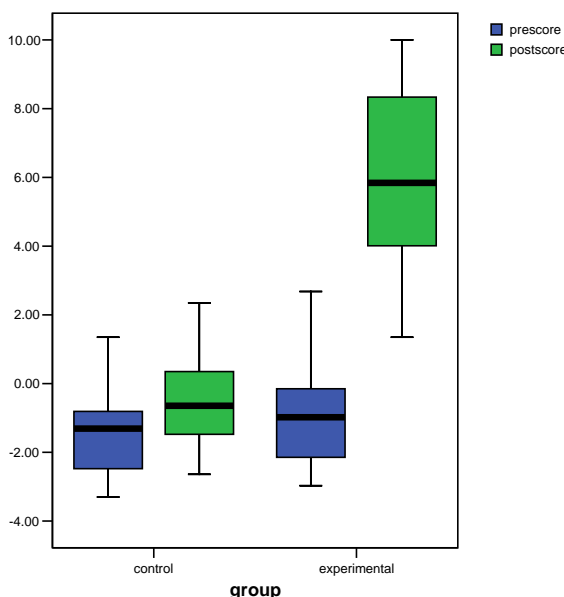
Graph 4.1 The overall performance of control and experimental groups

The performance on pre, post reading comprehension tests in two groups of control and experimental was illustrated through the use of graph 4.1. It clearly shows a great amount of progress in the experimental group's post scores. The bold lines in the middle of squares indicate the median scores in each group.

V. CONCLUSION

In response to the research question investigated if teaching of expository text structure affects Iranian EFL students' reading comprehension of expository text, the findings of this study will be discussed.

In the interactive model of reading comprehension, reading is viewed as the reconstruction of meaning from the interaction between reader and the text. In this view text structure knowledge plays an important role in comprehension and recall. A number of research studies with native and non-native speakers of English that investigated the role of rhetorical structure in text comprehension have provided support that direct instruction of text structure enhances the reader's comprehension, recall, and retention of text (Armbruster, Anderson & Ostertag, 1987; Carrell, 1984a, 1984b, 1985, 1992). In other words, students who use the structure strategy will be able to comprehend the gist of expository text better.

The analysis results reported in the present study provide support to the findings of the previous studies. It was found that there were significant differences in the performance of subjects who were exposed to text structure training comparing to the performance of those who were not. Then the use of text structure as a reading strategy in text processing, may have provided facilitative effects for Iranian EFL students to comprehend expository prose.

A reasonable explanation for these findings is that subjects who were aware of text structure and used it as their strategic approach to text processing may have gone through the process of discourse comprehension. (Meyer, 1975a; Meyer, Brandt & Bluth, 1980; Kintsch & van Dijk, 1978). That is, the readers tried to find a sort of cohesion among sentences of a text while these relations activated the relevant background knowledge in the reader's mind. After that the subjects made a proper match between the text new information and the active schema. Then, the meaning was reconstructed and the subjects could remember what they read efficiently. Subjects who employed the structure strategy had a significantly higher performance in text comprehension. This finding can be as an additional support that using text structure guides the subjects to better comprehend and learn from the text. The subjects in control group who have not received any training in text organization, did not have a systematic plan to guide their comprehension. Therefore, in the multiple choice question answering, these subjects remembered fewer main ideas than those who were taught the structure strategy. They simply did what they could remember from the text.

The goal of educators and teachers is to enhance students' reading achievement. The goal of students is to comprehend what they read. Cziko (1980). The students' failure in reading may affect their educational process. The improvement in reading should be achieved with the help of teacher or students themselves; otherwise, the students' reading achievements would be low. One problem of ESL/EFL students is they are not able to employ reading strategies suitable to what they read. Employing appropriate reading strategies helps students improve in reading comprehension (Carrell, 1992). Lee (1986), examined why EFL learners did not succeed in learning English, and found that the students failed to apply appropriate strategies to reading. To solve these problems, reading strategies should be explicitly taught to EFL students (Carrell, 1985). Applying knowledge of text structures such as description, sequence, problem-solution, cause-effect, or compare-contrast to comprehend and recall the expository text was one of the effective reading comprehension strategies (Miller & George, 1992; Carrell, 1984). Thus, reading teachers have to look for effective reading strategies for expository passages. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a study to investigate the effects of direct instruction of text structures on EFL students' reading comprehension.

With the pretest-posttest control-experimental design, the research focus was on the performance of a treatment group compared with a control group. Data were collected from 59 students who took the test in their EFL class. The study described the test takers' performance on the three reading comprehension tests quantitatively through statistical analyses. The total number of 59 students who took the test in the classroom was reduced to 56 after a selection of valid cases and deletion of outliers. The remaining subjects made up a highly homogeneous group, of which 28 subjects assigned to control and 28 students assigned to experimental group. The experimental group was taught reading through discussion of text structures, while the control group was taught reading without any consciousness raising over text structures. The performance of control and treatment groups in the three reading comprehension tests was analyzed. By demonstrating that the treatment group significantly outperformed the control group from pretest to posttest, the study results showed statistically the effectiveness of direct training of expository text structure awareness. Therefore the research question: "Does explicit teaching of different kinds of expository text structure, affect EFL students' reading comprehension?" has been answered positively and the null hypotheses: "EFL students at intermediate English proficiency level do not perform better on their reading comprehension test after being taught in text structure", has been rejected. This statement implies that the performance of EFL learners on the reading skill is highly affected by the direct training of expository rhetorical structures. The results from t-testrevealed that a reader's rhetorical structure knowledge and his ability to use the same structure as the original text, affect his/her comprehension. The better the reader recognizes and uses the original structure of the text, the better his/her comprehension. Experimental students in this study appeared to be able to use text structure knowledge to enhance comprehension. The results of this research strongly imply that text structure should be explicitly taught as part of an instructional program in ESL/EFL reading.

The findings of this study can lead to the pedagogical implications for the teaching of reading English to ESL/EFL students. Since there are students who are unaware of text structure or who may have knowledge of text structure but they are not able to use it as a strategy in reading; therefore, the knowledge of expository text structures should be instructed to second/foreign language learners and must be included in ESL/EFL reading curriculum. Although teachers do their best in teaching the grammar and vocabulary of the English language, they often can see their students with adequate knowledge of the vocabularies and structures fail to comprehend what they have read. Their difficulty in reading comprehension may result from their lack of necessary reading strategies or skills to help them learn from text (Richgels, McGee, Lomax & Sheard, 1987). To solve this problem, the teacher should provide students with explicit instruction and training in the use of expository text structure. They should incorporate text structure and signaling devices into the textbooks and instructional materials. They should provide the opportunity for ESL/EFL students to be exposed to various reading passages organized with different types of text structure. Moreover the writing teachers can also apply the findings of this study in their composition classes. Employing the knowledge of text structure is as essential in writing as in reading. To form a coherent writing, students can use text structure as a guide for revising what they have written.

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The Demonstration of Sexism in Thomas Hardy's Short Stories via Appraisal Analysis

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Abstract—As Eggins (2005) believes, there are obvious or concealed purposes behind any use of language. So, language evaluation seems essential for realizing theses goals. Recognizing the producers' goals in their discourse will lead to the recognition of their ideology and even ideology of the community they have lived in. The present study considering Appraisal System in some short stories written by Thomas Hardy aims to discover the ways the writer impresses his readers implicitly and makes them accept his hidden ideologies. The Appraisal framework developed by Martin and Rose (2003) is used to analyze the clauses in the stories to manifest writer's point of view towards male and female characters. The study focuses on the way Appraisal resources contribute to the creation of ideologies in the lines of the stories and transfers them to the readers' minds. The results shed the light on the issue and make readers think critically. Being aware of the fact that texts are ideologically loaded, readers' awareness needs to be developed.

Index Terms—Systemic Functional Linguistics, appraisal theory, ideology, sexism in language, feminism

I. Introduction

According to Martin and Rose (2003), discourse focuses on the meaning beyond the clause. It means that it is more than a sequence of clauses. Going through one clause to another one leads to the clarification of a text as it is unfolded. It means that discourse is treated as more than an incidental manifestation of social activity; there should be focus on the society as it is constructed through texts, on the constitutive role of meanings in social life. Fairclough (2003) believes that language constructs the world in one way or another according to position or perspective. As Martin and Rose (2003) mention, social contexts play a crucial role in interpreting social discourse at the first step. As sequences of meanings construct texts, social contexts develop. It shows that rarely does Social discourse consists of just single clauses. Interpreting the interaction each text manifests is possible because texts are produced interactively between producers and readers; since each interaction is an instance of the writer's culture and his/her point of view, the text can also be used to interpret aspects of the culture and writer's ideas. According to Mills (1995), discourses are rarely so simple. There are usually multiple facets to them, and multiple positions by different groups. The voices of many groups are to be heard in the texts who are arguing, or being argued for or against, in many subtle ways. The discourse analyses enable these voices to emerge clearly, explicitly, from the patterns of meaning in which they are encoded. Van Dijk (1997) states that discourse play a leading role in the construction and reconstruction of prejudice. The mental models, the social realizations, the perspectives, and ideologies that control people's action and their interaction with others could be acquired by people via books, television programs, news reports in the press, writings, and other forms of public discourse.

Since some attitudes and ideologies in discourses are hidden in the lines, discourse analysts should extract them by implementing some tools. Appraisal is applied as an implemented tool in this research by knowing that according to Martin and White (2005), at the level of discourse semantics, Appraisal is an interpersonal system in the broad field of Systemic Functional Linguistics.

As White (2001) believes:

Appraisal framework, a particular approach to exploring, describing, and explaining the way language is used to evaluate, to adopt stances, to construct textual personas, and to manage interpersonal positionings and relationships. Thus it explores how speakers and writers pass judgements on people generally, other writers/speakers and their utterances, material objects happenings, and states of affairs. It explores how attitudes, judgements and emotive responses are explicitly presented in texts and how they may be more indirectly implied, presupposed or assumed. As well, it explores how the expression of such attitudes and judgements is (pp. 1).

Simply put, the Appraisal analysis seeks to uncover meaning patterns through the systematic analysis of linguistic structures.

Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study

As Martin and Rose (2003) mention, writers play a prominent role in the construction of social realities. In their works the reality is not reflected in a neutral mode; however, they help to construct and interpret the reality. Story

writers exert a prominent influence on public discourse, hence on public opinions which lead to the structuring and maintenance of some ideologies. According to Manan (2001), the language that is used to portray events and people shows selections that are made out of all the available options in the linguistic system and these choices support special ways of noticing and reading. It is obvious that opinions and ideologies have significant social and cultural functions. They play a role in the formation and change of public opinions, in influencing social debates, decision making and other forms of social actions. One of the horrible points in most of the discourses is that a negative view is given to females.

This research tends to investigate how linguistic analysts can use Appraisal analysis in discourse to unpack and reveal implicit and hidden discriminatory ideologies which have been reflected consciously or subconsciously in Thomas Hardy's works. Through the analysis of a set of his short stories, *The Withered Arm* and *The Melancholy Hussar of the German Legion,* which exemplify how meanings are constructed and contested in a culture focusing on some issues, readers of his works will be guided to explore the ways in which males and females are introduced and tracked through the texts and also the way they are judged, appreciated and valued. So, by focusing on Appraisals, the researcher tries to shed light on some facts about existing sexism in language and female oppression. By considering Appraisals in the selected stories, the influence of the writer's implicit point of view will be revealed and as a result, the underestimation of language significance will be changed since the awareness of how language contributes to inequality and injustice between the conventional divisions of two genders will be increased.

Theoretical Framework

Any analysis involving language implies some theory of how language works. Appraisal which evolved within the general theoretical framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics is the framework theory in this thesis. James Martin is one of the greatest practitioners of SFL and his approach (2003) provides useful guidance on how to put this theory into practice. The Appraisal framework has been emerged as a result of research conducted by a group of researchers led by Professor James Martin in the University of Sydney.

In this study the researcher will follow the Appraisal framework of Martin and Rose (2003), and Martin and White (2005) to show how sexism as the writer's ideology has had influence on the Appraisals which have been used in Thomas Hardy's selected short stories and as a result it has been injected to the readers' minds.

Research Question and Hypothesis

While reading a story, we may think of the world views, social values, culture of the society of the writer, writer's thoughts and ideas and possible convincing impressions of the story. In this research, the researcher will try to answer the following question:

How does Thomas Hardy introduce, judge, and value male and female characters in his short stories by using different Appraisals? To put it simply, how has using special Appraisals for two genders helped Hardy to reflect his sexist prejudice in his works?

It is hypothesized that different Appraisals which have been used in Thomas Hardy's short stories may determine the writer's sexist point of view in oppressing the females.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The term 'discourse' has been used differently by various researchers in different cultures. Fairclough (2003) believes that different discourses are different viewpoints in the world that are related to various relations people have in the world based on their place in the society, their social and personal identities, and their social relationships. Not only do Discourses portray the world in a way it is, but also they describe possible worlds that are different from the actual one. According to Yule (1996), discourse analysts focus on the way language users make sense of what they read in texts, the way they understand what speakers mean despite what they say. Discourse, i.e. language use or production or comprehension, is the main kind of social practices influenced by ideologies. In turn, discourses influence and change how we acquire or learn ideologies. In other words, there is a dual link between discourse and ideology (Mills, 1997). We learn ideas especially ideological opinions by having interactions with other group members through reading, listening and speaking. As van Dijk (2003) states, since knowing about the way that ideologies are expressed in discourse and are reproduced in society is needed, particular attention to the discursive dimensions of ideologies is essential.

A systematic resource for stating meaning in context is language. According to Halliday (1985), language is not a fixed defined system or a set of grammatical sentences; language is present in our lives and should be studied in various contexts. It is the study of the ways people exchange meanings by using it. An approach to linguistics developed by Halliday who sees language in a social context is called Systemic Functional Linguistics. Systemic Functional Grammar deals mainly with the choices which are available to users of a language based on their grammatical systems. These choices which are meaningful associate speakers'/writers' meanings with the concrete forms of a language. Basically, SFL as a multi-perspective model has been planned to help analysts to interpret language in use. One of the most important points is the notion of ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning. Ideational meaning is related with construing experience: what's happening, including who's doing what to whom, where, when, why, how. Interpersonal meaning which expresses the way people interact and share their feelings, considers social relations negotiations. How ideational and interpersonal meanings are distributed in waves of semiotics is what textual meaning takes into

consideration; it means that this type of meaning is concerned with information flow. These three kinds of meaning are called metafunctions (Martin & White, 2005).

According to Eggins (2005), In order to resist or challenge hidden ideologies in texts, readers need to develop some skills to be able to decode the encoded beliefs; this is the implication of identifying ideology in text. As language does not just represent the realities but actively construct our view of the world, special ways are required to know how language could do that. Based on the explanations above, it is concluded that Appraisal is located as an interpersonal system in SFL. According to White (2001), Appraisal theory is about the linguistic resources by which texts/speakers try to show, discuss and naturalise special inter-subjective and also ideological positions. How the text presents special philosophies or theories about the social orders and considers them as reasonable, essential, or natural will be noticed in examining a text's reading position.

Affect

As feelings are of two kinds of good or bad, Affect can be positive or negative. Feelings can also be expressed directly or implicitly inferred from the behaviour; so Affect can be expressed directly or implied too. Naming special emotions directly or describing behaviour that also directly expresses emotion means that the writer refers to a mental state in a straight way. However, distinguishing from the physical symptoms is not always easy and the description of unusual behaviour could be interpreted as an indirect sign of emotion. At this time, a bit of psychology is necessary since it will be difficult to be quite sure about the exact meaning of the expressed emotion. More than any other genres, stories involve readers in people's feelings (Martin & Rose, 2003).

Judgement

The accepted standard ways of behaving in contexts of proposals are what people should do or not; these norms which are considered as the institutionalization of feeling are called Judgements. Like Affect, positive or negative Judgements of people's character exist and judgements could be done explicitly or implicitly. But unlike Affect, Judgements differ between personal Judgements of admiration or criticism and moral Judgements of praise or condemnation. Judgements are divided into two groups: social esteem and social sanction. Social esteem which is mostly without legal implications involves admiration and criticism; however, social sanction involves praise, and condemnation often with legal implications (Eggins & Slade, 1977).

Appreciation

Appreciation which is thought of as the institutionalization of feeling in the context of propositions is the norm about the ways products and performances are valued. Appreciation of things includes attitudes about things. Similar to Affect and Judgement, things are appreciated positively or negatively. Appreciation helps us to turn to meanings that construe evaluations of things that we make and performances we do. Appreciation considers how things are valued (Martin & Rose, 2003).

Ideology and Discourse

Ideology refers to a commonsensical systemic set of value system and representations, shared by social groups, often distorted in the service of power, which are mainly produced or reproduced through language. But what is the relation between discourse and ideology? Fairclougch (1989) mentions Language plays a significant role in stabilizing, reproducing and changing ideology. He adds that language always invites the reader to construct a version of reality. Language users with various characteristics in various communicative events may have diverse ideologies, therefore struggles including ideological ones which mainly take place in one through language. On the close relationship between discourse and ideology, Fairclough (1989) adds diverse ideology is seen as a field of both ideology processes, and linguistic processes, and there is a determinate relationship between these two kinds of process; specifically, the linguistic choices that are made in texts can carry ideological meaning. Although the learning of ideologies may be taken place in many social practicing, such as family, school, job, etc. but the primary sources of ideologies acquisition are text and take. Criticizing a language is criticizing the society and their background and ideology since language is closely related to and reflects society and ideology. Language, society and culture change through time. Cameron (1992) says that the most successful situation is when changes in language are along with changes in society, but language and society are so related that changes in language will have caused some changes in society. As Mills (2003) mentions, it is the language of a culture that determines how speakers and readers see the world. It means that language produces our perception of the world. So our thought systems are influenced by the language of the community. Poynton (1989), about the relation between language and culture says that human culture is not random, it is basically patterned.

Sexism

Sexism is a complex phenomenon, with a number of different possible meanings and causes. In its widest sense as Frye defines the term "sexism" in a way that it can be used to refer to anything that creates, constitutes, promotes, sustains, or explains an unjustifiable distinction between men and women (As cited in Cudd & Andreasen, 2005).

Sexism in Discourse

Fowler mentions some ways of sexism. Language is sexist because the ideological paradigm in language considers deviant position for women. Fowler (as cited in Toolan, 1991) discusses about images of women in newspapers. Females are considered as a special group, irrational, dependent to family, powerless and sexual. Language has different position for men and women. Women are considered as a discriminated group, many words refer to women are sexual.

Schulz (as cited in Thorne & Henley, 1975) believes that sexism is inherent in language, and dictionaries have stereotypes in definitions they present. Schulz says that Webster Third has given different roles for men and women and also belittled woman.

Title et al. (1976) found that educational achievement tests and college achievement tests are biased against women in language and also in the stereotyped gender roles they give to each sex.

Black and Coward (as cited in Cameron, 1999) locate sexism not in fixed meanings encoded by the linguistic system but in the way meaning is constructed in particular contexts. They observe for instance that it is common to read newspaper reports that say things like "ten survivors, two of them women." but you never read a report saying "ten survivors, two of them men". This has become a regular pattern. So as it is clear, there is a special need for some ideologies to be implemented to make the texts less sexist not to let readers have sexism subconsciously in their mind as a normal view point.

Feminism

As Goldberg (1999) believes, since nowadays different types of feminism exist, it is difficult to define feminism. However, most feminists have the same idea that women as a whole are subject to personal and institutional discrimination and are behaved oppressively and differently from men. Feminists also believe that societies are organized in a way that they are to the benefit of men rather than women. Mills (1995) defines feminism as a way of changing the social views to make the society less oppressive to women. Some feminists recommend not using "women's right" or even "the equality" in feminism definition; in their idea equality presupposes a standard to which one is equal, in this case the implied standard is men. So they define feminism as a movement for the full humanity of women.

Feminism in Discourse

Feminists are ultimately in pursuit of a more radical change, the creation of a world in which one gender does not set the standard of human value. Cameron (1992) states feminism as an intellectual approach, seeks to understand how current relations between women and men are constructed – they are constructed, rather than natural – and in the light of this understanding, how they are constructed and how they can be changed. She believes that cultural representations of gender which are demonstrated in literary works, pictures, textbooks, academic articles, and other works are very important in shaping the identities of males and females, their notions of masculinity and femininity, and their opinion about what is usual.

What the researcher would like to capture in this research is the way that the meanings of gender are represented so it would be possible to contest those representations, or reinterpret them. Then it would be obvious how strange is the way gender difference is represented in different cultures, so that perhaps writers might be able to think of ways in which female could be represented differently and more productively. The reader could find out more about the underlying messages of the text. Following systematic patterns and concentrating on particular aspects of texts can tell the reader a great deal more about the text than a simple reading which focuses on the subject-matter of the text alone.

III. METHODOLOGY

Materials

To deal with the hypothetical answer to the research question and to implement the Appraisal framework for analysis, the data pool for analysis includes two short stories by Thomas Hardy, namely: *The Withered Arm* and *The Melancholy Hussar of the German Legion* were selected. These stories were selected just based on the existence of two opposite sexes in the stories to let the researcher do the analysis. The selected stories are from Wordsworth Classics, Thomas Hardy, Wessex Tales (1995).

Procedure

Appraisal that is of attitudinal positioning is focused on in this research. In this system, the subcategories are Affect, which is the resources deployed for construing emotional responses; Judgment, that is used for understanding moral evaluations of manner; and Appreciation, which makes the aesthetic quality of semiotic text/processes and natural phenomena (Martin, 2000). Having selected the material, to achieve the aforementioned purpose of the study, the researcher follows the following procedures for analysing Appraisal in Thomas Hardy's selected short stories which are outlined by Martin and Rose (2003). Each text is broken down into its constituent clauses and each clause is specified numerically separately for two genders. Adopting Halliday's Systemic-Functional Grammar and implementing Appraisal tool, all the Appraisal items are identified and classified according to three subcategories of attitudinal positioning; then for getting an overview of the text as a whole, the results for men and women are tabulated separately.

White (2001) mentions In considering Attitude, the researcher considers the utterances that are indicators of some people, things, conditions, actions, happenings or state of affairs. They are interpreted either positively or negatively. So, the researcher categorizes any utterance which conveys a negative or positive evaluation or which can be interpreted for encouraging the readers to make their own negative or positive assessments. Surely, there are examples of individual words conveying a clear attitudinal meaning. But mainly instead of individual words, word combinations convey the meaning. It is better to consider attitude as feature or property, not individual words. They are complete utterances, the stretches of language which show a complete proposition or proposal. Therefore, in Attitude analysis, the researcher draws the conclusion that attitudinal meanings are better noticed when they are carried by complete propositions not

individual words although in some cases it is possible to consider individual lexical items. So, the proposition or proposal, or a sequence of interrelated propositions or proposals are analysed in the context of the larger text as the unit of analysis. The researcher works on explicit and implicit Attitude too. For explicit Attitude, overtly evaluative/attitudinal words or combinations of words and phrases which clearly carry a positive or negative sense are studied. In contrast, identifying instances of implicit evaluative/attitudinal wordings in the utterance is not easy. Rather, the audience/respondent interpretation of the happening is more considered. The writer/speaker relies on the reader/listener's evaluation of events and characters.

At the first step, the Affect which deals with the choice of words for showing the positive and negative feelings of two genders will be studied. By referring to a mental state and using words for special emotions or at times by referring to physical emotion and describing manner that directly expresses emotion, feelings could be expressed directly. They could also be expressed implicitly by description of strange and uncommon manner that can be considered as an implicit sign of emotion or by using metaphor. At the second step, the researcher will examine the Judgment category to clarify the evaluation of males and females based on their behaviour and character which could be admired, criticised, praised, and condemned. At the end, the Appreciation of things related to two genders will be clarified; Appreciation of things includes the writer's Attitudes about two genders' belongings. Like Affect and Judgment, appreciation of things can be done positively or negatively (Martin & Rose, 2003).

Data Analysis and Discussion

Following (Martin & Rose, 2003), the researcher is to provide readers with available instruments for discourse analysis in SFL which is called Appraisal. This phase deals with different types of attitudes which are expressed in the selected short stories by Thomas Hardy. The first pair of Tables shows the writer's expression of feelings for both male and female characters. The second pair of Tables will focus on the judgement of characters and the last pair of Tables implies the evaluation of things for two genders.

IV. RESULTS

Attitude Analysis in *The Withered Arm*
Affect Analysis

As it was described before, there are some sub-categories in Affect analysis, some of which will be just concentrated upon in this part of the study namely as the positive and negative words. This is to show how the writer consciously or subconsciously has described males and females' feelings in a different way.

TABLE1.
FREQUENCY OF EVALUATIVE WORDS IN AFFECT ANALYSIS

	Positive	Negative
Male	3	12
Female	4	87

As it is shown in Table 1, there are 87 negative affects for female characters in the story which is nearly seven times more than the negative affects for male characters. Since the number of affected clauses is not equal for opposite genders, to calculate the number of Appraisal occurring for them may not seem to be a logical way to gain accurate results; therefore, the results have been transformed to percentage forms. The percentage output of Table 2 unveils discriminative attitude of the writer towards genders where he undervalues females by allocating just 4.3 percent of positive Affects for them, while he assigns 20 percent of it for his male characters; as a matter of fact, the female characters take in 80 percent of their Affect as negative.

TABLE2.
PERCENTAGE FREQUENCY OF EVALUATIVE WORDS IN AFFECT ANALYSIS

	Positive	Negative
Male	20 %	80%
Female	4.39%	95.60%

Providing an illustration will clarify the point much better.
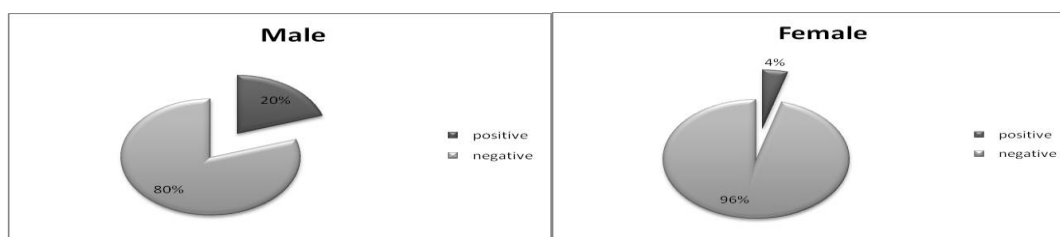
Figure1. Distribution of Evaluative Words in Affect Analysis

Judgement Analysis

As it has already been mentioned, Judgement is applied to construe people's attitudes to the way others behave and their character. According to Martin and White (2005), social and interpersonal values are judgements that appraise people's normality, capacity, or tenacity; they are put under the branch of Social Esteem. On the other hand, judgements of Social Sanction, which are used to make evaluations about morals, concern ethical or legal matter. Although both Judgements of Social Esteem and Social Sanction are formed by the special cultural and ideological situation in which they appear, the Judgements of Social Esteem have less social weight than Social Sanction. In the story, the analysis shows that the writer's judgement of his male characters is as high as 76.92% positive and just 23.07% negative, while his judgement of female characters is only 38.09% positive but 61.90% negative (Table 3). Yet another fact to prove his discrimination is that he has morally praised his male characters four times more than female characters and amazingly has morally condemned females three and half times more than males. The study of frequency and percentage of evaluative words in judgement analysis of the story can give the reader a clearer idea of this discrimination.

TABLE3.
PERCENTAGE FREQUENCY OF EVALUATIVE WORDS IN JUDGEMENT ANALYSIS

	Positive	Negative	Personal		Moral	
			Admire	Criticize	Praise	Condemn
Male	76.92%	23.07%	38.46%	15.38%	38.46%	7.69%
Female	38.09%	61.90%	28.57%	38.09%	9.52%	23.80%
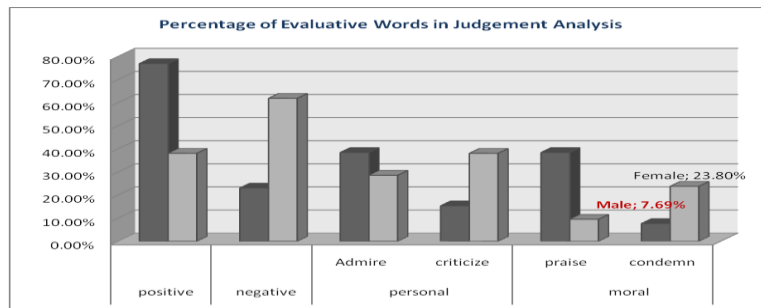
Figure2. Percentage Frequency of Evaluative Words in Judgement Analysis

Appreciation Analysis

The Appreciation of the things which is associated with male characters helps to give a firm mind to prove the hypothesis of disvaluing females against males. Here the subconscious mind of the writer has been crude enough towards his female characters to assign 100% percent positive appreciation of his male characters against the minor percentage of 5.55% for the females. This shocking difference is the bare evidence and proof to conclude the fact which is shown in Table 4.

TABLE4.
PERCENTAGE FREQUENCY OF EVALUATIVE WORDS IN APPRECIATION ANALYSIS

	Positive	Negative
Male	100%	_
Female	5.55%	94.44%
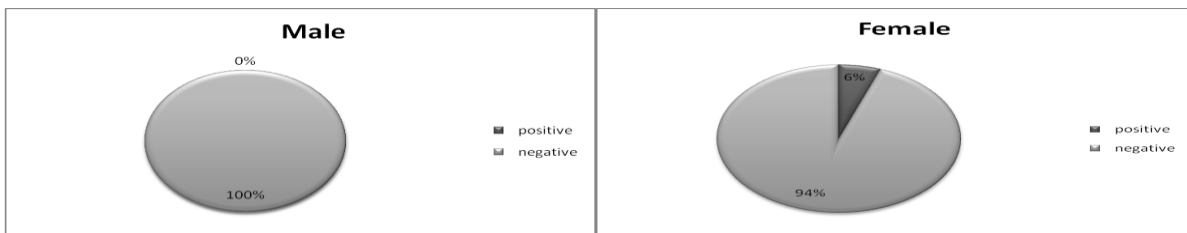
Figure3. Distribution of Evaluative Words in Appreciation Analysis

Attitude Analysis in The Melancholy Hussar of The German Legion
Affect Analysis

The results of the Affect analysis are in the same stream with other parts of the study to prove the discrimination. The number of positive Affects for male characters in this story is three times more than the same type of Affects for females, and consequently, the number of negative ones in females is twice male characters.

TABLE5.
PERCENTAGE FREQUENCY OF EVALUATIVE WORDS IN AFFECT ANALYSIS

	Positive	Negative
Male	18.18%	81.81%
Female	6.66%	93.33%
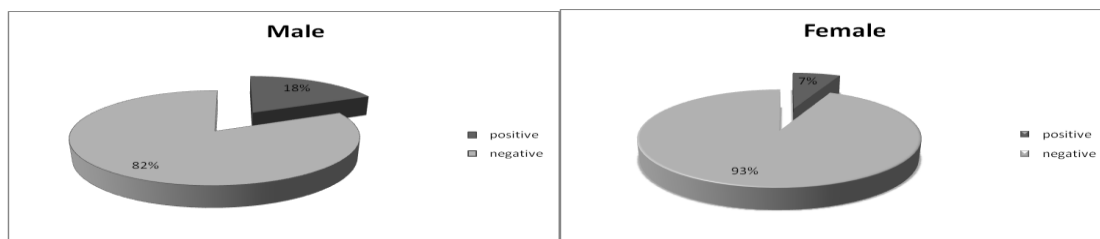
Figure 4. Distribution of Evaluative Words in Affect Analysis

Judgement Analysis

Judgement analysis results are another outstanding fact screening overwhelming masculine dominance in the story tone. Except for a slight imbalance in personal admiration in favour of female characters, all appreciations and valuation have been guaranteed for male characters. Yet, the so called admiration for female characters is only about four percent more than males, but in case for male characters the difference is so much higher (Table 6). The Figures in the judgement analysis and also in every section of the study speak better to reveal the writer's intention and his inclination towards his male characters, where he constantly disvalues the females.

TABLE6.
PERCENTAGE FREQUENCY OF EVALUATIVE WORDS IN JUDGEMENT ANALYSIS

	Positive	Negative	Personal		Moral	
			Admire	Criticize	Praise	Condemn
Male	66.66%	12.5%	29.16%	8.33%	41.66%	_
Female	55.55%	44.44%	33.33%	44.44%	22.22%	_
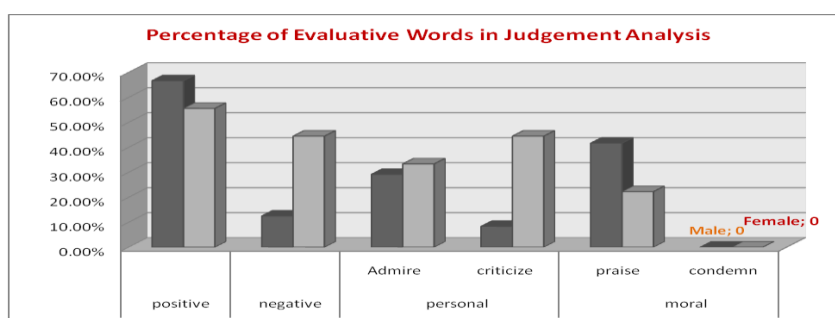
Figure5. Percentage Frequency of Evaluative Words in Judgement Analysis

Appreciation Analysis

The output of appreciation analysis, again, is in the course with discrimination of the opposite genders imposed by the writer to the whole story. Undermining feminine dignity and establishing splendour and magnificence for masculine force is highlighted by distinguishing positive and negative appreciations for male and female characters, where, once more, male characters are elevated by about 84 percent positive appreciation against humiliating 80 percent negative appreciation for female counterparts. This stream is tightly followed by the writer over and again and his discriminative view is traced throughout the story. Insistently, the writer is going to imply to his reader the superiority of his masculine society over female characters and generalize it to outer and bigger societies.

TABLE7.
PERCENTAGE FREQUENCY OF EVALUATIVE WORDS IN APPRECIATION ANALYSIS

	Positive	Negative
Male	83.33%	16.66%
Female	20%	80%
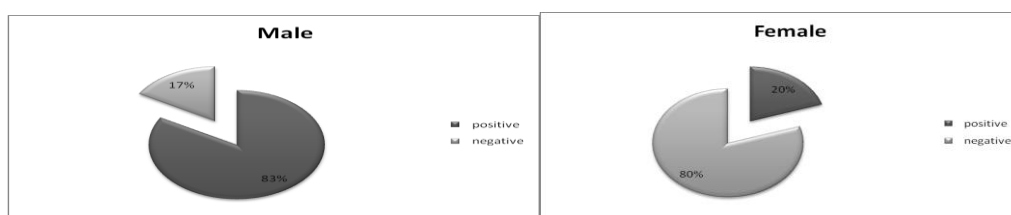
Figure6. Distribution of Evaluative Words in Appreciation Analysis

Interpretation and Explanation

Interpretations are generated through a combination of what is in the text and what is the interpreter's view point. From the point of the interpreter, the evaluative words which have been used by the writer in the selected stories, can determine the writer's different attitudes towards male and female. So the interpretations will be generated based on the

result of Appraisal system. As the results show, this Appraisal inequality is not simply a random result; the texts seem to be distinctively gendered and show sexist language. Mills (1995) for explaining the sexist language says: "by examining examples of usage such as the sex-specific pronoun use, the misuse of generics, address terms and the negative descriptions of females in a variety of texts, it is hoped to show that language-use can present and perpetuate a particular view of women"(pp. 83). This research reveals the writer's conscious or subconscious intention in the use of constant negative words and phrases to imply to his reader the female gender as an inferior to her male counterpart. This goes to extreme where by continuous application of these negative words, even women will incarnate a negative picture for themselves and their anticipation of themselves will shift in a negative way. As the results indicate, in order to express the feelings and things associated with female characters, the writer has frequently applied negative appreciations. In contrasting ethics and behaviour of the genders, Hardy has weighed the balance for male characters in a great deal, and he has appointed too little positive admiration for female characters for their social deeds. Therefore, it could be concluded that different Appraisals which have been used in Thomas Hardy's short stories determine the writer's sexist point of view in oppressing the females.

One of the effects of using sexist language as Sara Mills (1995) believes is that: "it may cause women to view themselves in a negative or stereotyped way. It may thus have an effect on the expectations women and men have of what women can do" (pp. 95). Some feminists see sexist language as symptomatic of discrimination and propose reformation. There is an alternative to these views, proposed by feminists such as Daly and Spender; they see sexist language as a casual factor in women's oppression (Daly & Sender, as cited in Mills, 1995). Negative appreciation of female characters in the stories will harmfully affect the women's dignity in the society, for sure. The interrelation of language and society is undeniably taken for granted, and subsequently, the suitable modification in language use will leave its positive feedback in the society. In Robin Lakoff's idea, sexism in language is a symptom of sexism in the community; it means that sexism within the society is reflected by the sexism in language (Lakoff, 1975). They argue that only by changing that wide sexism in the society will any change occur in language. Cameron (1992) believes that language is an extremely important element in the formation of our world-view and the way we think. She mentions that in order to change sexist language it is not enough to reform the language-use of individuals; the change has to be at an institutional level, at the level of what she calls the "gatekeepers of language" although it is a very difficult task. Obviously, such unequal presentation of men and women in the stories will result in destructive superiority and dominance of the male gender. Norman Fairclough states in his book *Language and Power* that his objective is to enhance consciousness of language and power and especially the ways language helps to the domination of a group of people by others (Fairclough, 1989). Sara Mills agrees with his aim in many ways, since analysis of language can help the reader be aware of ideologies of gender difference which are oppressive.

There are other frequent researches completed on different texts in the field of inequality of opposite genders, and in all of these researches the female gender has been regarded as inferior. Textbooks have been studied by many researches looking for various ways of sexism too. The importance of this work is obvious. Text books like other books, newspaper, journals, story books, etc. must be out of any kinds of racism and sexism.

Sunderland and other lexicographers of *The American Heritage School Dictionary* through a computer search of five million words available in American children's school books found that school books contain various ways of sexism; the majority of people in text books were male while there are almost equal boys and girls in school. The ratio of "*he*" to "*she*", "*him*" to "*her*" and "*his*" to "*hers*" was four to one; The number of men were seven times of the number of women and the number of boys were more than twice of the number of girls. Mothers were more than fathers, the ratio of wife to husband was three to one. It means that women are referred through their relation to men and children. It was suggested that the use of masculine pronoun "he" is for the unspecified singular subject but Sunderland's study of pronoun citation shows that out of 940 citation for he , 744 were used to refer to male humans, 128 to male animals, and 36 to persons in male-linked occupations; only 32 used to refer to unspecified singular subject. These figures show that large number of pronoun "*he*" does not refer to unspecified person but it is used for males. The reason for these findings is that most of the texts are written about men. Besides invisibility of women, this search shows that different sets of values, expectations, aims and expected lines have been defined for boys and girls. "Masculine" images are activity, strength, etc, while "feminine" images are inactivity and beauty. After reading, "he was the manliest of his sex and she was the loveliest of hers," a child would say that the word comparable to manly was lovely, not womanly. In the sentence, "the men are strong, virile, and graceful and the girl often beauties," we note that girls, not women, are paired with men and that virile is parallel to beautiful. A feminine figure, a feminine voice, and a feminine laugh are no match for masculine prerogatives, masculine egos, and masculine drives (Sunderland, 2006, pp. 136-137).

Nilsen (1977) says that girls' images in most books are dependents and followers. They are shown as "supportive and appreciative" of boys, boys are shown physically larger than girls. On the other hand, books which have more space for boys have better sells than those for girls.

According to what was said above, there is a necessity for language reform; as feminists believe language is not a neutral and transparent means of reality representation. The sexist language clearly reflects sexist social patterns and continuing the existence of sexist social patterns fails the success of language reform (Cameron, 1999).

Different kinds of sexism must be recognized and eliminated. Recognizing sexism available in story books and eliminating them is more important since these books are read by almost all the children and adolescents. By providing

materials which contain sexism, readers subconsciously accept the sexism and it will affect their ideology. It is like not giving descriptive realities to them. Texts which contain sexism are not descriptive, they are prescriptive. Invisibility and semantic derogation of women and stereotypes contradicts with the population of sexes, their jobs, roles, aims, etc (Mills, 2003).

V. Conclusion

This research was an attempt to investigate the association of Thomas Hardy's sexist point of view and his choice of descriptive vocabularies such as Appraisals for male and female characters in his selected stories. It was hypothesized that different Appraisals which have been used in Thomas Hardy's short stories may determine the writer's sexist point of view in oppressing the females.

To answer the research question which was: how has using special Appraisals for two genders helped Hardy to reflect his sexist prejudice in his short stories? *The Withered Arm* and *The Melancholy Hussar of the German Legion* were selected from the list of Hardy's short stories for analysis. The clauses in the stories containing Appraisals were numerically highlighted for the either gender, after which, they were grouped according to their sub-categories: Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation. The analysis was conducted upon the Appraisal analysis by Martin and Rose (2003); the results indicated the positive relationship between writer's hidden idea and his choice of words in his writings.

Current movements in the study of language and gender are supported by implementing Appraisal analysis in this research. The different expression of two genders through Appraisal analysis show that even though the hidden ideas are not explicitly expressed in the stories, the gendered inequalities are culturally constructed. It is easy to find contexts where these prejudice may exist, since this research has only dealt with a specific type of writing by a single writer. The outcome of the present research reveals that sexism in language is obvious in most of the texts and speeches, one of which is Thomas Hardy's short stories. With regard to the results of the Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation analysis, the research has detected a large number of negative Attitudes for females in the stories. So, the research clarifies negative views towards female characters that cause sexism, which is also generalized to the female gender in the real society. In most of the clauses during the analysis process similar patterns were encountered. This is due to the fact that the writer is already, subconsciously, influenced by this point of view and he is scattering it to the setting of his stories. They are the result of a social process, not a moment's thought. In the final section, the analysis stream results in a conclusion that the use of different Appraisals for describing male and female characters as a policy, subconsciously, makes readers adopt some discriminatory ideologies which lead to injustice in the society. Therefore, linguistic analysis can help understand the way somebody can achieve his/her goals in removing those oppressive ideas, one of which is the sexism in language. Thomas Hardy as one of the great writers has employed the language in an influential way and put together Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation for his male and female characters in a way that his readers, even women, not being aware of his sexist words against female enjoy reading and praise his works. Of course, in this thesis the researcher has just focused on the above-mentioned categories and it is necessary to mention that there are also other kinds of strategies in Appraisal analysis and more research is needed to study those strategies as well.

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Blended Learning in a University EFL Writing Course: Description and Evaluation

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Abstract—Though blended learning had been continuously adopted in an Academic English Writing course (AEW) in a key university in Beijing, no attempts had been made to describe this new learning environment or investigate its effectiveness and impact. To fill in the gap, the present paper describes and evaluates blended learning in this AEW course in terms of course design, material development and presentation, assignment submission and grading, student involvement, teacher reflection, and student evaluation. Results showed that the students highly appreciated and benefited from the blended learning employed in the course in varying ways: it helped increase student-student and student-teacher interactions, reduce or even eliminate communication anxiety, motivate them to become (more) independent and autonomous learners, and enhance their academic English writing ability, and so on.

Index Terms—blended learning, academic English writing, description, evaluation

I. INTRODUCTION

To optimize teaching and learning outcomes, computers have been increasingly applied in the teaching and learning of foreign languages in recent years (Beatty, 2003; Crook, 1994; Shang, 2007). Generally speaking, computer-assisted language teaching and learning (CALL) demonstrates a number of features in the enhancement of foreign/second language (FL/SL) learning, such as more language functions (Beatty, 2003; Chang, 2005; Crook, 1994), greater levels of participation (Gonza Iez-Bueno, 1998), reduced anxiety (Kessler, 2010; Ritter, 1993), and more motivation and interest and greater autonomy (Chang, 2005; Kessler & Bikowski, 2010; Leakey & Ranchoux, 2006; Vinther, 2011). "Multimedia-enhanced CALL is easily capable of creating learning situations of great fidelity or authenticity, both through the presentation of images of realia and through audio and video input that can present real world situations as realistically as television but with greater interaction" (Beatty, 2003, p. 22). Crook (1994) claimed that computer facilitated socially organized learning in the classroom rather than inhibited it. Chang's (2005) study revealed that students learning within a web-based environment with self-regulated learning strategies became more responsible for their own learning, more intrinsically orientated and more challengeable. Computers could also promote interaction through at least some of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) by providing a platform for collaboration and cooperation (Bahrani, 2011; Hwu, 1997).

When it comes to writing in a FL, FL learners usually face greater challenges, which can be attributed to a lack of language skills, culture-specific behaviors, and difficulty in interpreting hedged and indirect language (Baker & Bricker, 2010; Bell & Elledge, 2008; Jalilifar, 2010; Wold, 2011). Thus, both FL writing course instructors and learners often feel frustrated. Thus, as argued in Wold (2011), an effective instructional design model appropriate for online foreign language writing courses have not been found and designers of such a model should teach writing needs and should teach using a blended learning format (use of CALL and traditional classroom teaching and learning) instead of solely using an online learning format. It should be the same with traditional FL writing courses.

In a key university in Beijing, blended learning had been continuously employed in the Academic English Writing (AEW) course, yet not attempts had been made to describe this learning environment or investigate its effectiveness and impact, the same as what Beatty observed (2003). To fill in the gap, the present paper describes and evaluates blended learning in this AEW course in the University in terms of course design, material development and presentation, assignment submission and grading, student involvement, teacher reflection, and student evaluation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Along with the introduction of computers into classrooms, CALL has been widely used in various fields to facilitate the teaching and learning of different aspects of foreign languages, among which the persuasive applications include word processing, games, corpus linguistics, computer-mediated communication, www resources, adapting other materials for CALL, and personal digital assistants (Bahrani, 2011; Chang, Chang, Chen & Liou, 2008; Fidaoui, Bahous & Bacha, 2010; Liou, Yang & Chang, 2011; Romeo, 2008). These studies have predominantly revealed that CALL motivates learners and facilities learning. For example, Bush and Crotty (1991) compared videodisc instruction with traditional instruction and concluded that the use of videodisc exercises made practice inherently more meaningful than traditional text-based exercises. Montali and Lewandowski (1996) found that poor readers not only felt more

successful with bimodal presentation, but were more successful in terms of comprehending content.

The use of technology has also long been introduced to complement traditional writing classes (Chang et al., 2008; Fidaoui et al., 2010; Goldberg, Russell, & Cook, 2003; Liou et al., 2011; Shang, 2007). For example, Chang et al. (2008) developed an online collocation aid for EFL writers in Taiwan, aiming at detecting and correcting learners' miscollocations attributable to L1 interference. Relevant correct collocation as feedback messages was suggested according to the translation equivalents between learner's L1 and L2. The system utilized natural language processing (NLP) techniques to segment sentences in order to extract V-N collocations in given texts, and to derive a list of candidate English verbs that shared the same Chinese translations via consulting electronic bilingual dictionaries. After combining nouns with these derived candidate verbs as V-N pairs, the system made use of a reference corpus to exclude the inappropriate V-N pairs and singled out the proper collocations. The results showed that the system could effectively pinpoint the miscollocations and provide the learner with adequate collocations that the learner intended to write but misused and that this online assistant facilitated EFL learner-writers' collocation use. Shang (2007) examined the overall effect of using email on the improvement of writing performance in aspects of syntactic complexity, grammatical accuracy and lexical density and investigated the relation between the number of email exchanges and writing performance. Data collected from 40 non-traditional EFL students enrolled in an intermediate reading class at a university in Taiwan showed that students made improvements on syntactic complexity and grammatical accuracy, that exchanging email messages with their peers at least four times might have a greater overall improvement on their writing performance, and that the email approach was a positive strategy that helped improve students' foreign language learning and attitudes towards English. Thus the researcher suggested designing an effective email task to enhance foreign language writing development and attitudes.

Even so, as argued in Wold (2011), an effective instructional design model appropriate for online foreign language writing courses have not been found and designers of such a model should teach writing needs and should teach using a blended learning format instead of solely using an online learning format. It should be the same with traditional foreign language writing courses, because blended learning have been found to offer a process-oriented environment for collaboration, communication, confidence building, and better attitudes about writing that does not exist when working exclusively online (Chih-Hua, 2008; Clark & Olson, 2010; Colakoglu & Akdemir, 2010).

Blended learning, as defined by Thorne (2003, p. 2), "blends online learning with more traditional methods of learning and development". Kupetz & Ziegenmeyer (2005) referred to blended learning as "the purposeful arrangement of media, methods and ways of organizing learning situations through combining traditional media and methods with e-learning elements and possibilities" (pp. 179-180). As claimed by Neumeier (2005), blended learning consists of six parameters: (1) mode, (2) model of integration, (3) distribution of learning content and objectives, (4) language teaching methods, (5) involvement of learning subjects (students, tutors, and teachers), and (6) location. Among these six parameters, the two major modes are face-to-face and CALL. The mode which guides learners and where they often spend most of the time is called the lead mode; sequencing and negotiation of content is also done in the lead mode. The face-to-face phases are often obligatory while some online activities may not be (Neumeier, 2005). Giving learners this flexibility assumes that students are autonomous and will be responsible for their own learning (Grgurović, 2011).

Empirical studies on blended learning in language classes fall into comparison (Barr, Leakey, & Ranchoux, 2005; Chenoweth & Murday, 2003; Chenoweth, Green & Youngs, 2001; Scida & Saury, 2006) and noncomparison studies (Bañados, 2006; Grgurović, 2011; Stracke, 2007). The former examines the effectiveness of blended learning by comparing blended instruction (face-to-face together with CALL instruction) with traditional instruction (face-to-face without CALL instruction); and the latter investigates blended learning program design and implementation, and attitudes towards blended learning held by teachers and students. The blended learning classes in all the studies combined two modes: face-to-face in the classroom and CALL in the computer lab or student home via CALL programs, learning management systems (LMS), and the web, sometimes in conjunction with computer-mediated communication tools. Some studies made use of CALL technology features to set deadlines for exercises so students would complete them in a timely manner (Scida & Saury, 2006). Some studies showed that the learners improved their proficiency in a language skill (usually speaking and reading) because they could practice it both in the CALL mode and face-to-face mode (Bañados, 2006; Barr et al., 2005). Some studies revealed that students needed more support from the instructor in addition to a more detailed schedule of assignments and deadlines (Chenoweth et al., 2006). In some studies, some students observed that lessons and exercises were not connected or that the distribution of learning content was not parallel and thus dropped out of the blended learning class (Adair-Hauck et al., 1999; Green & Youngs, 2001; Stracke, 2007). Nineteen Asian students studying at an American university participated in Grgurović's (2011) study on the technology-enhanced blended-learning model in an ESL class in which the use of online CALL materials delivered through a commercially available LMS. The results indicated that the model successfully integrated modes and distributed learning content and that online speaking and pronunciation activities added value to instruction. The study also showed that the teacher's presence and assistance given to students during labs allowed for more individualized instruction than the teacher could provide in the classroom. In addition, the teacher participant believed that working on online materials in the lab helped less attentive students control their learning better than in the classroom.

Although blended learning has gained wide preference in recent years in recent years, it has not been well applied in writing courses or not much research has been done on blended learning in writing courses (Wold, 2011). The few

research in this area has indicated that blended learning creates a supportive and motivating environment for learners and enhances their independent writing skills in terms of quality and quantity (Kupetz & Ziegenmeyer, 2005; Thorne, 2003). Hence, more research is called for to better understand and use blended learning in FL/SL writing courses.

<div align="center">

III. FOCUS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

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As an instructor of an Academic English Writing (AEW) course for five consecutive terms since the spring term in 2009 in the University in Beijing, I have been employing both traditional style of teaching and the use of CALL during the process of the teaching and learning of the course. I have noticed, as Montali and Lewandowski (1996) did, that poor writers not only felt more successful with bimodal presentation, but were more successful in terms of comprehending content in this environment. Though the University has long introduced the use of computer and Internet into the traditional classroom teaching and learning of various courses, few empirical studies have been done to examine its effectiveness and impact, as what Beatty observed (2003) almost a decade ago. Likewise, even though blended learning had been continuously adopted in the AEW course, no research had ever been attempted to investigate this blended learning environment. Hence, the present paper describes and evaluates blended learning in the AEW course. Nevertheless, since blended learning had been employed since the start of this AEW course which targeted advanced learners across disciplines of the University, including undergraduate English and non-English majors in all years of study, it was rather difficult to design a pre- and post-test investigation of the effectiveness of blended learning in this course. Consequently, the assessment of this blended learning was achieved in terms of course design, material development, assignment grading, student involvement, teacher reflection, and student evaluation in the present paper, as detailed in the following sections.

Blended learning in the present study, as Grgurović (2011, p. 100) defined, refers to "face-to-face teaching and learning supplemented by an online CALL component" delivered through an online classroom platform developed and maintained by the University. In this blend, the students met in the classroom once a week (90 minutes) with the instructor (traditional classroom teaching and learning) and spent at least one hour in the computer lab or in their dormitories working on CALL materials.

Course description

Course objective. This course aimed to train students to write academic English (e.g., extended essays, project reports and research articles) (more) competently, meanwhile training them how to conduct a basic research project (e.g., survey, interview, observation). More specifically, by the end of the course, the students should be able to: 1) understand what is required in academic assignments, 2) understand the process involved and the approach to study needed, 3) understand how to structure and format library-based academic assignment, 4) understand the conventions used for citations and create a list of references, 5) understand the conventions of presentation, 6) locate sources, demonstrate knowledge of topic and relevant literature, 7) read extensively, using a range of reading strategies, make notes, paraphrase and summarize, 8) incorporate information from sources into writing and avoid plagiarism, 9) understand the need for a critical approach to academic reading and writing, 10) understand the need to develop own coherent argument, 11) know a range of grammatical structures and lexis appropriate to academic writing and use them properly, and 12) write competently, using a range of cohesive devices.

Course design. Some studies attribute poor instructional outcomes in FL writing to the instructional design of the courses, such as not integrating components to stimulate motivation in a topic that can often seem challenging for students (Colakoglu & Akdemir, 2010; Coryell & Chlup, 2007). To stimulate students' motivation and interest in academic English writing, the AEW course in the present study adopted blended learning, namely integrating technology into traditional classroom teaching and learning, in that it clearly has many advantages over using online or traditional formats (Bahrani, 2011; Wold, 2011).

The 16-week long AEW course in the present study generally divided teaching and learning into odd and even weeks: even weeks for lecturing and odd weeks for review (teacher review, peer review and group review) and discussion. Lecturing consisted of eight topics: introduction to academic English writing, introduction (with emphasis on the research problem and research statement) and conclusion, variables and sampling, literature review, primary data-collection methods, research design, results and discussion, and the writing up of the whole paper. During the term, the students had to complete five written tasks: a summary of an academic paper, an introduction and conclusion of a given paper, literature review report, research design, and a complete research paper. Towards the end of the course, each student was required to give an oral presentation of his/her research to the class. All the assignments, as reflected later by the course teacher and the students, required much reading and writing and were appropriately challenging, with each assignment gradually more competing than the preceding one. The teacher and the students met face-to-face once a week, each meeting lasting 90 minutes. For other times, they met online for individual and/or group discussion via a platform called Online Classroom (OC), a subplatform of a larger one created and supported by the University which offered information and links about almost every aspect of campus life such as course information and personal research projects to each teacher and student. Closely related to the present study was the OC platform, which provided a fairly convenient channel for interactions between the course teacher and the students and among the students, as presented below (see Diagram 1). Via this platform, the course teacher could make announcements, upload course materials, create new learning content, assign homework, check assignments, organize discussions, answer questions,

and view student profiles; and the students could download course materials, upload assignments or other files, ask questions, and initiate or participate in discussions. Though the course teacher could create new learning content and upload it to this platform, s/he could not make any learning content out of it. Nevertheless, the larger platform provided links to various available resources for both teachers and students to help create new learning content. Because of the platform and the easy access to Internet on campus, various computer or internet related ways (e.g., google, email, and online dictionaries) were encouraged/used to foster the learning of academic English writing as well as the language, such as searching for related works, writing up a review of related works, designing a research study, analyzing data, and writing up the paper, as suggested by Loucky (2005) and Sha (2010) and happened in Grgurović's (2011) course. And the course teacher and the students could communicate anytime and anywhere.

Diagram 1: The Online Classroom Platform (1)

Material development and presentation

The development of course materials abided by the following widely acknowledged rules: need, authenticity, text difficulty, range and style (Allwright, 1981; Benson & Voller 1997; Nunan 1989; Richards, 2001). To meet the specific needs of this AEW class, material development evolved around the aim of developing the ability to write academic English competently. For this purpose, all materials were taken from worldwide used academic writing textbooks (e.g., those compiled by McCormack and Slaght (2006) and Wyrick (2008)) and academic journals in various disciplines, with difficulty and topic scaffolded to tailor the students' academic knowledge and English proficiency. Likewise, the students were instructed explicitly different parts of an academic paper and were then trained to write different parts accordingly before they could finally produce a full research essay.

Meanwhile, as Krashen (1984) argued that it was reading that gave the writer the 'feel' for the look and texture and maintained that writing competence could be best derived from large amounts of reading of the target language, which was supported by many other researchers (Machin & Ward, 2007; Shanahan & Lomax, 1986), lots of articles from academic journals on diverse subjects were selected for the students to read and model on during the process of the AEW course.

As Beatty (2003, p. 142) said, "In a CALL program, it is important to have information structured on a series of levels encouraging readers operating at various levels, at any point, to delve deeper into explanations of the content", the course lectures and materials were developed and presented according to the level of difficulty and the progress of academic English writing during the term, as shown in Diagram 2.

Diagram 2: The Online Classroom Platform (2)

Assignment submission and grading

The students' written work was submitted via the OC platform. Since the course emphasized process-oriented and project-based writing and enormously encouraged revision and rewriting, the students might submit several drafts of the same writing task. Thanks to the platform, it was extremely easy for both the teacher and students to check and track the submission of assignments, as illustrated in Diagram 3.

Diagram 3: The Online Classroom Platform (3)

All the submitted assignments were read and commented with a tracking system from three levels: sentence level, paragraph level, and discourse level, as suggested and practiced by Yang (2004). Sentence level grading focused on word choice and collocation, as well as grammatical and spelling mistakes, which were often highlighted for self-correction; paragraph-level grading was mainly concerned with paragraph structure, paragraph development and coherence, and discourse-level grading involved discourse structure, thesis development, and global coherence and cohesion, as illustrated by the following example.
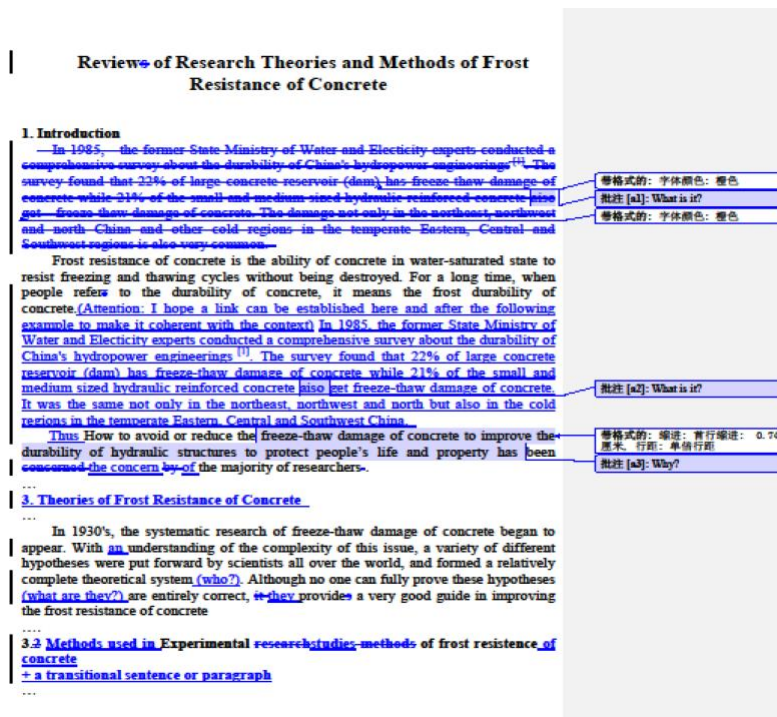
Thus, it was easy for the students to notice the mistakes they had made, the changes, revisions and suggestions given by the course teacher at different levels. With everything electronic, it was also easy for them to compare and contrast different drafts of the same writing task and read each other's writing. Meanwhile, since all the assignments were submitted and graded via the same platform, the students were able to obtain immediate feedback on progress.

Student involvement

During the term, the students were required to be highly involved in every stage of the process of developing the ability to write academic English competently. To access the learning content and complete their assignments, they ought to check the OL platform frequently to download and upload files of various kinds; they had to use various means to search for related articles and books in their own respective fields for different purposes; they were required to critically read the articles and books they had found, model on them, and cite appropriately in their own writing; they were encouraged to peer review each other's writing and report their research to the class for public discussion; and they were strongly advised to reflect on their own writing at certain intervals, post their questions and comments on the OC platform, and participate in various discussions initiated at the platform. More importantly, they were repeatedly encouraged and motivated to update their literature review, reflect on their thinking and writing, and revise their writing on the same topic until they felt satisfied, as Turuk (2008) noticed that students learned (more) effectively when reflecting on their new surroundings and changing their beliefs based on these reflections. Consequently, the locus of control varied from task to task and from person to person, as happened in Grgurović's (2011) study.

Teacher reflection

The course teacher, a Ph.D in applied linguistics, was in her late thirties and experienced in teaching English writing for general and academic purposes. When the present study was conducted, she was asked to comment on the blended learning environment in her AEW course and its impact on the students and their learning of academic English writing. When looking back, the course teacher believed that the OC platform was extremely useful, in that it helped reduce the students' anxiety and increase interactions between the teacher and the students and among the students, which ultimately facilitated both the teaching and learning of academic English writing. This is best illustrated by her comments,

because of the platform, we can send messages, download and/or upload materials any time. Because it is online, the students feel more comfortable and less anxious to ask questions and discuss among themselves and with me. Given the fact that both the students and I can obtain immediate feedback from each other, it's more helpful for us to adjust our teaching and learning in time.

As reported in Ritter's (1993) study, the students' anxiety levels were lowered when they used the technology and they thus became more active participants in the learning process. Liu, Moore, Graham and Lee (2003) also commented that ''positive affective states (i.e., enjoyment, anxiety) can provide additional incentive for students to learn. A positive emotional state could help increase student enthusiasm for a subject matter'' (p. 263). Likewise, the students' anxiety levels were (greatly) reduced in the present study so that they became more confident and willing to interact with their peers and the course teacher.

Feedback is essential in any teaching and learning setting (Wold, 2011), which pushes both teaching and learning on the right track. As found in Liou et al. (2011), the OC platform in the present study enabled the possibility of immediate feedback, which not only facilitated both teaching and learning but motivated the students to work harder.

Meanwhile, the course teacher commented that because the students were highly involved in every stage of the process of learning academic English writing, as evidenced in their behavior in class and submitted assignments, they were fairly motivated and did unexpectedly well in academic English writing. Learners' motivation has been found to be improved in a computer-assisted learning environment in a number of studies (Chang, 2005; Fidaoui et al., 2010; Guthrie & Richardson, 1995). As Chang (2005) commented, web-based learning often places a variety of demands on learners that exceed those typically experienced in traditional teacher-centered classrooms. Learners in this environment are encouraged to construct knowledge for themselves and to have the control of their own learning. Consequently, they are more motivated because it provides them an environment to take charge of their own learning and control their own learning process.

Student evaluation

As required by the University, each student enrolled in a course must fill in a questionnaire to evaluate the course toward the end of the term so that s/he could register courses for the coming term. This evaluation questionnaire consisted of 11 items and an open-ended question. These 11 items, all on a scale of 1-100, measured the following dimensions: teacher's attitude (item 1), teaching (items 2-3), the teacher (items 4 & 8-9), teaching materials (item 5), assignment (item 6), assessment (item 7), benefit from the course (item 10), and an overall evaluation of the course (item 11). The open-ended question aimed to collect students' comments on any aspect of the course. Though its validity and reliability had been repeatedly challenged by researchers and professors across disciplines over the years of the University, this questionnaire had been continuously employed in the University as a principal approach to evaluate teachers' teaching of various courses in different areas targeting at diverse student populations. True be the challenges, this questionnaire might not objectively evaluate a course. Nevertheless, since it had been consistently administered across terms, meaning varying groups of students used the same questionnaire to evaluate the same course or even the same course teacher, this type of data collected across terms might to a large extent objectively reflect how the course was taught and how effective it was.

The students of this Academic English Writing (AEW) course were generally advanced undergraduate learners of English from various disciplines and years of study, including English majors, of the University. Each term, around 10-20 of them, with an age range of 17-22, registered for and stayed in the course till the end.

Because of some reasons, this AEW course in the present study was exempt from student evaluation in some terms.

Hence, the results of student evaluation of only three terms were available, as summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1:
STUDENT EVALUATION OF THE AEW COURSE ACROSS TERMS

	2009 spring (N = 17)	2010 spring (N = 13)	2011 Autumn (N = 11)
(1) The teacher is enthusiastic, serious, dedicated, and educational.	96.98	100	100
(2) The teaching is clear, with a focus on the important and difficult points.	90.13	100	100
(3) The teaching is vivid, attractive and inspiring.	92.43	92.56	97.82
(4) The teacher interacts with the students, encourages them to ask questions, and guide them on the right track.	94.87	100	100
(5) Course materials are helpful.	92.43	98.34	97.78
(6) Assignments and other types of training facilitate the learning of the course.	96.98	100	100
(7) Assessment and tests motivate the students to learn more.	92.43	98.34	95.56
(8) The teacher encourages originality and independent thinking.	88.92	98.34	97.82
(9) The teacher gives advice on after-class learning.	100	100	100
(10) I benefit from this course.	96.98	98.34	97.82
(11) Overall evaluation of the course.	96	100	95

Note: N = number of students

As noted from Table 1, the students of each term highly evaluated the course, with a score range of 95 to 100 (item 11). The mean score of each item across terms was also high, ranging from 88.92 to 100. Alternatively, the students of the three terms all believed that the teacher was enthusiastic, dedicated, inspiring, encouraging, and helpful, that the teacher interacted with them well, and that they enormously benefited from the course.

Consistent with the survey results, the students' responses to the open-ended question revealed that they highly evaluated the teacher and the course. Among the 20 students of the three terms who answered the open-ended question, 20 (100%) commented that they were deeply impressed and motivated by the teacher's responsibility and that they gained a lot from the course. 17 (85%) reflected that the OC platform provided for them a convenient channel for greater communication with the others, as reported in many other studies (Gonza Iez-Bueno, 1998; Liu et al., 2003; Ritter, 1993). 16 (80%) believed that they became more confident users of various computer and Internet-related approaches to help them through different stages of academic English writing, as found in Kessler (2010). 11 (55%) claimed that the OC platform motivated them to become more independent and autonomous learners, as found in Fidaoui et al. (2010), Bahrani (2011) and Leakey and Ranchoux (2006) who discovered that blended learning enhanced student motivation and promoted their autonomy in the use of the multimedia environment.

10 (50%) of the respondents wrote that their English was also greatly improved by learning how to write academic English (more) competently. 6 (30%) maintained that the OC platform enabled them to maximize their interaction and gain from each other and the teacher, as reported by their counterparts in Roed (2003) and Ritter (1993).

4 (20%) of the 20 respondents were so happy that they successfully survived the course though it was tough and challenging.

As such, as happened in Wiebe and Kabata's (2010) and Mathews-Aydinli and Elaziz's (2010) studies, both the course teacher and the students held fairly positive attitudes towards the use of blended learning in the Academic English Writing course and appreciated highly the approach.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The present paper describes and evaluates the blended learning in an Academic English Writing course in a key university in Beijing in terms of course design, material development and presentation, assignment submission and grading, student involvement, teacher reflection, and student evaluation.

Aiming to train students to write academic English (more) competently and largely depending on the online classroom platform, this Academic English Writing course had employed various computer and Internet-related approaches to involve, motivate and inspire the students to be actively engaged in various stages of academic English writing. Both the course teacher's reflections and student evaluation across terms revealed that the students highly appreciated and benefited from this blended learning in varying ways: it helped increase student-student and student-teacher interactions, reduce or even eliminate communication anxiety, motivate the students to become (more) independent and autonomous learners, and enhance their academic English writing ability, and so on, as found in numerous existing studies (Kessler & Bikowski, 2010; Kupetz & Ziegenmeyer, 2005; Roed, 2003; Vinther, 2011; Wiebe & Kabata, 2010).

As revealed in the present study as well as other studies (Bahrani, 2011; Beatty, 2003; Roed, 2003; Vinther, 2011; Wiebe & Kabata, 2010), CALL has many advantages over traditional classroom teaching and learning such as providing motivation and autonomy for learners, flexible learning, immediate and detailed feedback, reducing anxiety,

and enhancing student involvement and participation. The use of hypertext, hypermedia, and multimedia enables teaching and learning different from the traditional way, which often seems to be more motivating and inspiring. Nevertheless, in spite of the positive feedback from the students in successive years in the present study, it should be noted that computer can never replace teachers, who should be responsible for developing appropriate CALL programs and caring about students' progresses, as suggested in Nunan (1987) and Williams (1998). Teachers, as suggested by Richard (1997), need to select learning activities, prepare students for new learning, present learning activities, ask questions, conduct drills, check students' understanding, provide opportunities for practice of new items, monitor students' learning, give feedback on student learning and review and re-teach when necessary.

Finally, due to various constraints, several limitations exist in the present study, the most striking of which is that the subject matter emerged from the data but was not the initial focus of investigation. The questionnaire, in particular, was not designed to assess the effectiveness of the blended learning adopted in the Academic English Writing course, but for a more general purpose. Hence, to better examine the impact of blended learning in writing courses in Chinese EFL contexts, more systematic investigations are required. In particular, a pre- and post-test design is called for to assess the effectiveness and impact of this blended mode of learning academic writing English.

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Caryl Churchill's *Vinegar Tom*: Beyond Feminism?

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Abstract—**Caryl Churchill's *Vinegar Tom* is a critique of patriarchy (especially patriarchy fueled by religious extremity), given added scorn with implicit sallies on capitalist tendencies. The repression of women by patriarch standards is embodied in the victimization of a number of deviant females living in a village in 17th century England. However, there are also instances of self-victimization which do not fit into the patriarchal pattern of inhibition, but rather provoke apparently undecided questions, fulfilling Churchill's expectation of playwrights in general who, according to her, "don't give answers; they ask questions" (quoted in Aston, Diamond, 2009, p. 10). Following her own precept, Churchill mocks religious fanaticism harboring belief in witches and their association with the devil, while simultaneously asking unanswered questions implicit in the "devilish" behavior of her characters.**

Index Terms—**Caryl Churchill, feminism, 17th century witch-hunts, patriarchy, oppression of women**

Interviewing with Linda Fitzsimmons the "tall lithe Caryl Churchill" who "moves through the world with the same brisk and graceful angularity that propels her plays" (Keyssar, 1983, p. 198) leaves no doubt about her orientations: "I've constantly said that I am both a socialist and a feminist" (1989, p. 89). Such confidence, no doubt, arises to a high degree from her character "[y]et it is important to understand that the feminist climate of the 1970s gave Churchill 'a context for thinking of' herself 'as a woman writer.'" (Aston, Diamond, 2009, p.3). The historical moment is a key factor in conditioning self-awareness and personal development which, especially fragile in the case of female writers, entails literary arrest by circumstances of gender, race or class as was the fate of those from earlier generations or the widening of artistic horizons "in a climate of feminist change," when "theater horizons presented the 'woman writer' with more opportunities than before" (Aston, Diamond, 2009, pp. 3,4), as turned out for writers such as Churchill in the 1970s. In such a climate, Churchill began working with the Monstrous Regiment women's theater company in 1976; *Vinegar Tom* is a result of her collaboration with this company, a collaboration which "brought Churchill 'both artistic and intellectual stimulation and also a recognition that she belonged to a [woman's] movement.'" (Aston, Diamond, 2009, p.4). It is the product of an age, playwright and company highly conscious of voluntary feminism.

Feminism for Churchill involves gender concerns grappling simultaneously with issues of class in a social context; she felt strongly about both feminism and socialism not willing to solicit a form of one that would exclude the other (Aston, Diamond, 2009, p.4). Churchill could never come to terms with capitalist sentiments and, as her whole career attests, she repeatedly "returns to the pathologies induced by money–lust and to the suffering caused by the dreadful disparities capitalism creates between those who own and those who owe" (Howard, 2009, p.36). *Vinegar Tom* wraps Churchill's historical moment, feminism and socialism into an intertwined whole. And yet the play provokes some questions from the depths of its internal associations which seem to have a stake beyond feminism.

Written in 1976 when the author was also working on another play, *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, *Vinegar Tom* shares with the former "a sense of history trampling the individual spirit" (Gussow, 1992, p. 14). The play, under the pretext of witches and witch-hunting in the 17th century, rather than being about "evil, hysteria and possessions by the devil" (Churchill, 1985, p.130) is, in Churchill's own words, about "poverty humiliation and prejudice, and how women accused of witchcraft saw themselves" (p. 130). It includes a number of women deviant from the envisaged female roles of 17th century society where "the women who do not fit into the expected female roles are the ones declared as witches" (Solomon, 1981, p. 51). The play, however, is not a mere historical narrative. In her study of "witches" Churchill "discovered for the first time the extent of Christian teaching against women;" she also realized that there existed "connections between medieval attitudes to witches and continuing attitudes to women in general" (Churchill, 1987, p.39). Thus in the play she brings the 17th century into the present asking contemporary society whether it too *wants* to see evil in women: "evil women/is that what you want to see?/On the movie screen/of your own wet dream" (*Vinegar Tom* 21; 85-9). In preparing for the play she had realized "how petty and everyday the witches' offenses were, and how different the atmosphere of actual witch-hunts seemed to be from [her] received idea, based on slight knowledge of the European witch hunts and films and fiction" reaching the conclusion "that witchcraft existed in the minds of its persecutors" (Churchill, 1987, p.39), rather than being a historical phenomenon. Thus her question in the final song of the play "Is that what you want to see?" implies that "Evil women" are seen when they are wanted to be

seen "in the minds of their persecutors." As for past, as for present. If the witch can be "seen" in the mind of the 17th century persecutor, then *Vinegar Tom* may well ask every woman in contemporary society to "Look in the mirror tonight" (20; 63) and ask herself "Would they have hanged you then?" (20; 64). Having done no wrong her answer would be negative. Yet, as *Vinegar Tom* attests, those who were hanged "They were *gentle* witches /with *healing* spells" (20; 46-7, emphasis added); they had no other fault than being "desperate witches/ with no way out but the other side of hell" (20; 60-1). They too had done no wrong. Therefore the contemporary woman should want to know "Who are the witches now?" (20; 39), and how she herself is possibly being "hanged." "Ask how they're stopping you now" (20; 65). The destinies of women, past and present, are intertwined in the fusion of history, spectacle and song. In this fusion the play ignores historical boundaries and, in our reading, solely feministic concerns, in its aspiration for deeper roots imbedded in universal human character. It reaches out beyond the particulars of a fragment of historical time and probes beyond insistence on a specific outlook in order to engage with the generalities of human nature.

The first of *Vinegar Tom's* deviant, unconventional women is Alice. The play opens with a scene following the sexual encounter of Alice with a man. The Man asks her "so you think that was no sin we did" (1; 43) to which she answers "If it was I don't care" (1; 44). Not only does she not care about sinning, she would actually be happy about it if others would leave her alone: "Any time I'm happy someone says it's a sin" (1; 46-7). She is doing what makes her happy and thus for her it cannot be sin. However, her Christian, patriarchal society is unable to comprehend, nevertheless accept such liberalism. Even the very Man himself, having barely finished taking pleasure in her, construes their situation as a devilish one implying Alice's witchcraft and trying to wrest some sort of confession from her. Alice, however, has no care about the devil and is too innocent to admit knowing anything about him:

MAN: If you come with me and give me body and soul, you'll never want in this world.

ALICE: Are you saying that as a man?

MAN: Am I saying it as the devil?

ALICE: If you're saying it as a man I'll go with you. There's no one round here knows me going to marry me. There's no way I'll get money. I've a child, mind, I'll not leave the child. (1; 31-40)

Still, despite her innocence of the devil, Alice is part of the society where devil and witch are both realities of the material world. When the Man mentions a witch hunt in Scotland, Alice is immediately intrigued:

ALICE: Did you? A real witch? Was she a real one?

MAN: She was really burnt for one.

ALICE: Did the spirits fly out of her like black bats? Did the devil make the sky go dark? I've heard plenty tales of witches and I've heard some called witch, there's one in the next village some say and others say not, but she's nothing to see. Did she fly at night on a stick? Did you see her flying? (1; 90-100).

Alice's remarks may be supposed ironic; the irony, however, deems more a subjective insinuation than a reflection of her words. Her attitude signals a society which has had her believe there is only one he–devil, yet plenty of she–witches. She truly believes if a witch is a "real" witch "spirits fly out of her like black bats" and the devil with whom the witch has a pact will "make the sky go dark." The non-occurrence of such phenomena does not reveal the duplicitous nature of belief in witch; rather, it proves the inauthenticity of the woman labeled as witch. Alice-and by implication any other deviant female- is the first victim of the misogynistic scorn of *Vinegar Tom's* society.

The next victim is Joan Noakes, Alice's mother, an old woman who has had lesser days of poverty in her past. Joan's only connection to witchcraft is her appearance – she is old and wrinkled, poor and dressed in rags – and her name, which evokes the names of Joan Williford and Joan Cardien, both convicted of witchcraft in the 16th century and executed consequently (qtd. in Khozaei Ravari, 2010, p. 124). Otherwise she's a normal woman – only deviant. The patriarchal norm for a woman in Joan's position is a grandmother sitting silently in a corner enjoying the sight of her grandchildren and maybe scolding them lovingly every now and again: "nobody loves you when you're old,/unless your someone's gran./Nobody loves you/unless you keep your mouth shut" (12; 49-52). But for Joan there is no such conformity. She says to Alice "If we'd each got a man we'd be better off" (3; 33). She would like to have a man and is not ashamed of it even though such desire would make others' "blood run cold". Joan is the "old woman" of whom the chorus sings:

I met an old woman

Who made my blood run cold.

You don't stop wanting sex, she said,

Just because you're old. (3; 40-44)

Also, in addition to being a socio-economic failure, Joan drinks which adds to her already dire predicament. Joan is poor. She drinks. She would like to have a man. She is now an ideal candidate for accusations of witchcraft.

Alice's friend, Susan, is not deviant in the sense that Alice and her mother are but she is also not totally at home in the patriarchal society as is Margery, Joan's neighbor. Having had several miscarriages and having "[n]early died last time" (5; 28) Susan's present pregnancy is a serious burden that she can neither endure nor dare put an end to, having been weaned on the idea that "I must think on Eve who brought the sin into the world that got me pregnant. I must think on how woman tempts man, and how she pays God with her pain having the baby" (5; 38-42). In this confusion of natural instinct and patriarch–oriented religious inculcation she is pulled both ways: "I don't want it but I don't want to be rid of it. I want to be rid of it, but not to do anything to be rid of it" (8; 15-17). Finally, influenced by Alice and

Helen, the cunning woman, who provokes her with a mildly sarcastic yet apparently indifferent "[i]f you won't do anything to help yourself you must stay as you are" (8; 18-19), she goes through with Ellen's medication but, ultimately, the patriarchal values of *Vinegar Tom's* society get the better of her. She is accused of being a witch for destroying her baby and is gullible enough to accept the accusation: "I was a witch and never knew it. I killed my babies. I never meant it. I didn't know I was so wicked" (19; 21-23). She is totally subdued with the belief that woman must suffer from the sin Eve brought into the world and if she is unwilling to do so she must be wicked and a witch. In Susan's case the man/woman relation reaches its endmost polarization with the former pole of the binary achieving its age-old desire: "the oppression of women happens because men want and like to dominate women and act out their hostility towards them" (Johnson, 2005, p. 28). Susan's identity has been totally dissolved into the ideal role of patriarchal femininity.

More fortunate than the other victims is Betty. She is the daughter of a landowner and as such has less to fear in terms of witchcraft accusations. However, she is also victimized by patriarchy in that her marriage to a man has been decided-being highly beneficial for her parents-and since she is not willing to consent to the marriage, is being "treated" by a male doctor, presumably to be brought to her senses and realize her folly in trying to reject such an opportunity. Therefore, although "Betty's usefulness as the glue in an economic alliance protects her from accusations of witchcraft" yet "the cruel medical treatment and forced marriage presents her with inexorable grim prospects" (Kritzer, 1991, p. 92). In her own words her situation is pitiful:

Why am I tied? Tied to be bled

Why am I bled? Because I was screaming

Why was I screaming? Because I'm bad.

Why was I bad? Because I was happy

Why was I happy? Because I ran out by myself and got away from them. (6; 1-6)

But the patriarchal view has everything under cold control; as the Doctor "wisely" pronounces: "hysteria is a woman's weakness. Hysteron, Greek, the womb. Excessive blood causes an imbalance in the humors. The noxious gases that form inwardly every month rise to the brain and cause behaviour quite contrary to the patient's real feelings" (6; 11-17). Betty does not know her own good nor even her own feelings; her "real" feelings will be duly shown her by the male Doctor who knows her "humors" better than herself. After all, he is a *man* and she, a mere woman.

The final victim, Ellen, the cunning woman, is a real threat to *Vinegar Tom's* male-oriented Christian society: her methods are "as great a threat (to the Catholic Church, if not the Protestant) as her results" since she relies "on her senses rather than on faith or doctrine" (Ehrenreich, English, 1973, p. 14). Ellen offers herbal treatment to women. Medical treatment is solely a male prerogative; she is trespassing into dangerous male territory. Working in this territory she also achieves economic independence which adds to her already highly presumptuous course of action. A woman "who earns her own living outside of the monetary system and works outside the sanctioned medical/male establishment" (Reinelt quoted in Fitzsimmons, 1989, p. 32), is a highly likely candidate for the witchcraft prize, hanging. Of the five victimized women, Joan and Ellen are hanged and the other three remain in a precarious balance of patriarchal whims. The overall estimation of *Vinegar Tom's* patriarchal society, and by analogy of its presentation in contemporary theater, patriarchy in general, is that "women's autonomous desires are seen as punishable offenses because they are committed without official sanctions" (Merill, 1988, p. 82).

The subjugation of women by men is taken for granted from the feminist point of view and aimed at with the most biting slander in feminist discourse since man is at the root of woman's dilemmas. Although *Vinegar Tom* is a feminist work, yet it probes deeper than a superficial gloss on a fragment of history for the purpose of exposing patriarchy. Put in the words of a founding member off Monstrous Regiment (the company that produced the play) Gillian Hanna:

We had a very real feeling that we didn't want to allow the audience to get off the hook by regarding it as a period piece, a piece of very interesting history. Now a lot of people felt their intelligence was affronted by that ... [but] I believe that the simple telling of the historical story, say, is not enough. (qtd. In Frances Savilonis, 2004, p. 99)

Vinegar Tom seems to sense a more human, more universally cajoling exertion at stake that surpasses the male/female binary and spies into human character itself. It senses a subtle nuance of mischief, deeper than the rigid insinuations of patriarchal convention, undulating unawares in the depths of the mystery which is mortal identity. This veiled influence lurks between the lines of the play where blatant male repression of the female characters daringly manifests itself; it shows in the transparent associations of those very characters with and among themselves.

After her sexual encounter with the Man, Alice pleads with him to take her to London. She is willing even to leave her old mother to fend for herself:

ALICE: Would you take me to London? I've nothing to keep me here except my mother and I'd leave her. (1; 70-2)

Although as their conversation continues, the Man asks "Will you kiss my arse like the devil makes his witches?" (1; 84-5), Alice is not offended and continues amiably "I'll do what gives us pleasure. Was I good just now?" (1; 86-7). She keeps up her insistent pleading with him to take her until the man finally bursts out in reproach: "A whore? Take a whore with me?" (1; 124), to which Alice only responds with a mild "I'm not that" (1; 125). And again the Man's verbal attack shows his disgust:

MAN: What are you then? What name would you put to yourself? You're not a wife or a window. You're not a virgin. Tell me a name for what you are" (1; 126-9).

Alice's response to this evident show of aversion to her is very telling:

ALICE: You're not going? Stay a bit.

…………..

MAN: Get away, will you

ALICE: Please

MAN: Get away

She pushes her and she falls

ALICE: Go to hell then, go to the devil you devil

………………

ALICE: But come back. I'll not curse you. Don't you curse. We were friends just now

MAN: You should have behaved better.

ALICE: Will I see you again? (1; 130-148)

And her pleading with him continues until he finally departs with "You won't be seeing me" (1; 165-6).

Alice's desire to go with the Man even at the price of sacrificing her old mother is understandable; her dire state of poverty and infamous reputation as a prostitute has made her life unbearable. Her passionate yearning to flee from her village is sanctioned by her abject misery. Even her mild response to his patriarchal naming maybe justifiable. From the man's perspective, being neither wife nor widow nor virgin which are the acceptable norms of his conventional mindset, Alice is a "whore." His evident disgust in her for being none other than a whore must be somehow warranted for him in the light of his very recent pleasure in her body. The pardon of bewitched surrender to the devil, can be that which allows for his pleasure yet vindicates his disregard of her. His fantasy of being possessed by the devil excuses his momentary sexual satisfaction yet exonerates his disgusted outburst at her impropriety, her being only a vile whore or witch:

MAN: You don't think I'm sent you by the devil? Sometimes I think the devil has me. And then I think there is no devil. And then I think the devil would make me think there was no devil. (1; 73-7)

Of course he cannot be blamed since the devil "has" him. It is she who is accountable since no one "has" her; according to his patriarchal doctrine she is "naturally evil." Even though it could be expected of Alice to show a slightly more vehement response to his labeling her a whore, her gentle "I'm not that" is, in light of her dire situation, understandable. However, after his outburst ending with "Tell me a name for what you are" her pleas for his staying just "a bit" longer go beyond social circumstances and the margins imposed by patriarchal subjugation and reach further down surpassing female identity shaped by patriarchy, into human character. Sexual love between Alice and the Man is impossible (Diamond, 1988, p. 197). It is evident from his remarks that the Man has no further interest in her, as it is equally evident that he cannot be available to her emotionally or of use to her economically . Yet Alice is not only unresentful of his coarse behavior and remarks coming barely after having used her, but pleads with him to remain. Even days after their encounter Alice is still thinking of the Man. She is no child; she is a mother with child. She knows that a man of any rank would want nothing to do with a poor disreputable woman like her, yet she "could do with it now" she says; she "could do with walking across that field again and finding him there just the same" (5; 70-3). From a feminist perspective using her as he did would suffice for the Man to be the target of interminable scorn for Alice; yet, obviously she is no feminist. Nor does *Vinegar Tom* display any emotional outburst of feminist scorn.

Margery and Jack are the well-to-do neighbors of Joan and Alice. Margery in Joan's words is a "woman comfortable off with a fine man and a nice field and five cows" (4; 48-50) and many other possessions, enough to make her smugly comfortable. Therefore the probability of any capitalist-based competitive tension between her and the old poverty-stricken Joan can only prove unrealistic illusion. When Joan goes to Margery's dairy to ask her for a little yeast she is answered with more than a rejection. Joan's request starts innocently enough:

JOAN: A little small crumb of yeast and God will bless you for kindness to your poor old neighbor (4; 58-60).

However, Margery's unresponsiveness leads to a more heated conversation culminating in her unreasonable accusation of stealing:

MARGERY: There's nobody curses me. Now get out of my dairy. Dirty old woman you are, smelling of drink, come in here day after day begging, and stealing, too, I shouldn't wonder. (4; 85-89)

Margery's "I shouldn't wonder" obviously shows that she herself does not believe Joan to be a thief but she accuses her anyway, adding a biting, uncalled-for share of cruelty. And thereafter Margery repeats once more "Get out of my dairy" (4; 92-3). The possessive "my" used twice in succession has some implications even though it may be a sign of idiosyncrasy, but when a few lines later it is repeated again in Margery's "Now get out, I'm making my butter" (4; 97-8), it is clear that she feels no feministic companionship between herself and her old, pitiful female neighbor. It is her dairy and her butter. The three repetitions of "my" juxtaposed with Joan's plea for "a little small crumb of yeast" also evokes a critique of heartlessness induced by capitalist values.

Some time after Margery's encounter with Joan which ends in Joan's emphatic cursing of Margery's "man" and "fields" and "cows" and all else that comes into her mind (4; 101-5), Jack and Margery have problems. Their calves swell and stench and Margery feels she has terrible pains. Jack gives the first interpretation, imputing these misfortunes to his sins: "My sins stinking and swelling up" (7; 67). It is Margery who encourages another explanation:

MARGERY: If it's not God.

JACK: What?
MARGERY: If it's not God sends the trouble
JACK: The devil?
MARGERY: One of his servants. If we're bewitched, Jack, that explains all.
JACK: If we're bewitched… (7; 72-77)

And from here, concluding who the witch might be is not much of a mystery. Later they go to Ellen, the cunning woman, to determine for certain who the witch is. Ellen gives them a glass to look into and see the witch for themselves. It is no surprise that Jack would fancy seeing Joan in the glass; he is the patriarchal-minded male figure. But Margery is herself a victim. Jack habitually calls her a "lazy slut" (4; 119) through no fault of hers. She, at least, should feel some compassion for her female peer who "[t]ime was she was neighborly enough" (10; 23-4). Yet it is she again who provokes Joan's accusation:

MARGERY: Look
JACK: What?
MARGERY: Did something move in the glass? My heart's beating so.
JACK: It's too dark
MARGERY: No. Look
JACK: I did see something
MARGERY: It's the witch
JACK: It's her sure enough
MARGERY: It is, isn't it, Jack? Mother Noakes, isn't it?
JACK: It was mother Noakes in that glass.
ELLEN: There then. You have what you came for. (10; 50-63)

Margery creates the vision of mother Noakes as that of a witch and Ellen stamps its final confirmation. In the patriarchal society of *Vinegar Tom* where women are the victims, they themselves also seek their own victims among their own kind. Margery and Ellen, two women, themselves objects of male discrimination, become for Joan whom they sentence, a jury of her peers.

Packer and Goody are two "witch-hunters" who come to *Vinegar Tom's* village. They are "experts" who efficiently find the marks of "witchcraft" on witches' bodies by looking it over naked. As soon as the witch is recognized as such, her punishment of hanging is carried out. Of *Vinegar Tom's* five deviant women Joan and Ellen are identified and hanged. Alice and Susan wait their turn. Goody is a woman and very well aware of the plight of other women. Of her own work as Henry Packer's assistant she says: "Better than staying home a widow. I'd end up like the old women you see, soft in the head and full of spite with their muttering and spells" (15; 44-8). She considers it "an honor to work with a great professional" (15; 49-50). Feminist solidarity is lost on Goody as long as she can "do good at the same time as earning a living" (15; 43-4). "While Goody justifies her torture and murder of other women on grounds of keeping the country healthy, it soon becomes apparent that she is primarily motivated by self-interest" (Morelli, 1998, p. 104). She too, is a victimizer of her own peers.

Perhaps the strongest instance in *Vinegar Tom* of faithlessness is that of Susan in relation to Alice. After torturing her by pricking her body to find the "devilish spot" which feels no pain and furnishes no blood, Packer and Goody tire of finding nothing with which to accuse Alice of and decide to seek evidence of her witchcraft from others. Unexpectedly surprising is the fact that it is her friend, Susan, who speaks out against her:

SUSAN: I know something of her
PACKER: Don't be shy then girl, speak out.
ALICE: Susan, what are you doing? Don't speak against me.
SUSAN: Don't let her at me.
ALICE: You'll have me hanged
SUSAN *starts to shriek hysterically* (14; 84-90)

Alice is taken out and Susan, calm again, initiates her evidence:

SUSAN: She met with the devil, she told me, like a man in black she met him in the night and did uncleanness with him, and ever after she was not herself to want to be with the devil again. (14; 101-105)

Alice's sexual encounter with the Man becomes in Susan's account a rendezvous with the devil himself. Alice and Susan's friendship whereby Alice puts Susan into her most intimate confidence by recounting her episode with the Man is sacrificed and takes a sudden unexpected twist when Susan becomes Alice's arch enemy. Susan had in a previous encounter between Alice and Jack, suddenly decided that Alice was in fact a witch. Jack appears one day-while Alice and Susan are together-calling Alice a witch and looking as if he were drunk. He grabs Alice around the neck hard and threatens Alice to return his manliness to him. Alice, half suffocating sees no other choice than to play along. She puts her hand between his thighs as if giving back his organ:

ALICE: There. It's back.
JACK: It is. It's back. Thank you Alice I wasn't sure you were a witch till then.
JACK *goes*
SUSAN: what are you doing Alice? Alice? Alice?

ALICE *turns to her*

ALICE: It's nothing. He's mad. Oh my neck, Susan. Oh, I'd laugh if it didn't hurt.

SUSAN: Don't touch me. I'll not be touched by a witch. (13; 142-151).

Alice turns amiably to Susan saying she could laugh at this comic episode; Susan, however, has a totally different view. She has inwardly confirmed that Alice is a witch. It is intriguing to think on this sudden turn of attitude in Susan towards Alice. Of course the whole scene can be dismissed on account of Susan's being more than gullible; yet the fact remains, as is evinced by other articulations within the play, that Alice does have a strange charm over Jack. Despite the fact that she is labeled a prostitute and Margery, Jack's wife, is a reputable woman, yet it is Alice who has a "spell" over Jack not his reputable and therefore presumably lovable wife. Equally intriguing is the fact that despite her poverty and her infamous reputation in the village as a prostitute, Alice rejects Jack's offer of financial support in return for her favors:

JACK: Alice, I'd be good to you. I'm not a poor man. I could give you things for your boy….

ALICE: Go away to hell. (5; 141-4).

Thus, Susan's confusion in this ambiguous state of affairs may not be as far off the mark as one might imagine. In that Alice has a certain influence over Jack, she does tend towards a mysterious nuance of "witchcraft," if not witchcraft in its superstitious meaning. From the perspective of male authority 'Jack endows Alice with the power of the phallus in order to repossess his organ, but then, newly authorized and empowered, he must subdue her by "seeing" her as, labeling her a witch' (Diamond, 1988, p. 194). One orientation is that "[i]f Jack hardly seems in a phallic position of knowledge and authority, Susan as spectator believes that he is" (p. 194). It is possible that Susan also sees in Alice a power independent of Jack's phallic authority, a power which not only Jack fears but also puts Susan herself in awe or, maybe, a feeling closer to despair since it is Alice and not her who had the power to deprive Jack of his phallus to begin with. Before being "endowed with the power of the phallus" it was Alice who usurped that power with a feminine vitality independent of the patriarchal society which empowers Jack with "a phallic position of knowledge and authority." It is therefore not only "a phallic economy based on castration fear" (p. 194) that must "see" Alice as a witch but also a fear of the initial power of castration which does not necessarily originate in the male mentality. Susan also "sees" Alice as a witch and Alice's status thereafter is a precarious one.

Thus, as one of those playwrights who "don't give answers; they ask questions" (Aston, Diamond, 2009, p. 10) Caryl Churchill in *Vinegar Tom* exposes the patriarchal constitution of the 17th century and its persecution of women under the pretext of abominable witchcraft asking simultaneously, "where are the witches now?" At the same time, in her satiric treatment of witchcraft she mocks the notion of witch and devil but in the "devilish" behavior of her characters she implicitly asks, not solely from a feministic perspective, is "devil" not a possibility on a human level? And finally, not exempting women themselves in the persecution of other women-given extra emphasis in that the two arch misogynists of the play, the "Professors of Theology," Kramer and Spencer are played by the actors of Ellen and Mother Noakes who thus compound victimizer and victim -and bringing past and present in theatrical conjunction, she provokes us to ask, is female victimization exclusively in male competence and is the concept of "witch" only the folly of the 17th century?

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Research-based Teaching Comprehension Strategies: Bridging the Gap

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Abstract—I present research-based strategies for teaching reading comprehension. In order to read and understand texts, learners must know which strategies to use. Teachers find the teaching of reading comprehension strategies challenging and do not teach it effectively. As a result, learners struggle to read texts with understanding. This article is based on empirical research done on reading comprehension teaching to Grade 3 Tshivenda-speaking learners. The study found that the teaching of reading comprehension strategies depend on the theoretical knowledge of teachers and their practical experience in teaching comprehension.

Index Terms—reading comprehension, Grade 3 Tshivenda-speaking learners, comprehension strategies, research-based strategies, mother tongue, foundation phase

I. INTRODUCTION

Learners who cannot read and understand texts is a challenge in South Africa (The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), 2006; The Sunday Times, 2000). A large number of learners who cannot read and understand text are found in the Foundation Phase. This situation is concerning, since the Foundation Phase is the start of education.

There is sufficient evidence supporting the teaching of the strategies of comprehension monitoring, graphic and semantic organisers, question answering, question generating, story structure, summarising and multiple strategies (NRP, 2000). I realised that there is lack of recent empirical research on reading comprehension in rural areas of South Africa. Within the context of my research, based on the low performance of Grade 3 Tshivenda-speaking learners of the Vhembe district in the Limpopo province, there is a need for teachers to teach comprehension strategies to help learners read with understanding.

II. CONCEPTUAL PLATFORMS OF THE STUDY

Here I present the reading comprehension strategies based on research evidence identified by the NRP (2000). These theories assisted me in exploring the research-based strategies that were successful in other countries.

A. Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

Piaget (1968) maintains that children use schemes to organise, categorise and understand the world. As children grow older, these schemes become increasingly abstract as new experiences are assimilated into the existing schemes. Piaget states that experiences and interaction with the environment facilitates the development of cognitive structures (Lieberman, Clark, Krone, Orlandi&Wynder, 1992).

Piaget's (1968) theory has implications for teaching reading comprehension as each child's current stage of cognition development must be taken into account when teachers plan learning activities. Knowledge about this stage will assist teachers understand that learners are ready to listen to stories, and to read stories which move between the past and present and about heroes.

Piaget's theory relates to this study in that learners should construct the meaning of texts in reading comprehension and be able to use it in contexts outside the classroom. Learning activities should match the level of the conceptual development of learners. Teachers must use the stages as a way to gauge and monitor learners' pace of learningand must teach learners to acquire self-regulatory competence by observing and listening to their explanations. Piaget's (1968) view is that learners must be self-initiated and actively involved in learning.

B. Vygotsky's Socio-historical Theory of Cognitive Development

Vygotsky (1978) attributes cognitive development to the social environment of children and the role of parents. Cognitive development proceeds from behaviours regulated by others to self-regulated behaviour (Zimmerman, 1998). According to Vygotsky, when a child is working independently, we see the actual development level of children. When children are working with an adult, we see the potential development of children. The difference between these two levels of functioning is referred to as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Biehler& Snowman, 1993; Gage & Berliner, 1992). With regards to the importance of the ZPD, Vygotsky (1978, p. 137-138) emphasises:

Everything that the child cannot do independently, but which he can be taught or which he can do with direction or cooperation or with the help of leading questions, we will include in the sphere of imitation... Thus, in studying what the

child is capable of doing independently, we study yesterday's development. Studying what the child is capable of doing cooperatively, we ascertain tomorrow's development.

The area of immature, but maturing processes makes up children's ZPD. When children are faced with challenging situations, they can seek help from their teachers and peers, which is termed 'scaffolding' (Woolfolk, 1995).

Vygotsky believes that language is an important tool because it is internalised by children to affect thinking and problem-solving (Bukatko&Daehner, 2001; Shaffer, 1996). Teachers can focus on effective communication, meaning and comprehension of language. Vygotsky's theory has implications for teaching reading comprehension because in facilitating learning, teachers must take the cultural context of the learners into consideration as it influences their thinking. Learners can be given problem-solving activities with instructions for the task of reading comprehension. Thereafter learners should work independently using their own knowledge and skills with the guidance received from teachers. Two approaches are pertinent to teaching reading comprehension, based on the views of Vygotsky, namely reciprocal teaching and scaffolded support.

1. Reciprocal teaching

Palincsar and Brown (1984) developed an approach to teaching reading comprehension called reciprocal teaching. Reciprocal teaching is an instructional procedure to improve learners' comprehension skills and is related to Vygotsky's ZPD and scaffolding. This approach has three main components, namely:

- Dialogue between learners and teacher, each taking turns in the role of dialogue leader;
- Reciprocal interactions, where one person acts in response to another;
- Structured dialogue using four strategies, namely generating own questions, summarising parts of texts, clarifying word meanings and text passages, and predicting what might come next in texts.

The overall goal of reciprocal teaching is to promote self-directed and flexible use of the learnt strategies through scaffolding instruction collaboration (Sporer,Brunstein&Kieschke, 2009). According to the NRP (2000), the focus of reciprocal teaching is upon the actual teaching approach. Reciprocal teaching involves four instructional procedures for explicitly teaching four strategies, namely summarising, questioning, clarifying and predicting (Palincsar& Brown, 1984).

In reciprocal teaching, these strategies pertain to ongoing dialogues with a dialogue leader, who can be a teacher or a learner who models the use of the strategies, provides conditional knowledge about strategy use, and helps learners to apply a strategy to a passage. The leader helps the group clarify difficult words or passages that might hinder comprehension. Next, the leader summarises the text read and predicts what might happen next. The process continues for each part of the text, with learners taking turns leading the discussion. In this way, learners are actively involved in their own learning, while poorly self-regulated learners can learn from their highly self-regulated peers.

Teachers can also begin with a group of learners discussing the text. Teachers start by modelling each strategy. The demonstration includes a clear explanation of what the strategy is, a description of how and when to use it, and an explanation of why it is useful for enhancing understanding. After explaining and modelling the strategy, teachers ask learners to read, providing guidance and support (NRP, 2000; Zimmerman, 1998; Shanahan, 2006).

2. Scaffold support

Scaffolding involves the provision of support that is focused on learners' particular capacities within ZPD. Teachers take all the responsibility for applying a newly introduced strategy by modelling. Learners must observe, imitate and self-regulate themselves, and create meaning from the text by using the strategy. As learners get more exposure to strategies, teachers withdraw their responsibility. This enables learners to manage their own learning by making use of the strategies. Eventually, learners take more and more responsibility as they become confident, knowledgeable and capable. Finally, they are able to work independently (Pardo, 2004; McMahon & Oliver, 2003).

C. Bruner's Theory of Learning and Development

Bruner (1986) maintains that thinking and reasoning are integrated into a single process. He advocates learning through discovery and active learning, where the problem-solving skills of learners are encouraged. Like Piaget and Vygotsky, Bruner regards social and cultural factors as important in cognitive development (Driscoll, 1994).

With regards to teaching reading comprehension, teachers should present new concepts repeatedly, initially at a simple level and then at an increasingly difficult level, a concept Bruner (1986) referrers to as the "spiral ordering of content."

D. Ausubel's Cognitive Field Theory

For meaningful learning to occur, learners must be ready and willing to relate new concepts to their current experience and to what learners already know. Meaningful learning occurs when learners actively process the information they are asked to learn. Ausubel (1963) refers to his theory as "verbal learning," because most of what is learnt in the classroom is based on language as a means of communication. Another concept of Ausubel is "reception learning," where learners receive information, think about it deductively and apply the information. Ausubel believes that learning occurs as a result of the relatedness of what learners know and what they learn.

With regards to teaching reading comprehension, teachers must be aware of the fact that certain minimal levels of intellectual maturity are necessary before various subjects can be taught with efficiency and success. Therefore, teachers

must consider learners' points of view, and take into account their limitations in the command of language and their grasp of concepts.

E. Bandura's Social Learning Theory

Bandura (1977) developed a social learning theory in which children use rewards, punishment and imitation to understand the working of the world (Kail, 2001). According to Bandura (1977), the environment plays an important role in children's life, because this is where they interact with other people who act as role models. Children's interaction with other people is based on observing their norms, values and beliefs within the context of a particular society and children are most likely to imitate adults with whom they have an emotional bond, which Bandura (1977) calls "naturant models." Bandura (1977) refers to this concept as "modelling," which means that learners learn behavioural patterns from observing behaviour. When learners interact with people, they adopt and live according to what has been seen (Mwamwenda, 1995).

Bandura states that "experience gives learners a sense of self-efficacy, which refers to learner's beliefs about their own abilities and talents" (Kail, 2001, p. 16). This means that learners will have a good sense of what they can or cannot do and will not imitate the actions of someone if they feel their own abilities are dissimilar. Furthermore, through memory, what is observed must be processed so that it can be retrieved when the information is needed. Observation is important because the behaviour displayed by the model should be reproduced. For an observed behaviour to be reproduced perfectly, practice is important. Reinforcement also plays an important role and if modelled behaviour is rewarded, the chances of this behaviour being repeated are high (Hjelle& Ziegler, 1981; Engler, 1985).

With regards to reading comprehension, teachers are regarded as good models, as they have positive relationships with learners. They should therefore display positive reading comprehension strategies so that learners can imitate and internalise these.

F. Zimmerman's Applied Social-cognitive Model of Self-regulated Learning

According to Zimmerman (1998; 1990), self-regulated learning involves the regulation of three general aspects of academic learning, namely:

• Self-regulation of behaviour, involving active controlling of the various resources learners have available to them (Pintrich, Smith, Garcia & McKenzie, 1993);

• Self-regulation of motivation, involving controlling and changing motivational beliefs so that learners can adapt to the demands of a course;

• Self-regulation of cognition, involving controlling of various cognitive strategies for learning, resulting in better learning and performance (Palincsar& Brown, 1989; Pintrich*et al.*, 1993).

Teachers must thus motivate learners to be actively involved in reading with understanding instead of memorising words on the page. It is important for teachers to encourage learners to think positively about reading comprehension and believe that they can read and understand texts, and to condition their satisfaction to reach their goals (Zimmerman, 1998). Teachers must teach learners to acquire self-regulatory competence in order to become independent readers. Zimmerman (1998) proposes that learners themselves should be the source of plans, intentions, strategies and emotions that are necessary to create meaning from text. However, the self-regulatory strategy will not work for all learners and using a few strategies will not work on all tasks (Zimmerman, 1998). Zimmerman thus suggests multiple self-regulatory strategies rather than single strategies.

Zimmerman (1998) postulates that the applied social-cognitive model of self-regulated learning can be organised within a learning cycle based on three types of self-effective thoughts:

• Goal-setting and strategic planning;

• Self-monitoring of accuracy in implementing a selected strategy;

• Self-assessment of strategy outcome and task performance.

These processes are considered cyclic because each process entails information that can lead to changes in a subsequent step of the cycle. These processes qualify as self-reflective cognition activities and the associated corrective processes are central features of each step of the cycle (Sporer, *et al*., 2009).

Drawing on Zimmerman's applied model of self-regulated learning, learners are engaged in cognition and metacognitive activities during reciprocal teaching, and alternate between prompting, using a strategy, applying the selected strategy and monitoring its accurate implementation (Sporer,*et al.,* 2009).

III. RESEARCH-BASED COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES TO BE TAUGHT TO GRADE 3 LEARNERS

I reviewed comprehension strategies to be taught to Grade 3 learners. Each is discussed below.

A. Comprehension Monitoring

The teaching and monitoring of comprehension strategies refers to learners' knowledge about and use of reading comprehension strategies. Routman (2000, p. 134) defines comprehension monitoring as "a metacognitive process which is affected by person strategy and task variables."Comprehensive monitoring is essential for reading, as it directs readers when trying to make sense of texts (Routman, 2000). Good readers use metacognitive strategies to think about

and have control over their reading, e.g., before reading, they monitor their understanding, adjusting their reading speed to fit the difficulty of the text and 'fix-up' any comprehension problems they have, e.g., identifying where in the text the difficulty occurs, restarting a difficult sentence or passage on their own and looking back through the text (Lehr & Osborn, 2005).Readers thus learn how to be aware of understanding their material during comprehension monitoring (NRP, 2000). This implies that when learners monitor their comprehension, they understand that reading must make sense, and when it does not they try to use appropriate different fix-up strategies to resolve the problems.

In teaching comprehension monitoring strategies, teachers need to demonstrate awareness of difficulties of understanding words, phrases, clauses or sentences. Learners are taught to think about what is hampering their understanding. They think aloud, reread, slow down, and look back through texts to try to solve a problem (Armbruster,Lehr & Osborn, 2003).

B. Graphic and Semantic Organisers

The tools of graphic and semantic organisers enable learners to examine and visually represent relationships, and help learners write well-organised summaries. These organisers illustrate concepts and interrelationships among concepts of text, using pictorial devices (Armbruster& Osborn, 2003).Graphic and semantic organisers are found in many forms, e.g., semantic maps and graphic metaphors. These allow the reader to represent graphically/visually the meanings and relationships of concepts (Armbruster& Osborn 2003; Lehr & Osborn, 2005). Lehr and Osborn (2005) state that graphic and semantic organisers allow readers to represent graphically/visually the meanings and relationships of the ideas that underlie texts and to improve readers' memories of what they read.

In teaching the use of graphic and semantic organisers, teachers must ask learners to construct an image that represents the content.

C. Questioning

Questions appear effective for improving learners' reading comprehension as they provide learners with a purpose for reading, help learners to focus attention on what they are to learn, help learners to think actively as they read, encourage learners to monitor their comprehension, andhelp learners to review content and relate what they have learnt to what they already know.

Durkin (1978) critiques asking and answering questions as a reading comprehension strategy, pointing out that the manner in which teachers ask questions is more an assessment of comprehension than the teaching of reading comprehension. However, it is important for teachers to ask various questions to develop learners' critical thinking. Bloom (1968) and Joubert,Bester and Meyer (2008) show that the type of questions learners become accustomed to can shape their understanding of texts, e.g., when learners are constantly asked literal questions, they will focus on these during reading comprehension. Routman (1996) maintains that teachers need to ask higher-order questions and show learners how to find answers. This requires interactive settings in order to achieve high levels of reading comprehension. Analysis by Zimmerman and Hutchins (2003, p. 73) indicates that "questions lead readers deeper into a piece, setting up dialogue with the author, sparking in readers' minds what they care about. If you ask questions as you read, you are awake. You are interacting with words". This implies that questioning during reading becomes a strategy to help learners interact with the author and so remain focused throughout the text. Teachers must ask a combination of questions and show learners how to find answers. This can be done by discussing the different types of questions that exist with learners (Raphael and Au, 2005) and using the information to locate the answer.

In order to succeed, Taylor, Pearson, Peterson and Rodriguez (2002) and Bloom (1968) state that learners must engage in high levels of questioning and do so in highly interactive settings to achieve high levels of comprehension. Thus, it is critical that instruction helps learners understand that active readers question the author, the text, and themselves before, during and after reading. In order for learners to be able to answer higher-order questions, they need to understand the relationship between the question and the answer, or where to find the answer (Raphael and Au, 2005).

Under questioning as a comprehension strategy, there are two different strategies, namely answering and generating questions. These strategies are discussed separately because the one affects teachers and the other affects the learner.

D. Question Answering

During question answering, the reader answers questions posed by teachers and is given feedback for correctness. It gives learners a purpose for reading, focuses attention on what they are to learn, helps them review content and relate what they have learnt to what they already know. Learners learn to distinguish questions that can be answered based on the text from those based on prior knowledge and therefore acquire more knowledge (Armbruster& Osborn, 2003). There are different types of questions, e.g., one type helps learners understand the relationships between questions and where the answers to those questions are found. In this instruction, readers learn to answer questions that require an understanding of information.

Questioning during the guided reading phase is intended to scaffold learning for learners and to check learners' understanding. Such questioning is intended to instruct, guiding learners to independence (Dewitz, 2006).

When teaching the question answering strategy, teachers need to ask learners questions during and after reading passages. Teachers ask learners to look back, which is when learners articulate and process their understanding of what they have read to find answers after reading. Teachers ask learners to analyse questions with respect to whether the

question is tapping literal information covered in the text, information that can be inferred by combining information in the text, or information in the reader's prior knowledge base (NRP, 2000).

E. Question Generation

Question generation encourages learners to be actively, and independently, involved and to become aware of whether they understand texts or not, and thus improves comprehension ability (Routman, 1996; Duke & Pearson, 2002). In their view, Lehr and Osborn (2005) confirm that teaching learners to ask their own questions improves their active processing of text and improves their comprehension. By generating questions, learners become aware of whether they can answer the questions and whether they understand what they are reading. Learners learn to ask themselves questions that require them to integrate information from different segments of text, e.g., learners can be taught to ask main idea questions that relate to important information in texts.

Question generation also assist learners to increase their awareness of whether they are comprehending text (NRP, 2000; Armbruster& Osborn, 2003). Questioning can be applied before, during and after reading. Pearson (1985) suggests that during reading comprehension, teachers should ensure that guided reading questions include inference questions to enhance both story-specific inferential comprehension and comprehension of new stories. Also, adding a pre-reading set for evoking relevant prior knowledge and predicting what will happen in a story, coupled with discussion of why it is important to do so, results in better inferential comprehension.

In teaching the question-generating strategy, teachers need to ask learners to generate questions while reading a passage. Teachers should ask learners to evaluate their questions, checking that they covered important material and were integrative. Teachers provide feedback on the quality of the questions asked or assist learners in answering the questions generated (Armbruster& Osborn, 2003).

F. Story Structure

During reading comprehension, the reader continuously asks questions in order to understand the text. The story structure is "the way the content and events of a story are organised into a plot" (Lehr & Osborn, 2005, p. 18). This is where readers ask themselves questions about various aspects of the story (NRP, 2000). Lehr and Osborn (2005) also state that learners who recognise the story structure have greater appreciation; understanding and memory of texts.Instruction in the content and organisation of stories improve learners' comprehension and memory of stories. These strategies train learners to ask questions during reading about the basic components of stories. Learners learn to identify the categories of content, such as setting, initiating events and outcomes, and how this is organised into a plot (Lehr & Osborn, 2005).

Thus, during the teaching of reading comprehension, teachers need to ask and answer five questions:

- Who is the main character?
- Where and when does the story occur?
- What does the main character do?
- How does the story end?
- How does the main character feel?

This helps learners identify what happened and what was done in the story, e.g., they recognise the story structure through the use of story maps, i.e., recording the setting, problem, goal, action and outcome (Armbruster& Osborn, 2003). A type of graphic organiser thus shows the sequence of events in stories.

G. Summarising

Summarising requires learners to determine what is important in what they read, to condense information and to rephrase in their own words (Ambruster& Osborn, 2003). Routman (2000) refers to summarising as the ability to state the main ideas in texts in a clear and coherent manner. This involves paraphrasing and reorganising text information. It requires readers to sift through large units of text, differentiating important from unimportant, and significant from insignificant ideas (Armbruster& Osborn, 2005).Thereafter they synthesise those ideas and create a new coherent text that stands for the original (Dole, Duffy, Roehler& Pearson, 1999).

Klinger and Vaughn (1999) and the NRP (2000) maintain that summarisation can be taught effectively and that the ability to summarise can improve comprehension recall. However, "summarising sounds difficult and the research demonstrates that ... it is" (Dole *et al.,* 1999, p. 244).Teachers, therefore, need to give learners opportunities to practice summarisation before they apply it. Summarising will enable learners to process texts more deeply and better retain their knowledge of texts. In teaching summarising as a strategy, teachers need to teach learners to summarise main ideas and leave out the less important aspects.

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The data presented in this article is derived from a larger research project undertaken, where a case study was employed. The unit of analysis was three schools in the Dzindi Circuit, Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa. I selected this specific case purposefully (Merriam, 1998) and aimed to investigate the teaching of reading comprehension to Grade 3 Tshivenda-speaking learners. Despite the recommended changes to Curriculum 2005 (DoE,

C2005) to develop an improved curriculum for the 21[st]century, South Africa still faces reading literacy problems at the Foundation Phase (DoE, 2008). Concerns about learners' development of basic literacy skills at the foundation levels of education (Bloch, 1999; Lessing & De Witt, 2005) are consistently reflected in local and international research (Fleisch, 2008; SAQMEC, 2004; Howie, Venter, Van Staden, Zimmerman, Long, Scherman& Archer, 2006).

Teachers and learners of the case study speak Tshivenda as a mother tongue, and Tshivenda is the language of teaching and learning in the schools. Not all Grade 3 learners and teachers at the schools of the Vhembe district were included in the study. However, those who executed the study claim an approach to enquiry that was qualitative and subjective in nature (Merriam, 1998). We assumed that teachers' experiences and understanding were real and should be taken seriously by other teachers. We documented the voices of teachers through individual and focus group interviews, and classroom observations. We used a variety of data collection instruments to obtain rich data in our attempt to answer our research question (May, 2002). Table 1 provides a summary of the methods and instruments that were used for data collection, as well as the data capturing method/s.

Methods of data collection	Type	Instrument assisting data collection	Prompt	Data capturing method
Interview	Individual interview	Researcher interviewing teachers; Interview schedule	Discussion about teaching reading comprehension to Tshivenda-speaking learners and their experiences as teachers	Informal field notes; Audio tape transcription of interviews
Focus group interviews	Small group discussions	Researcher involving teachers in discussions; Researcher asking questions	Discussion about the teaching of reading comprehension to Tshivenda-speaking learners and the experiences as teachers	Focus group discussion schedule; Transcription of discussions; Audio tape / informal field notes
Observation	Classroom observation	Researcher observations; Observation schedule	None. Used 'natural field setting'	Informal field notes
Content analysis	Official policy documents with provision for teaching reading comprehension	Researcher collecting policies	Discussion about teaching reading comprehension to Tshivenda-speaking learners as explained in policy documents	Researcher reviewing literature; Grounded theory; Thematic analysis

V. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Participating teachers were asked questions as one means of data collection. Here I present only teachers' responses from question 2**: Which strategies do teachers use to teach reading comprehension?** The responses were categorised as Theme 2. The data was derived from the various instruments used to collect empirical data. Theme 2 states: one who is teaching reading comprehension must be ready to teach and must know his/her learners.

Classroom observation was also executed, the objective being to determine whether what teachers said about the teaching of reading comprehension was actually taking place.

A strategy is "instructional mental actions during reading that improve reading comprehension", deliberate efforts by a reader to better understand or remember what is being (Shanahan, 2006). It is critical that teachers know strategies and apply them in their classrooms. However, the participating teachers showed a lack of knowledge about teaching reading comprehension strategies during classroom observations.

The following remarks from teachers were representative:

'I do not know what to say, what to name it' [reading comprehension strategies]
 (IT/T5-SCH C, Q3)
'I do not know because I do not use strategies, I just teach them how to read a text and answer questions' (IT/T6-SCH C, Q3)
'Nothing realistic, I do not have anything to say, today you start this way tomorrow you start this way' (FG/T3-SCH B, Q3)

During reading comprehension, teachers must provide a clear explanation of the structure of the strategy to be learnt and explain why strategies are used (Ben-Ari &Kedem-Frederich, 2000; McEwan, 2004). Palincsar and Brown (1984), Trabasso and Bouchard (2002) and Henk, Moore, Marinak, and Tomasetti (2000) suggest that teachers should have knowledge of multiple strategies. In my understanding, if the participating teachers had the knowledge base, they would have taught the learners how to read with understanding. However, teachers showed that they did not have a theoretical knowledge of comprehension strategies.

Participating teachers expressed different views when asked about which strategies they use in teaching reading comprehension. Learners should learn to use these strategies before, during and after reading texts in order to self-regulate their own learning (Schunk& Zimmerman, 1994; Zimmerman, 1998; Keene & Zimmerman, 1997; Puustinen&Pulkkinen, 2001). Pre-reading activities are essential to prevent learners from 'barking at print' (Wessels,

2010). This implies that teachers must teach the importance of pre-reading activities and their use for enhancing reading comprehension. During classroom observations, teachers asked learners to preview texts and talk amongst themselves, and make predictions. However, during classroom observations it was not found that teachers told learners why they should preview the text before they started with the actual reading of the text. Additionally, the most commonly used strategy was to discuss the illustrations. Talking about illustrations is important because it can create the desire to read a book (Wessels, 2010). What was not observed were teachers linking the predictions made during the pre-reading phase with the content.

This was highlighted by teachers in the following way:

> 'Time is offered to children to can guess what will happen in the story' (FG/T1-SCH A, Q 3)
> 'They can predict what will happen' (FG/T5-SCH C, Q 3)
> 'Learners predict what will happen in the story' (IT/T4-SCH B, Q 3)

The guided reading phase was not evident during classroom observations. The term 'guided' implies a structure that is first modelled to learners by teachers, then practised with learners and eventually demonstrated by the learners themselves (Flynt&Cooter, 2005). There were few learners asked to read individually during reading lessons. In most cases it was only the ones who could read and not the struggling readers that were asked. During the interviews, teachers said that learners could not read and understand texts:

> 'Children cannot read and write' (IT/T1-SCH A, Q1)
> 'There are many challenges especially those children who cannot read and understand' (FG/T5-SCH C, Q3)

Literature confirms that primary grade teachers fail to teach learners strategies for becoming proficient readers (Harvey &Goudvis, 2007; Shanahan, 2006). Teachers should thus be supported to do so. In addition, Ivy and Fisher (2007) state that educators are flooding the professional learning community with requests for strategies that work to improve the teaching of reading comprehension.

Asking questions to learners or learners asking questions is an important strategy for teaching reading comprehension (Parkey & Hurry, 2007). During classroom observations, questions were asked frequently. Teachers preferred to ask learners questions, but the learners struggle to give the correct answers because they cannot read and understand texts. The following responses from teachers illustrate the point:

> 'Questioning is very critical at all times' (FG/T1-6-SCH A, Q3)
> 'Yes, I agree we must ask questions' (FG/T4-SCH B, Q3)
> 'Questioning is important, we use it' (FG/T5-SCH C, Q3)
> 'I ask them questions' (IT/T 1-6-SCH A,B,C, Q3)

From these responses it is clear that teachers prefer to ask learners questions. However, most of the questions are at a literal level, possibly because most learners cannot read and understand the words. The teachers said that they are not aware of comprehension strategies, that they regard teaching comprehension as a challenge and that they are frustrated because they have learners who cannot read and understand texts. McNeil (1992), Miller (2002), and Reynolds and Brown (2001) suggest that the use of strategy is beneficial for reading comprehension. Williams (2007, p. 40) says the following:

A rationale for teaching comprehension strategies is that readers derive more meaning from text when they engage in intentional thinking. That is when people run into difficulties in understanding what they have read; the application of specific strategic cognitive processes will improve their comprehension.

Durkin (1979) finds that teachers concentrate more on asking questions instead of teaching how to comprehend texts. This may be due to the lack of teachers' knowledge about the use of reading comprehension strategies. What I noticed was that because of the lack of understanding, learners fail to answer higher-order questions. Surprisingly, teachers did not ask learners to generate questions about the text themselves. Also, no evidence was found that teachers encourage learners to use 'fix-up' strategies.

During interviews, respondents indicated that they preferred to start reading comprehension lessons by asking learners to learn the difficult words.

> 'I can start by explaining difficult words' (FG/T3-SCH B, Q3)
> 'Learners underline the new difficult words' (IT/T1-SCH A, Q3)

literature agrees that teaching learners the meaning of difficult words is an important reading comprehension strategy because learners already know the words by the time they read the text (Armbruster& Osborn, 2003). Cain, Oakhill and Bryant (2004) state that decoding skills may predict the ability of reading comprehension in children.

With regard to the after-reading phase of teaching, teachers asked learners to read aloud and to retell what they had read. Teachers reminded learners to concentrate on major events or to summarise. However, there was no evidence of teachers' asking learners to read sections of the text that substantiated answers to questions they had made and to confirm or disprove predictions they had made based on prior knowledge. I conclude that the absence of these aspects may be due to teachers' lack of knowledge about the importance of reading comprehension strategies.

With regard to modelling strategies, data revealed limited evidence of teachers modelling strategies, e.g., when asked which strategies they use in teaching reading comprehension during interviews, a teacher confirmed that she did not know what to name the strategy. Wessels (2010) emphasise that it is important for teachers to model good behaviour of reading and the strategies before reading so that learners may use them during independent reading and when they experience problems. Also, the importance of modelling strategies is that learners get opportunities to learn and see how strategies should be incorporated by watching expert comprehenders modelling the strategies (Miller, 2002). It is therefore necessary that teachers be competent, since they are required to model and practice a given strategy (Pressley, 2002).Only one teacher indicated what she did before the start of reading comprehension:

'I explain to the learners what to do like what must be done, why the strategy helps and demonstrate how they can apply the strategy independently' (IT/T5-SCH C, Q 3)

No evidence was found of the following:
• where the pace and flow of the various phases of reading comprehension lessons represented an effective use of strategies;
• teachers' encouraging learners to use strategies;
• teachers' modelling during the teaching of comprehension strategies.

Reasons for the absence of modelling may be teachers' lack of theoretical knowledge about the concept of teaching learners' comprehension strategies, as well as not being given opportunities to observe an expert teaching reading comprehension in Tshivenda.

Literature reveals that comprehension strategies should be taught and learnt (Farrell, 2001; NRP, 2000; Durkin, 1993; Myers, 2005). Blachowicz and Ogle (2001), Ambruster and Lehr (2001), and Harvey and Goudvis (2000) agree that in order to prevent reading comprehension difficulties, teachers should teach learners reading comprehension strategies. Consequently, teachers will develop a positive attitude towards their work and learners will read the words and understand what they are reading. However, the teaching of reading comprehension is a challenge, as expressed by teachers during the interviews.

Participants lacked knowledge of the concept of self-regulated learning as described by Zimmerman (1998). No respondents indicated any process for supporting learners. They did not indicate any skill they taught that would enable learners to control their own learning. They did not realise that learners could self-regulate their learning through acquiring specific strategies. The knowledge of Zimmerman's (1998) applied social cognitive model of self-regulated learning is needed to account for the low level of reading comprehension amongst the learners of this research study. The model suggests that learners must be actively involved in their own learning. Therefore, it is important that teachers should put them into practice in their teaching. Then, as learners become capable of choosing and using strategies, teachers may gradually hand over the responsibility to the learners (Zimmerman, 1998).

During the interviews, teachers complained about the little time given for teaching reading as indicated in the policy document *Teaching Reading in Early Grades* (DoE, 2008):

'Reading comprehension has many things, we need more time for reading comprehension but one hour is needed specifically for reading comprehension because reading comprehension has many aspects. They must read and understand so that they can answer the questions … it takes time' (FG/T6-SCH C, Q3).

Teachers indicated that time for reading should be increased since reading comprehension was a challenge to them. This confirms that teachers are acutely aware of time pressures to meet objectives within the literacy hour. They say that when such teachers are under pressure, they tend to use a more directive form of teaching with less emphasis on active learning, which in turn influences the teaching of reading comprehension negatively.

During interviews teachers highlighted their challenges, concerns and frustrations:

'I am confused about comprehension and how to teach it' (IT/T2-SCH A, Q3)
'...because these kids who cannot read they really stress us ... we get stressed' (FG/T3-SCH B, Q3)
'You will find educators developing a negative attitude towards that young boy or girl' (FG/T5-SCH C, Q3)
'... teaching reading comprehension is frustrating, to have learners who cannot read' (FG/T6-SCH C, Q3)

It thus becomes clear that teachers are aware that there are learners in their classrooms who cannot read and understand and this creates stress and frustrations. This was indicated during interviews, and was confirmed in classroom observations. I failed to find evidence about teachers' teaching strategies to learners. In essence, it was not clear if teachers knew what they should do when planning reading comprehension and their roles in teaching learners to read texts with understanding.

VI. CONCLUSION

There is agreement that teaching reading comprehension can enhance learners' understanding of texts. There are research-based comprehension strategies which teachers must know and model during reading. Teachers must monitor learners' understanding and ensure that they use strategies correctly.

Teachers should organise their comprehension teaching in the following stages to help learners understand the importance and the correct use of strategies:

- Before teaching comprehension, teachers must examine texts for rigour, level of questioning and vocabulary.

- Before reading they must teach learners to set a purpose for reading, provide questions and connections to motivate learners, pre-teach key vocabulary concepts, relate texts to learners' lives and teach learners' text features.

- During reading, teachers must deepen learners' level of understanding by modelling text reading.

- They must provide multiple opportunities for learners to read and interact with the text. It is important during reading to deepen learners understanding by asking them questions at various levels. Teachers must also teach learners to generate questions.

- After teaching, teachers must be able to reflect on learners' responses to instruction and plan for deeper teaching opportunities.

Teachers have a pivotal role to play in preparing learners for independent learning. Capacity building for teachers is therefore needed, with appropriate guidelines on how to teach reading comprehension.The comprehension strategies reviewed in this article will help learners to read texts with understanding.

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The Relationship between Lexical Diversity and Genre in Iranian EFL Learners' Writings

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Abstract—**The present study investigated whether lexical diversity is sensitive to genre in Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writings. It also aimed at determining the relationship between learners' writing quality and lexical diversity in different genres. To this end, 30 intermediate EFL learners, studying English at the Language Center of Urmia University, were asked to write essays in three genres: argumentative, narrative and descriptive. The writings were scored both holistically and analytically by the researchers and a trained rater, yielding an inter-rater reliability of 0.84. Subsequently, lexical diversity was measured using Richards and Malvern (1997) VocD model of lexical diversity. Results obtained through correlational analyses and one-way Repeated Measures ANOVA indicated a significant difference between narrative and comparative, and also between narrative and argumentative genres in terms of lexical diversity. A positive relationship between lexical diversity and writing quality was found only in argumentative genre when scored analytically. The study may have implications for improving and predicting the quality of EFL learners' writing.**

Index Terms—**lexical diversity, Iranian EFL learners, writing genre**

I. INTRODUCTION

A number of second language (L2) studies (e.g. Leki & Carson, 1994; Raimes, 1985; Uzawa & Cummings, 1989) have indicated lack of vocabulary is what makes writing in a foreign language difficult, and that vocabulary proficiency is probably the best indicator of the overall text quality (e.g. Astika, 1993; Santos, 1988). Lexical diversity (LD) as an important lexical aspect has been correlated by many researchers (e.g. Engber, 1995; Laufer and Nation, 1995; Yu, 2010) with the quality of learners' writings. The results of these studies indicated a positive relationship between writing quality and lexical diversity, which means that it can be used as a predictor of the quality of writing.

"Lexical diversity can be described as the range and the variety of vocabulary deployed in a text by either a speaker or a writer" (McCarthy & Jarvis 2007, p. 459). Lexical diversity is loosely defined as "something to do with the range of vocabulary displayed" in written and spoken discourses (Durán, Malvern, Richards, & Chipere, 2004, p. 220). LD is also relevant to a wide range of aspects, such as writing skills, vocabulary usage and lexical knowledge. It describes the quality of vocabulary content of the learner's output. The premise behind lexical diversity indices is that more diverse vocabularies indicate more proficient lexicons. Higher lexical diversity is generally considered to indicate more advanced proficiency than lower lexical diversity (Malvern, Richards, Chipere, & Duran, 2004).

Lexical diversity has been studied under many guises and many forms. A number of measures of this sort exist, but there is no clear agreement about which is the best variant to use in the context of L2 learners. Since Yule's (1944) seminal work, various attempts have been made to seek lexical diversity indices that are conceptually sound and mathematically simple in many language related research areas (e.g., Baayen, 1996; Hoover, 2003; Panas, 2001; Panas & Yannacopoulos, 2004; Sichel, 1986; Tweedie & Baayen, 1998; Wimmer & Altmann, 1999). Among the many methods for quantifying lexical diversity, D developed by Malvern et al. (2004) was considered to be the most valid for the purpose of this study.

Koda (1993) investigated the impact of linguistic knowledge on L2 writing ability of English-L1 college students learning Japanese as a foreign language. In her study, the correlation between students' vocabulary knowledge (assessed with a word definition task in their native language) and the quality of their essays was 0.7. Regression analysis showed that the single strongest predictor of their writing was lexical diversity, which explained roughly half of the variance in L2 writing performance. In compositions written by EFL learners at intermediate to high intermediate levels of proficiency, Engber (1995) also found substantial correlations between lexical diversity and holistic quality ratings of the compositions.

Ruth Berman's Spencer Foundation study 'Developing literacy in different contexts and in different languages' (Berman, 2000) assessed vocabulary diversity in first language speaking and writing. This research was conducted across seven languages (with the subsequent addition of Catalan), comparing children at three ages, plus adults, producing language in two genres (narrative and expository), and two modalities (speech and writing). Their measure shows main effects for age, genre, and language, but not for modality (Berman and Verhoeven, 2002). Berman's results

were later supported by the results of a study by Woerfel and Yılmaz (2011) which showed that measurement of lexical diversity, word and text length differ according to age and genre.

Jarvis (2002) tested various lexical diversity measures on short written narratives by young EFL learners and English native speakers. The methodological advantages of D over other measures were again confirmed in this study. It was found that the narratives by EFL learners with more years of English learning experience tended to have higher D. Significant difference between EFL learners and native speakers was noted, always with native speakers having a higher D. Overall, lexical diversity was found to have consistently significant, albeit moderate, correlations with the holistic quality ratings of the narratives. His conclusion was that lexical diversity, when measured by reliable indices, was positively correlated with the quantity of formal instruction and L2 vocabulary knowledge.

Yu (2010), using D as a measure of lexical diversity, found that D had statistically significant and positive correlation with the overall quality ratings of both writing and speaking performances as well as test takers' general language proficiency. Different topics and topic types of the writing prompts exerted significant effects on the lexical diversity of the compositions. Compositions of impersonal topics had significantly higher lexical diversity than personal topics.. Higher lexical diversity was achieved when test takers were highly familiar with the impersonal topic. The significant effect of topics and topic types on lexical diversity echo the suggestion made by Vermeer (2000, p. 79): "Control of tasks over informants is a prerequisite for comparing different texts, so that the kinds of topics are similar for all informants."

McNamara, Louwerse, McCarthy, and Graesser(2010) analyzed the linguistic differences between high quality texts and low quality texts using computational linguistic tool, CohMetrix. They found that the three most predictive linguistic features of essay quality were syntactic complexity, lexical diversity, and word frequency. Mellor (2010), in a study of 34 essays using an argumentative topic, collected from a group of third year English majors at a Japanese university also found lexical diversity and essay length the predictors of writing quality with essay length having a greater correlation (r=0.79) with the quality of writing than lexical diversity does (using D, r=0.29).

However, it should be acknowledged that "the quality of a discourse, written or spoken, is defined and shaped by various linguistic features other than their lexical diversity alone (e.g., handwriting quality, grammatical and syntactic structures of a piece of writing; pronunciation, fluency and speed in speaking)" (Yu, 2007, p. 80). Furthermore, many nonlinguistic factors in relation to the process of task performance such as test takers' anxiety and stress could also affect the lexical diversity of their performance (see Bradac, Bowers, & Courtright, 1979).

Linnarud (1986) found clear differences in the use of vocabulary between the compositions written by 17-year-old Swedish learners of English, who had been learning it for 9 years, and those by English native speakers of the same age. The Swedish learners lacked lexical variation and showed much less lexical originality than the English native speakers. In addition, there was a large difference between the number of individual words most frequently used by English native speakers and Swedish learners. Linnarud, however, detected no significant relationship between holistic scores and lexical diversity for advanced learners.

As viewed above, research in the area lexical diversity regarding EFL learners' success in writing has been slow to take off. There also exists divergence as regards the results of lexical diversity in writing studies. Unfortunately, the impact of genre on the writers' response to the writing task has been a neglected variable of test design in performance analysis and writing assessment research. That the testing task has decisive effects on the linguistic data elicited has been a long recognized issue in the field of second language acquisition (e.g. Tarone and Parrish, 1988; Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991) which seems to have gone overlooked in second language writing teaching and learning research.

Accordingly, the objective of the present study was to determine the effect of genre on lexical diversity and also to investigate the relationship between writing quality (scored both analytically and holistically) and diversity in the three genres of argumentative, narrative, and comparative.

More precisely, this study sought to find answers to the following questions:
1. Is lexical diversity sensitive to genre in Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners' writings?
2. Is there any relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' overall writing quality and lexical diversity?
The following two null-hypotheses were put forward for the above questions:
1. Lexical diversity is not sensitive to genre in Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writings.
2. There is no relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' overall writing quality and lexical diversity.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to investigate the research questions, a correlational or associational design and a repeated measures design were employed. Correlational design helped to find the relationship between lexical diversity and the quality of learners' writings in different genres. A repeated-measures design was also employed to compare the written performances of the participants in three different genres in terms of lexical diversity. To this end, 30 participants (both male & female) at the intermediate level were selected from among students studying English at the Language Center of Urmia University based on the results of the writing section of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) as a placement test in July, 2011.

Following the placement test, the selected participants wrote on the three topics of argumentative, comparative, and narrative during three subsequent sessions. The researchers scored all 90 writing samples first analytically (following

Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormuth, Hartfiel, & Hughey, 1981) and then holistically (using the scoring guide for the Test of Written English). Following the researchers, a trained assistant did the same on ten randomly selected essays. Using correlational analysis, the inter-rater reliability was computed to be 0.84.

The lexical diversity of the writings was measured using Richards and Malvern's (1997) VocD model. Each text had more than 50 words, thus meeting the minimum sample size requirement to compute a valid D. Each text was subject to 15 times of VocD analyses; a slightly different D was reported each time, therefore, the average of them was used as its final D. The data were entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) spreadsheet, version 15, and the relevant hypotheses were tested at the probability level of 0.05. Subsequently, a one-way Repeated Measure ANOVA was utilized to determine whether lexical diversity was sensitive to genre. Finally, lexical diversity was correlated with the writing quality, using first the results of holistic scoring and then the analytic one

III. RESULTS

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was used to compare lexical diversity in the three genre types. Below are the means and standard deviations.

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR LEXICAL DIVERSITY ACROSS DIFFERENT GENRES

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
diversity.comparative	82.8000	12.75066	30
diversity.argumentative	80.2333	10.87130	30
diversity.narrative	87.1667	8.59063	30

TABLE 2
MULTIVARIATE TEST RESULTS

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
time	Pillai's Trace	.291	5.759[a]	2.000	28.000	.008	.291
	Wilks' Lambda	.709	5.759[a]	2.000	28.000	.008	.291
	Hotelling's Trace	.411	5.759[a]	2.000	28.000	.008	.291
	Roy's Largest Root	.411	5.759[a]	2.000	28.000	.008	.291

a. Exact statistic
b. Design: Intercept
Within Subjects Design: time

According to table 2, the value for Wilks' Lambda is 0.709, $F (2, 28) = 5.75$, $P < .05$, with a very high effect size of 0.291. The p value is less than 0.05, suggesting a statistically significant effect for genre with regard to lexical diversity. In other words, there was a significant difference among the different genres in terms of lexical diversity. As a result, the first null hypothesis is rejected. Table 3 shows which groups differ from each other.

TABLE 3
EXACT GENRE DIFFERENCES IN LEXICAL DIVERSITY

(I) time	(J) time	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.[a]	95% Confidence Interval for Difference[a]	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1*	2	2.567	3.009	.401	-3.588	8.721
	3	-4.367*	1.854	.025	-8.159	-.574
2	1	-2.567	3.009	.401	-8.721	3.588
	3	-6.933*	2.542	.011	-12.132	-1.734
3	1	4.367*	1.854	.025	.574	8.159
	2	6.933*	2.542	.011	1.734	12.132

Based on estimated marginal means
a. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Least Significant Difference (equivalent to no adjustments).
*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.
*1 stands for comparative, 2 stands for argumentative, and 3 stands for narrative genre types.

According to the above table, the difference between comparative and argumentative genre types is not statistically significant (p=0.401). However there are significant differences (p=0.025) between comparative and narrative genres. Also, there is a statistically significant difference (p=0.011) between narrative and argumentative genres.

In order to examine the relationship between lexical diversity and writing quality, Pearson Correlation was employed. The results are shown below in table 4.

TABLE 4
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WRITING QUALITY AND LEXICAL DIEVRSITY

		analytic	holistic	diversity
Analytic	Pearson Correlation	1	.664**	-.003
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.981
	N	90	90	90
Holistic	Pearson Correlation	.664**	1	.057
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.592
	N	90	90	90
Diversity	Pearson Correlation	-.003	.057	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.981	.592	
	N	90	90	90

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results indicate that there is a nonsignificant, negative and weak relationship (r= - .003) between lexical diversity and overall writing quality (i.e., three genres taken together) when scored analytically. The same is valid for the relation lexical diversity and overall writing quality when scored holistically, showing a positive but nonsignificant relationship (r= 0.05) between the two. This implies that the second null hypothesis is confirmed. In order to further investigate the relationship between lexical diversity and writing quality in different genre types, the following Correlational analyses were used.

TABLE 5
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEXICAL DIVERSITY AND COMPARATIVE WRITING SCORED ANALYTICALLY

		diversity.comparative	analytic.comparative
diversity.comparative	Pearson Correlation	1	.029
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.877
	N	30	30
analytic.comparative	Pearson Correlation	.029	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.877	
	N	30	30

TABLE 6
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEXICAL DIVERSITY AND ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING SCORED ANALYTICALLY

		diversity.argumentative	analytic.argumentative
diversity.argumentative	Pearson Correlation	1	.482**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.007
	N	30	30
analytic.argumentative	Pearson Correlation	.482**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	
	N	30	30

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As table 5 shows, there is not a significant relationship (p<0.05) between lexical diversity and comparative genre scored analytically. However, table 6 shows that there is a significant relationship (r= 0.48) between lexical diversity and argumentative genre scored analytically, implying that the second null hypothesis regarding argumentative genre scores analytically is rejected.

The results of the analytic scoring of narrative genre were also correlated with lexical diversity indicating a nonsignificant negative relationship (r= -0.34) between the two. As table 7 shows, once more, the second null hypothesis is confirmed.

TABLE 7
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEXICAL DIVERSITY AND NARRATIVE WRITING SCORED ANALYTICALLY

		diversity.narrative	analytic.narrative
diversity.narrative	Pearson Correlation	1	-.340
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.066
	N	30	30
analytic.narrative	Pearson Correlation	-.340	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.066	
	N	30	30

Following the analytic scoring of genres, lexical diversity was also correlated with the holistic scoring of each genre. The following three tables show the relationship between lexical diversity and the quality of writing in each genre when scored holistically.

TABLE 8
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEXICAL DIVERSITY AND COMPARATIVE WRITING SCORED HOLISTICALLY

		diversity.comparative	holistic.comparative
diversity.comparative	Pearson Correlation	1	.112
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.555
	N	30	30
holistic.comparative	Pearson Correlation	.112	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.555	
	N	30	30

The figures in table 8 show that the relationship (r=0.11) between lexical diversity and the quality of writing in comparative genre when scored holistically is weak and nonsignificant (p=0.555). This implies a confirmation of the second null-hypothesis, indicating no relationship between the two variables.

TABLE 9
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEXICAL DIVERSITY AND ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING SCORED HOLISTICALLY

		diversity.argumentative	holistic.argumentative
diversity.argumentative	Pearson Correlation	1	.316
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.089
	N	30	30
holistic.argumentative	Pearson Correlation	.316	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.089	
	N	30	30

The above table reveals a moderate nonsignificant relationship (r= 0.31, p=0.089) between lexical diversity and argumentative genre when scored holistically. The second null hypothesis is confirmed gain, indicating no relationship between lexical diversity and writing quality.

The last table (table 10) concerns the relationship between lexical diversity and narrative genre when scored holistically. Since the relationship is weak and nonsignificant in this case too (r= -0.26, p=0.157), the answer to the second question turns out to be negative.

TABLE 10
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEXICAL DIVERSITY AND NARRATIVE WRITING SCORED HOLISTICALLY

		diversity.narrative	holistic.narrative
diversity.narrative	Pearson Correlation	1	-.265
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.157
	N	30	30
holistic.narrative	Pearson Correlation	-.265	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.157	
	N	30	30

IV. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study regarding lexical density in different genres are very close to the results of Yu (2010), indicating that different topics and topic types of the writing prompts exert significant effects on the lexical diversity of compositions. Compositions of impersonal topics had significantly higher lexical diversity than personal topics did. The significant effect of topics and topic types on lexical diversity support/verify echo the suggestion made by Vermeer (2000, p. 79): "Control of tasks over informants is a prerequisite for comparing different texts, so that the kinds of topics are similar for all informants."

Berman (2000) conducted a comprehensive study of lexical diversity across seven languages, comparing children at three ages, plus adults, producing language in two genres (narrative and expository), and two modalities (speech and writing) and found main effects for age, genre, and language, but not for modality. Berman's results were later supported by the results of a study by Woerfel and Yılmaz (2011) which showed that measurement of lexical diversity, word and text length differ according to age and genre. The results of these two studies can be said to be consistent with the findings of the present research, in that they both consider lexical diversity to differ among different genres.

Although the correlation between overall lexical diversity and overall writing quality was determined to be nonsignifican, a detailed investigation of the correlation in each genre type showed divergent and, in some cases, contradicting results. This can be related to findings regarding the first question in which genre had a significant effect on lexical diversity. In other words, as lexical diversity differed among the genres, it is quite natural to find different results for its relationship with writing quality in different genres.

The results of the correlations between lexical diversity and argumentative writing scored analytically can be considered congruent with those of Grobe (1981), Laufer and Nation (1995), McNamara et al. (2010), Engber (1995), Mellor (2011), and Yu (2010), who found that lexical diversity had a statistically significant and positive correlation with the overall quality ratings of writings. However, Koda (1993) found higher correlations (r=0.7 and r=0.6) between lexical density and the quality of writings, indicating that lexical diversity can be considered a strong predictor of writing quality.

The findings of the present study regarding the correlation between lexical diversity and writing quality (holistic and analytic) could replicate the results obtained by Linnarud (1986), whose study of the compositions written by 17-year-old native speakers and Swedish learners of English detected no significant relationship between holistic scores and lexical diversity for advanced learners.

Jarvis (2002) found consistently significant, albeit moderate, correlations between lexical diversity and the holistic quality ratings of the narratives. His results stand in sharp contrast to the findings of the present study which revealed nonsignificant correlation between lexical diversity and holistic and analytic scores of writing.

V. CONCLUSION

This study aimed at first investigating lexical diversity in the three genres of argumentative, narrative, and comparative. The second aim was to see whether there exists any relationship between writing quality in different genres and lexical diversity. Based on the obtained data, the outcome of this study was that lexical diversity is sensitive to genre. Except for the relationship between lexical diversity and argumentative genre scored analytically, there was not any statistically significant relationship between lexical diversity and writing quality.

The lexical diversity patterns over topics of the current study provide implications of writing topic preparation for the ESL writing course. To increase the learners' lexical diversity and to meet the writing culture of the academic writing community, writing instructors need to develop writing topics that can increase writers' creativity, critical thinking, and cultural awareness so that the learners look for new vocabulary rather than circulating the same vocabulary over and over.

By expanding the types of lexical variables used for comparison and by investigating the relationship to quality score, the role of the lexicon in writing would be further substantiated. Although this study failed to establish a significant relationship between lexical diversity and writing quality except for argumentative writing scored analytically, it indicates the need for further attention to different genres in writing. In other words, if students pay more attention to the use of vocabulary while writing, the quality of their writings will most probably improve, leading to a positive washback. In other words, it is worth helping and encouraging learners to bring their vocabulary knowledge into active use in writing.

Becoming aware of the differences among genres in terms of lexical diversity, teachers will put more emphasis on the different genres in writing courses. Knowing these differences among genres, students will probably pay more attention to the two lexical aspects while writing in English. Consequently, the present study is a strong support to genre-based writing courses, emphasizing attention to different genres in the process of learning writing.

The realization of the effect of lexical diversity on the quality of their writings will also make students pay more attention to this lexical aspect while editing and revising their written products. Since learners only pay attention to the use of correct vocabulary in their writings in the stages of drafting, editing, and revising, by paying more attention to the use of more varied vocabulary they will probably be able to increase the quality of their writings in these stages.

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The Analysis of Summative Assessment and Formative Assessment and Their Roles in College English Assessment System

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Abstract—**Taking English teaching summative assessment and formative assessment system as the entry point, the essay illustrates the effect of the assessments on College English teaching and its great influence on English learning by combing it with practical teaching experience deeply and broadly. It also points out that students' real English level can not only rely on a single evaluation mode. Summative assessment and formative assessment have different form and different function. They should be combined together during the teaching and learning process. Then the students' English level will be effectively evaluated, and it will better guide the foreign language teaching.**

Index Terms—**English teaching, summative assessment, formative assessment, outcome**

I. INTRODUCTION

Assessment is a broad term defined as a process for obtaining information that is used for making decisions about students; curricula, programs, and-schools; and educational policy (American Federation of Teachers, National Council on Measurement in Education, and national Education Association, 1990). Decisions about curricula, programs, and schools include decisions about their effectiveness (summative assessment) and about ways to improve them (formative assessment) (Anthony J & Susan,2005). When we want to know students English level, we usually formally collect information through students' paper-and–pencil tests within a given time, or informally record information of students' performance on oral participation, homework, presentation. Assessment is a very important activity during foreign language teaching. It's a scientific method of the evaluation of teaching quality and learning outcome. Efficient evaluation is like a mirror. Because it timely feeds back the information of teaching and learning, makes teachers and students see the achievements and shortcomings clearly and improve teaching and learning efficiently. Whatever assessment is taken, we should be clear about learning targets and what assessments should be taken during the process of teaching and learning.

II. LEARNING TARGETS AND ASSESSMENTS

Teaching is the process that teachers use instructions to help students achieve their learning targets. Nitko (et al., 2005) pointed out some learning targets are cognitive, meaning that they deal with intellectual knowledge and thinking skills; other learning outcomes are affective, meaning that they deal with how students should feel or what they should value. Of course, this theory are consistent with our student learning objectives. Besides, from Allen also (et al., 1997) pointed out the assessment has four targets: to carry out teaching research, to understand students' learning progress, to guide teaching and reflect the ultimate teaching and learning case. For the learning targets, there're general learning target goal and specific learning target. General learning target goal is a statement of an expected learning outcome deriving from educational goal. A specific learning target is a clear statement about what students are to achieve at the end of a unit. In China, the college English curriculum is the general learning target for all the universities which says College English teaching is that students have strong ability of reading and listening, speaking and writing, translation, they can communicate in English. College English teaching should help students lay a solid foundation of the language to master a language study method, to meet the needs of high social development and economic development.while the specific learning target is more detailed. For example, in the unit of "Work roles", students are to achieve to talk the subject of "work"; to write "report"; to grasp the general and specific information while listening to a material. Once we are clear about the learning objectives, we are also make sure what kind of evaluation method should be taken. But it is very important when teachers use assessments, they need consider the choice of the method of the evaluation which must meet the need of students, the outcomes that teachers assess are the process and strategies students use to solve real life problems, and they also should take into account of what kind of effect the assessments have on building students' confidence and making progress that different assessment will produce. Therefore, on one hand, the

evaluation methods should be used to achieve the targets of assessment. On the other, it should consider the effect it has on students. As some types of assessments' influence on students are as light as a feather that students imperceptible to them, while others are more apparent, relatively have large impact. In fact, all forms of evaluation for teaching are very important, because the effective evaluation has the following effects: It makes the teachers know the teaching effect. It helps teachers understand the whole class, decide whether to continue the current work mode or take another way. It helps teachers find that individual students may have special problems. It helps teachers understand the class and each student's progress. It provides efficient feedback to the teacher the students' the basic information, and as a basis for recognition and awards. It helps teachers evaluate their performance and teaching program, and make proper adjustment. (Janet, 2002)

In the classroom, teachers need to make particular decisions to adapt to the different needs of students, which is very important to determine the teaching scheme. At present, in China, universities usually adopt summative assessment and formative assessment to evaluate students' learning which has the significance for teaching and learning.

III. Summative Assessment and Its Role in Foreign Language Teaching

Summative assessment is to evaluate student learning and teachers teaching after a teaching period (Anthony J & Susan M, 2005). It has a clear evaluation criteria. American educator Bloom (et al.,1971) pointed out that summative assessment is an assessment of the course, the education program's validity and education research in order to classification, identification, evaluation of progress after a teaching program or the end of the term. Summative assessment is that teacher wants to find out what the students can remember about the course material so that a mark cab be determined. It lets the teacher sum up" what the students have learned, or to make judgment (Luo Shaoqian, 2003).

Nowadays in China, the universities' summative assessment is undertaken according to the provisions of the nation's syllabus. It is a curriculum standard test which is a conventional criteria to measure students' English level. For example, the national Band 4 and Band 6 English Tests for non - English Major students and English final examinations at the end of the term. These examinations are summative assessment, also called the achievement test which is made basing on the outline of what is taught and what to be tested. It evaluates and measures what students grasp in the learning situation after a learning period. For example, multiple-choice test is one of the typical summative assessment. Multiple-choice test belongs is formal and objective. It can be a direct assessment of certain abilities (Anthony J & Susan M, 2005).It usually has several items which is used in teaching, election, or in other fields. In our university final examinations, we use multiple choice test such as listening, vocabulary and structure, cloze and reading comprehension for the purpose of grading students learning results. There are advantages of multiple choice test. Firstly, it is a very efficient way of testing. In a given time, a great variety of learning target is assessed. There are 70% part of exam is multiple choice test in our examination. Secondly, the possibility of bias that teachers grade scores for students is minimized in the final score. The result is more reliable and validity, because teachers can't put their subjective opinion on the answers. Thirdly, multiple choice test make teachers more easily find students' common problem. For example, in a 20 items multiple -choice test, if most students choose "A" which is a wrong answer, then teachers know that most students choose the wrong answer. Lastly, it lows the cost and saves time. Because machine grades the score, it is faster than man's hand work. Its result can be fed back to teachers quickly so that teachers know what the outcome is. Teachers can compare the present students' grades with that of the past so as to decide whether to continue the current mode of operation or take another way. This assessment helps teachers make proper teaching adjustment and improve teaching program timely. Linguist Heaton (1989) argued that summative assessment which takes the main role objective tests treats language as a separate component and has very high reliability. As summative assessment provides very accurate quantitative data for teaching analysis, teachers can analyze the test results to guide the next teaching instruction .For example, accordance with the collected data of this year's final examination, we find the average grade of vocabulary is lowest in the test. So we decide to strengthen students' learning of vocabulary in the next term. Out of question, the information that summative assessment provides can guide teachers timely discovers teaching problems and adjusts the teaching content and teaching methods. In the mean time, it can help students find their problems in study, and adjust their learning objectives and learning methods. But everything has two sides. There're disadvantages of summative assessment. Firstly, students can guess the answer when they have no time or when they had no idea to make the choice. So some students may be lucky in the exam. Secondly, students must choose one answer form the choices which restrains students' subjective opinion of writing the answer, even if they have the idea of how to write out answer. An example of finding similar meaning word: "This student was excelled from school because he had forged some document for overseas study. A. Frustrated B. formulated C. fabricated D. facilitated". The answer is "C". The students may not know the word of "fabricated", but he knows the word of "forge". He is able to write out the right answer instead of making false document. But he has no chance to do it. It can be seen that multiple choice test restrains his high skill of thinking such as creation and critical thinking. Thirdly, less knowledgeable students may guess answers. They may be lucky in such test. Lastly, too much use of multiple choice tests may mislead education into undesirable ways. For example, teachers and students may be pushed to put a lot of energy to study some "skills" to make a "right" answer, not on the exploring knowledge. Students' ability creation is ignored. Actually, in our teaching, we find that some students who scored high have poor ability of speaking English and less participation in classroom

discussion, and some with good speaking ability have low marks on paper-and-pencil test. Obviously the summative assessment can't show students' real English level. Though it makes teachers able to get quick overall results but not complete. It is lack of comprehensive evaluation to the students' ability of using English, especially the ability of speaking English in a communicative situation (Luo Shaoqian, 2003). Obviously this way of single assessment cannot reflect the level of learning. If most or all of the items in our test tests students simple recall, a short answer test is preferred (Anthony J & Susan M, 2005).Thus in our university examination, the amount of multiple choice should be reduced. Short answer test should take the place of part of multiple choice, because short answer can provide students' large space of thinking and make them build up their own opinion. The students in our university has relatively high level of English. They has the ability of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Most of all, formative assessment makes up for the irrationality and regret caused by summative assessment, for it emphasizes to cultivate students' motivation, creation and critical thinking during the process of assessment.

IV. FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND ITS ROLE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEACHING

Formative assessment is the investigation, evaluation and analysis of record of daily students' learning activities. It is the use of systemic evaluation in curriculum development, teaching and learning so that these three process are improved in any one process (Bloom, et al., 1971). Formative evaluation is different from the summative evaluation. Its main purpose is to help teachers to guide students' learning Its criteria usually is not so clear, and does not have to pass the test to complete assessments (Anthony J & Susan M, 2005). Formative assessment can often be performed, whether formal or informal. It provides for the teacher with more detailed, a continuous feedback, and a comprehensive understanding of what help students need so that teachers can decide to use what kind of teaching methods according to the different students' need. Bloom (et al., 1971) pointed out that formative assessment must not have any association of evaluating grades so that learners will not fear, but rather look at it as a learning aid. There's a wide range of sources of information for formative evaluation. British linguist Widdowson (1990) emphasized on cultivating students' ability of using language. He pointed out that language ability is actually the process capability, namely, language ability is the process of transmitting information, inducing, reasoning and problem solving. Some linguists also pointed out, from the social function of language, language is the process of doing, instead of knowing.

Formative assessment also is consistent with ancient Chinese teaching perspective and the theory of the nature of language---teach students in accordance with their aptitude. The famous Song dynasty Neo-Confucianism Zhu Xi pointed out that Confucius taught according to each students' aptitude (Wang Hongliang, 2005). Educator Confucius taught students in accordance with their aptitude in the teaching practice as early as two thousand years ago. To teach students in accordance with their aptitude is to have a comprehensive understanding of students. In the teaching, Confucius tried to understand the very thoroughly every of his students moral, intelligence, personality, interests. Under this premise, Confucius used different methods for teaching in order to obtain the best effect. So, it is necessary to take formative evaluation when evaluating students' performance in the classroom. For instance, in our university, our students have different backgrounds. Some once were English teacher, some did interpreting work, some were foreigners, some worked in foreign companies and English was their daily working language. The difference determines their ability and English level. Some students got high score in summative assessment but with less ability of spoken English, some didn't score high but with good ability of using English in a real communication situation. Thus only to take a unified summative assessment on the evaluation of our students would be unfair and unjust, and would not favor students to improve their real standard of English. Therefore, in our teaching activities, we adopted several styles of formative assessment with the purpose of providing students' a wide space for reaction, motivation and critical thinking.

A. Drama Performance. Performance can evaluate students' performance in national curriculum

in. Because the show emphasizes the ability of investigation and research, performance and literature have very close combination (Wu Shiying, 1999). Drama performance can gave our students full chances of playing their talents and abilities such as the ability of using language, imitation, organization and coordination and so on. In the classroom students played drama in groups. They wrote content, plot and direct by themselves. In this process students gave full play of their competence and capacity. They learned to exchange and cooperation, to integrate what they had learnt in different areas of as a whole, to help each other and so on. It made teachers knew more about the impact of emotional factors on learning.

B. Interviewing with Students. Interviewing with students helps teacher to diagnose what difficulties students have during their learning and give them suggestions for further learning. Diagnostic assessment of learning difficulties has two related purposes: (a) identifying which learning targets a students has not mastered and (b) suggesting possible causes or reasons why a student has not mastered the learning targets (Anthony J & Susan M, 2005). In our teaching, teachers were required to have an interview with individual student regularly. Students explain their thinking and or answer question, teachers follow students' response to gather informal diagnostic information. For example, after the drama performance, teachers asked students to give their opinions of the activity frankly. Usually teachers began with general questions and then specific questions such as

1) "Do you like this drama?"
2) "How well do your group accomplish your performance?"
3) "How many marks are you going to grade for your performance?"

4) "What is your group members advantage and disadvantages when you designed your play?"

5) "How did you go about when plying this drama?"

6.) "What problems did you encounter?"

7) "Did you solve the problem now?"

8) "What are your goals for your next piece?"

During the interview, teachers took down students' thinking, the problems they were faced with, the reasons of the problems and recommendations to solve the problems for students. The teachers should note that the interview should be taken in a friendly and kind atmosphere. Teachers should not threat students.

C. Feedback .Feedback in the assessment is very important. Its purpose is to encourage and help students to learn better. There are many ways of feedback like written assignments, oral homework, quiz, performance and so on. Feedback can be both assignment reviews, modification, symbols, annotations, interview with the individual or give comments to all the students. During the classroom activities, teachers carefully observed and record every student's performance. After activities teachers immediately gave feedback to students, such as pointing out students' strengths and deficiencies in the performance and gave them instructions of how to do it well next time. Teacher also had individual dialogue with students in order to better understand the students. No matter what formative assessment is undertaken, teachers' feedback must be objective and fair, because if formative assessment doesn't dealt well, it will not produce good results. For example, in order to encourage the students, no matter how students perform, some teachers always say to students "very good", or "good". If students find no matter how they perform, they will easily get praise. This will be very hard to move students to a higher goal. Therefore, although praise is very important, it must be based on students' true progress. Students need to know where they do well, so that they can progress faster. Feedback also helps students have self-assessment. Richard G. Sober (2009) stressed self and peer assessment can make students reflect on their own contribution to the team and also voice their opinions on their co-workers and it is essential they have confidence that a sense of fairness will prevail in the marking process.

Formative assessment is not perfect, it has advantages. For instance, other's opinions are not objective, often based on incomplete information; some students cannot express themselves well in front of other students, inefficient students' conversation may be irrelevant to assessing their achievement; some learning targets cannot be assessed by short oral responses; they require longer time frames in which students are free to talk, create and respond (Anthony J & Susan M, 2005). Though formative has the above disadvantages, we may take measure to avoid them. Keep the conversation on a professional level; be careful not to misunderstand students attitude; kindly ask questions and patiently wait for students' response; treat every student equally----don't ignore and punish students who make mistakes or praise a lot of students who participate more often. Though formative assessment doesn't have standard criteria, as long as teachers reasonably deal with it, it will serve the teaching and learning well. After all, Formative assessment helps teacher and students find out the students' achievements in the performance that summative assessment doesn't. At the same time, it also finds out students' specific problems existed. This assessment not only allows students to better play their strengths, but also provides specific help for individual student. Formative assessment can not only praise and encourage students, but also help students who are lack of confidence realize their own progress and help everyone establish his\her direction and goals. There's no doubt that it evaluates a student's English level and the ability of using English comprehensively and objectively and effectively and timely guide teaching. High quality formative assessment and feedback can improve the quality of learning (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

V. CONCLUSION

Summative assessment and formative assessment have different forms and functions. The types of the choice of assessments depends on what we want to know, what the purpose is. To assess effectively, the type must match the results required, but this is not to say that there is only one option, instead there are usually several different options. We choose the type based on the available resources, and use the most familiar and most effective way to assess. The national or the university's unified summative assessment is very authoritative. Summative assessment focus more on the objective test and more easily to get students overall English level, In the present situation, summative assessment is still necessary. Because in most universities, the ratio of teachers and students usually is 1:100.So at the fixed locations, within a given time paper-and-pencil test is one of the most effective method of evaluation of learning and teaching. in China. But it is undeniable that summative assessment is hard to test students' ability of using English especially speaking ability in a real communicative set to a certain extent. Moreover, summative assessment is also very difficult to make teachers have in-depth understanding of individual differences of each student, thus there is imperfection for summative assessment to evaluate students' English level. However formative assessment directs more on students' individual performance. It has important significance for the inspection of each student progress and achieves the desired teaching standards. It is helpful for teachers to diagnose and find individual differences in performance, to reflect, to foster students' critical thinking. Yet, if we use one type of assessment method for a long period, it's possible to cause negative effects. Therefore formative evaluation and summative evaluation can not be completely separated. In a certain range, effective evaluation can make teacher use different ways of evaluation so they will have a comprehensive understanding students' ability. Therefore, we should put summative assessment and formative

assessment to combine together in order to guide teaching and get more comprehensive and reasonable assessment of student learning, make students play a variety of potential as much as possible.

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Different Strategies of Compliment Responses Used by Iranian EFL Students and Australian English Speakers

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Abstract—The advanced Iranian EFL students are capable of producing grammatically correct sentences, but they have a lot of gaps, lack of variety and form-function clashes in communication. Therefore, this pragmatic failure may specially be traced in the areas of speech acts. This paper investigates to explore the differences between the strategies of responses to compliments given by Iranian EFL students compared with Australian English speakers in terms of socio-cultural patterns. In line with the nature of the present research, a cross-cultural one, 30 Australian English speakers and 30 Iranian EFL students were given a questionnaire consisting of two parts, each of which was composed of 8 open-ended questions. Based on the Chi- square inferential statistics the collected data were analyzed and interpreted and the results were obtained. The overall results suggested that some strategies of Compliment Responses (CRs) are cultural-specific like request interpretation "Qabel-Nadare" (I am glad to give it to you as a gift)" in Iranian culture and that there were various strategies of CRs which were used for different purposes by Iranian EFL students and Australian English speakers.

Index Terms—compliment responses, Iranian EFL students, socio-cultural patterns, speech acts

I. INTRODUCTION

Today, in researches related to second language learning and teaching, it is crucial to pay attention to the use of grammatical forms in the user's speech as well as to the ability to match structures with communicative functions. In other words, the need to use language that is appropriate to the social context has become a central focus for teachers and researchers (Kumaravadivelu.B, 2003). "The concept of communicative competence was introduced into applied linguistics in reaction to highly grammar-focused theories of language competence, which analyzes the nature of language as a system independently of its users" (Sari Luoma, 2009). After Lado and Carrolls' skills/components model (1960) was presented as the first model of language ability, the concept of Communicative Language Ability (CLA) has gone through a wide range of changes and reconceptualizations (Backman 1990). Lado and Carroll's model was ignorant of context for language use; this pitfall was remedied by Canale and Swain's framework (1980) through introducing the concept of sociolinguistic and strategic competence into their model. Later Bachman (1990) presented a model of CLA with three components. In the Bachman's model, psychophysilogical competence was incorporated, and also the concept of strategic competence was extended (Backman 1990). "The most frequently used communicative model in language testing today is Bachman and Palmer's (1996) model of language ability", which is a more elaborate model of CLA for language teaching and testing (Sari Luoma, 2009). Bachman and Palmer (1996) relabeled knowledge structure as Topical knowledge which refers to schemata about different topics that language user can benefit from in the context of language use. In their model strategic competence was also reconceptualized as a set of meta-cognitive structures (Backman 1990).

A. Aspects of Speech Act Theory

As far as language and function are concerned, speech act theory deals with the performance of different acts by utterances in an act of communication including locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts."Locutionary acts are simply the speech acts that have taken place, illocutionary acts are the real actions which are performed by an utterance, where saying equals doing, as in betting, plighting one's troth, welcoming and warning, and perlocutionary acts are the effects of the utterance on the listener, who, for example, accepts the bet or pledge of marriage" (Searle,J - Austin, 1968, p 405-424).

B. Types of Illocutionary Acts

Some linguists have attempted to classify illocutionary acts into a number of categories or types. Machiko, quoting Searle (2003), enumerated five such categories:

Representatives. The speaker asserts a proposition to be true, using such verbs as: affirm, believe, conclude, deny, and report.

Directives. The speaker tries to make the hearer do something, with such words as: ask, beg, challenge, command, dare, invite, insist, request.

Commissives. The speaker commits himself/herself to a (future) course of action, using verbs such as: guarantee, pledge, promise, swear, vow, undertake, warrant.

Expressives. The speaker expresses an attitude to or about a state of affair, using such verbs as: apologize, appreciate, congratulate, deplore, detest, regret, thank, welcome, and "*compliments*".

Declarations. The speaker alters the external status or condition of an object or situation, solely by making the utterance: "I now pronounce you man and wife".

C. Compliments

Holmes (1988, p.446) considered compliment as "a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some 'good' (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.), which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer". Giving a compliment is a positive politeness strategy that enhances "the hearer's positive face" (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p 101). It is believed that complimenting "grease the social wheels" and thus serves as "social lubricants"; As a matter of fact complimenting is another speech act that implies the use of politeness strategies (Wolfson, 1983). Giving and responding to compliments is an important aspect of learning foreign languages for those who are from different cultural backgrounds (Neil Mercer, Janet Maybin, 2003). Spencer-Oatey (2008, p. 96) quoting pomerantz (1978) contends that people who are given compliments are faced with dilemma of having the strong inclination of fishing for compliments, and being under "the pressure of avoiding self-praise". Patterned conversational moves can coerce people into gendered roles and enforce them. For example, a compliment offered to a woman on her appearance is part of the linguistic practice by which women are judged by their looks, while men are complimented on their actions and judged by their accomplishments Eckert, Penelope & Sally (2003).

In an article by Chen-Hsin Tang & Grace Qiao Zhang (2008), the findings demonstrated that Chinese participants prefer to use fewer "Accept" strategies and more Evade and Reject strategies, than their Australian counterpart; "that is the Chinese express appreciation for a compliment less than Australian and denigrate themselves more". Australians on the other hand prefer using explicit CRs more than Chinese participants. Another finding of the article is that the Chinese participants applied much less combined compliment response strategies than the Australians, "indicating that the Australians made more effort when responding to compliments". In another work by Golato (2005) focusing on sociocultural differences between Americans and Germans' compliment responses, she found that in their responses to compliment, Germans display "fewer rejections and disagreement" to complimenter than Americans, while the frequency of Americans' agreements and acceptance of compliments were higher than Germans. In this line of studies, Winnie Cheng (2003, p116) compares compliment responses of Hong Kong Chinese (HKC) with Native English Speakers (NES) and suggested that HKC do not use acceptance among the strategies of responding to a compliments, but NES are more willing to accept the compliment, even though they often turn it into sub-strategies of acceptance like, Praise Downgrades Or Shift Credit. With respect to Iranian strategies of compliment responses, in a contrastive study of compliment responses among male & female teenage EFL learners Mohammad Ali Heidari, Mohsen Rezazadeh, Abbas Eslami Rasekh (2009) stated that "Iranian females use an indirect communication pattern of modest acceptance, and their "no" response to compliments means 'yes' which demonstrates consideration and politeness toward others". They suggested that "males prefer the use of the Accept response as a direct communication of acknowledgement", whereas females "consider that implicit CRs are as desirable, if not more desirable, than explicit CRs".

D. Compliment and Compliment Responses Topics

"In a series of articles, (e.g. Wolfson & Manes 1980; Wolfson, Nessa 1981) it was noted that one of the most striking features of compliments in American English is their almost total lack of originality". Examining a corpus of approximately 700 compliments, they categorized compliment functions into 4 compliment actions and 5 compliment responses as follows (Herbert, 1990):

E. Major Compliment Topics

1) Appearance, 2) Possessions, 3) Performance/ skills/ abilities, and 4) Personality traits.

F. Major types of Compliment response topics are

1) Accept: Which is subcategorized as:
   a) Appreciation token "Thanks/ Thank you"
   b) Comment acceptance "Yeah, it's my favorite, too"
   c) Praise upgrade "Really brings out the blue in my eyes, does not it?"
2) Mitigate: Which is subcategorized as:
   a) Comment History "I bought it for trip to Arizona"
   b) Shift Credit "My brother gave it to me/It really Knitted itself"

    c) Questioning or Request reassurance / repetition "Do you really like them?"
    d) Return "So's yours"
    e) Scale down / Downgrade "It's really quite old"
  3) Reject "A: You look good and healthy B: I feel fat"
  4) No acknowledgement (addressee responds with an irrelevant comment or gives no response)
  5) Request Interpretation (Addressee interprets the compliment as a request such as: "You want to borrow this one too?" or "I am glad to give it to you as a gift"

II. METHODS AND MATERIALS

A. Research Design and Hypothesis

The present study is intended to describe strategies of responding to compliments. The study in this field provides the readers with the fact that there are languages and there are culture-based ways of performing a speech act, and these rays of culture in the first language (L1) may manifest itself while using the second language. The study investigates compliment behavior in Iranian EFL students in comparison with Australian English speakers. This study in particular investigates "responses to compliments". So the basic question of this study is "What are different strategies of Compliment Responses (CRs) given by Iranian EFL students compared with Australian English speaker in terms of socio-cultural patterns"?

Regarding the research question, the following null–hypothesis was formulated:

H0: There is no socio-culturally significant difference between strategies of Responding to Compliments used by Iranian EFL students and Australian English speakers.

B. Participants

Sixty subjects participated in this study. Participants in this study were thirty Australian native English speakers (AES), and thirty Iranian proficient speakers of English (IES). Australian native English speakers were all both native male and female living in Orange a town 206 km western of Sydney, Australia, and ranged in age from 22 to 55. Iranian EFL students were both male and female as well, who were M.A. students in TEFL at Isfehan Azad University and ranged in age from 23 to 51.

C. Materials

For the purpose of data collection, a questionnaire in accordance with the purpose of the experiment was prepared in English. It was composed of two parts: The first part included some demographic questions including the age, sex, level of education, and native language of the participants. and the second section (following Holmes, 1988) included 8 contextualized discourse situations concerning the strategies of responding to compliments which were technically designed regarding the research question to successfully elicit different strategies of responding to compliment, and were divided into following categories: Accept/ Mitigate/ Reject/ No acknowledgment/ and Request interpretation. In this section, situations were designed in a way that made it difficult to write anything socio-linguistically appropriate other than a responding to compliment as happening in daily language interactions.

D. Procedures

Among various pragmatic research methods which have been applied in studies on compliments, Manes and Wolfson (1981) argue that the ethnographic models, mostly in form of the dairy methods is the most reliable for collecting compliments (Andreas H. Jucker, Irma Taavitsainen, 2008). However, the questionnaire used in the present study is as well another ethnographic model for investigations about compliments which is a form of Discourse Completion Task (DCT) originally developed by Blum-Kulka (1982) and Oleshtain & Blum-Kulka (1985) in which subjects are asked to respond to a given situation. "An example of this method is provided by Chen (1993) who used a discourse completion task to investigate cultural differences in compliment responses between speakers of Chinese and of American English. More recently, Schneider and Schneider (2000) have extended this line of research and used the same discourse completion task with speakers of Irish English and of German". (Andreas H. Jucker, & Irma Taavitsainen, 2008, p 205). Many scholars who have conducted research in fields of Cross-cultural pragmatics have considered DCT as a form of data collection procedure with some main credits and also some discredits.(Shoshana Blum-Kulka, Juliane House, Gabriele Kasper, 1989). "Justified criticisms have been leveled at the DCT some labeling it an instrument that limits the capturing of authentic communication, and others making it look almost absolute. However, there are to date no other sociolinguistic data collection instruments that have as many administrative advantages as the DCT". (Billmyer & Varghese, 2006). One great advantage of "this type of data collection is that the data elicited reflect the content of oral data despite its written form"; another point of advantage relates to the ease and practicality of data elicitation across cultures. (Klaus P. Schneider, Anne Barron, 2008). For the purpose of elicitation of the data in this study, the questions for Australian subjects were administered by a friend of mine "Micelle Clark", an Australia citizen who was accurately informed by the researchers how to deal with the task, but the tests for the other group were administered and conducted by the researchers themselves. During the test, the administrators were available to answer any question raised by the subjects.

E. Data Analysis

In this part the focus of attention is on the analysis of data obtained through 8 open-ended questions concerning the difference between strategies of responding to compliments used by Iranian EFL students and Australian English speakers in terms of socio-cultural patterns. Table 1, displays 5 major categories of responding strategies to compliments, which are almost consistent in different cultures except their frequencies and the purpose behind their use.

TABLE I.
FREQUENCY OF MAIN STRATEGIES OF RESPONDING TO COMPLIMENT USED BY IRANIAN VS. AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPANTS

Response Strategies	Iranian	Australian
Reject	9	18
Mitigate	120	132
No acknowledge	2	9
Accept	91	121
Request Interpretation	48	5

Of course, it should be considered that a participant's response can consist of more than one simple utterance of accepting or rejecting or other types of responses; for example, it could be Accepting + Mitigate. On the face of it, the strategies of responding to complimenting used by the two cultural groups under the study do show discrepancies in most of the columns except for the second column i.e. Mitigate in table 1, but this is a premature judgment unless we go into detailed information.

TABLE II.
COMPUTATION OF X^2

R	C	O	E	O-E	(O-E)2	£(O-E)2 /E
1	1	91	103.13	-12.13	147.136	1.42670
2	2	120	122.59	-2.59	6.708	0.05471
3	1	9	13.13	-4.13	17.056	1.29900
4	2	2	5.35	-3.35	11.225	2.09813
5	1	48	25.78	22.22	493.728	16.15159
1	2	121	108.86	12.14	147.379	1.35383
2	1	132	129.40	2.6	6.76	0.05224
3	2	18	13.86	4.14	17.139	1.23658
4	1	9	5.64	3.36	11.289	2.00159
5	2	5	27.21	-22.21	493.284	18.1398
						X^2= 43.8141

In order to deal with the above data, Chi-square test was conducted for the analysis of the estimated frequencies. Table.2 shows the estimated Chi-square for the given data is x^2(P= 0.05, df = 4) = 43.814, and from the tabulated x^2 values (see appendix 2), it is evident that at the 0.05 level of significant with 4 degree of freedom critical value of x^2 is equal to 9.487. As it is obvious, not only our calculated x^2 is greater than x^2 value for probability of 0.05 ,but also it exceeds even the tabulated x^2 value for 0.001 probability which is equal to 18.47. So we conclude that there is a highly significant departure from the null hypothesis ,and this gross difference indicates that our null hypothesis is firmly rejected i.e. we have very strong evidence that the results of the Chi-square test reveal socio-cultural differences between strategies of responding to compliment by Iranian EFL students and Australian English speakers in this study.

F. Content Analysis

Response strategies of compliments (See Table 1) consist of 5 major categories, 2 of which (Accepting and Mitigate) have sub-categories, i.e. Accepting consists of three sub- categories including Appreciation token, Praise up grade, and Comment acceptance. The strategy of Mitigate as well is composed of five sub- strategies including Comment history, Scale down, Shift credit, Return, and Question reassurance. Finally three other major strategies which do not have any sub-divisions are Rejecting, No Acknowledgment, and Request interpretation. The distributions and frequencies of the above strategies will be investigated in the following section.

1. Strategy of Accepting.

As Table 1 displays, the total number of Accepting strategies used by Iranian is lower than those of Australian (Iranian=91, Australian=121) indicating Iranians' less willingness to accept compliments in comparison with Australian. Examples from the data:

Example 1
You have used a perfume you have bought recently.
Your friend*: That smells wonderful!*
You: *Thanks, That's kind of you.*
(Accept/shift credit, from Iranian responses)
Example 2
You are showing your new stereo to your friend.
Your friend*: that's terrific!*
You: *yeah, the speakers really make a big difference to the sound.*

(Accept/praise upgrade from Australian responses).
2. Strategies of Mitigating.

As Table 1 shows, the total number of strategy of Mitigating used by two groups is almost the same but this does not seem to be comprehensive. When we take a glance at the frequencies and percentages of sub-divisions of Mitigating strategy (see Table 3), we will come up with different conclusions. In fact, even though Iranian and Australian use of Mitigating strategy is not so different, when it comes to 5 sub-divisions of this strategy, real differences become evident and we might claim that Australians prefer to use strategy of Comment History more, whereas Iranian show more preference to use the other three sub-strategies of Mitigating nearly twice as much as of Australian which may show more power and presence of modesty and humility in cornerstones of Iranian culture in comparison with that of Australians. Examples from the data:

Example 3
You are at a party with your friends.
Your friend*: I like your suit. It's very smart!*
You: *Yours looks nice too.*
(Mitigate/return, from Australian responses)
Example 4
You have got an A score in your exam because the question were very easy.
Your friend*: hey, I really like this color. I wish I had seen this carpet when I picked out mine!*
You: *no, I was just lucky with the questions.*
(Rrejec+Mitigate/shift credit & scale down, from Iranian responses)

TABLE III.
FREQUENCY OF RESPONDING STRATEGIES TO COMPLIMENT USED BY IRANIAN VS. AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPANTS

Strategies of Responding to Compliments	Frequency	
	Iranian	Australian
Appreciation token	59	64
Comment acceptance	20	39
Praise upgrade	12	18
Comment history	14	38
Scale down	30	16
Shift credit	26	19
Return	34	36
Question reassurance	16	23
No Acknowledgment	2	9
Rejecting	9	18
Request interpretation	48	5

3. Strategy of No Acknowledgement and Strategy of Reject.

As it is observed in Table3, the differences between frequencies of these two responding strategies for two groups are not so much outstanding, consequently we can claim that both groups do not seem to be willing to make so much use of these strategies. Examples from the data:

Example 5
You have bought a new carpet and you have invited your friend for dinner.
Your friend*: hey, I really like this color. I wish I had seen this carpet when I picked out mine!*
You: *Too bad may be next time.*
(Kind of Response Strategy: No acknowledgement)
Example 6
You have got an A score in your exam because the question were very easy.
Your friend*: hey, I really like this color. I wish I had seen this carpet when I picked out mine!*
You: *no, they just asked the questions I knew.*
(Kind of Response Strategy: Reject)
4. Strategy of Request Interpretation.

The most interesting part of the present research is probably related to strategy of Request interpretation. As it is shown in the Table 3, the frequency differences between two groups are evidently outstanding and perhaps it can be claimed that it is mostly the presence of this strategy that causes the rejection of the research null hypothesis. As it is observable in the Table 3, the frequency of this strategy used by Iranian EFL students is 48, whereas this frequency for Australian is equal to 5. But more interesting than their frequencies is the fact that even the very few cases of this strategy among Australian refer to concepts different from those of Iranians. In other words, each group has a different purpose and concept behind making use of this strategy. In order to shed some light on this issue, we present some examples of using this strategy by two groups. Examples from the data:

Example 7:
1. You are showing your new stereo to your friend.
Your friend: That's really a terrific stereo.

You: You can take it as a gift "Qabel-nadare"
The above example is related to Iranian EFL students, but the following one is related to Australians.
Example 8:
2. You are showing your new stereo to your friend.
Your friend: That's really a terrific stereo.
You: Do you want to hear a "demo"

Reflecting on the above examples, we can clarify the differences between concepts and purposes of each group for using this strategy. In fact, use of this strategy by Iranian and offering the ownership of their properties as a gift in the Persian phrase of "Qabel-Nadare" means showing affection to complimenter whereas by using this strategy, Australians never ever offer the ownership of their properties and just at most offer using that property. We mentioned earlier that there were only 5 cases of applying this strategy by Australian out of 285 responses besides, in most cases where Iranian EFL students used this strategy, it was found that Australian used other strategies instead.

III. CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The general results obtained regarding these strategies revealed numerous and deep dissimilarities and also some similarities between strategies of responding to compliments applied by Iranian EFL students and Australian English speakers in terms of socio-cultural patterns. Results emphasized that total number of Accepting strategies used by Iranian are lower than those of Australian indicating Iranians' less willingness to accept compliments in comparison with Australian English speakers; nevertheless, it was also discovered that the differences between Accepting strategies used by the two groups are mainly carried by the two Accepting sub-strategies i.e., Comment Acceptance and Praise Upgrade that implies both Iranian and Australian express thanking in response to compliment but Iranian prefer to a great extent not to express any verifying comment on the features, properties, or traits about which they have been complimented.

With regard to strategies of Mitigate, it was found that even though Iranian and Australians' use of strategies of Mitigate are not so different, with respect to 5 sub-divisions of this strategy, real differences becomes evident and it can be claimed that Australians prefer to use strategy of Comment history more than other ones ,whereas Iranian show more preference to use other three real sub-strategies of Mitigating nearly twice as much as of Australian which may show more power and presence of modesty and humility in cornerstones of Iranian culture in comparison with that of Australians. This is supported as well by the findings of Briallen Davis (2008) pertaining to compliment responses among Australian female who suggests that nearly around 40% of participants offered the purchase history of the complimented article i.e. the responding strategy of Comment history after their expression of thanks.

Finally, concerning the findings related to the responding strategy of request interpretation, it might be indicated that %17.77 of Iranian EFL students' responses were of this type believing that appearing generous will maintain and enhance the face and image, whereas Australians only expressed %1.75 of their compliment responses using this strategy. According to the results, it was found that there were only 5 cases of using this strategy by Australians out of 285 responses and in most cases where Iranian EFL students used this strategy, it was observed that Australian used other strategies instead since it may be claimed that the reason behind this few number of this strategy among Australian is that such an strategy with the same concept among Iranian is not existent in most English spoken contexts like Australia.

The findings of this study will have some implications for teachers, materials developers, and researchers. This study indicates that some strategies of responding to compliments are unique while others are nearly universal. This implies that teachers and materials designers should underscore these similarities and discrepancies among languages. Language teachers and material developers should sensitize learners to a variety of linguistic forms. Besides, foreign language classrooms should benefit from the findings of such cross-cultural studies some of which are rarely carried out and language teachers should make their students well aware of the differences in speech acts between L1 and L2 and assist them to notice the gaps between their own production and that of native speakers. Above all, the findings drawn from these studies and the cross-cultural similarities and varieties recorded in the study should be reconsidered, clarified, and presented in the classroom.

APPENDIX A

Personal information:
Native language: Gender: Age:
Education: Email:
Instruction

Please read the following 8 situations and write a response in the blank after "you". The questions are meant to investigate how you "respond to a compliment" given by your friends and relatives in the real world in your daily conversations.

1. You have helped your friend with his\her homework.
   Your friend**:** *You're the best and kindest friend I have ever had.*
   You:
2. You have used a perfume you have bought recently.
   Your friend**:** *Hey, guy this is dynamite!*
   You**:**
3. You are at a party with your friends.
   Your friend**:** *I like your suit. It's very smart!*
   You:
4. You have bought a new carpet and you have invited your friend for dinner.
   Your friend**:** *hey, I really like this color. I wish I had seen this when I picked up mine!*
   You:
5. You have got an A score in your exam because the question were very easy.
   Your friend: *It seems that you are really intelligent and hard working.*
   You:
6. You are showing your new stereo to your friend.
   Your friend: *That's really a terrific stereo.*
   You:
7. After the competition in a tennis game.
   Your friend: *You played a good game of tennis.*
   You:
8. You are having on a pair of jeans walking in the street and suddenly you ran into a friend of yours.
   Your friend**:** *Hey, these jeans really go with you.*
   You**:**

APPENDIX B

TABLE OF X ^{2} VALUES

Degrees of Freedom	Probability, *p*				
	0.99	**0.95**	**0.05**	**0.01**	**0.001**
1	0.000	0.004	3.84	6.64	10.83
2	0.020	0.103	5.99	9.21	13.82
3	0.115	0.352	7.82	11.35	16.27
4	0.297	0.711	9.49	13.28	18.47
5	0.554	1.145	11.07	15.09	20.52
6	0.872	1.635	12.59	16.81	22.46
7	1.239	2.167	14.07	18.48	24.32
8	1.646	2.733	15.51	20.09	26.13
9	2.088	3.325	16.92	21.67	27.88
10	2.558	3.940	18.31	23.21	29.59
11	3.05	4.58	19.68	24.73	31.26
12	3.57	5.23	21.03	26.22	32.91
13	4.11	5.89	22.36	27.69	34.53
14	4.66	6.57	23.69	29.14	36.12
15	5.23	7.26	25.00	30.58	37.70
16	5.81	7.96	26.30	32.00	39.25
17	6.41	8.67	27.59	33.41	40.79
18	7.02	9.39	28.87	34.81	42.31
19	7.63	10.12	30.14	36.19	43.82
20	8.26	10.85	31.41	37.57	45.32
21	8.90	11.59	32.67	38.93	46.80
22	9.54	12.34	33.92	40.29	48.27
23	10.20	13.09	35.17	41.64	49.73
24	10.86	13.85	36.42	42.98	51.18
25	11.52	14.61	37.65	44.31	52.62
26	12.20	15.38	38.89	45.64	54.05
27	12.88	16.15	40.11	46.96	55.48
28	13.57	16.93	41.34	48.28	56.89
29	14.26	17.71	42.56	49.59	58.30
30	14.95	18.49	43.77	50.89	59.70
Not significant			**Significant**		

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Japanese Speaking Personnel Proficiency Deficiencies: A Case Study of Japanese Education in Thailand

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Abstract—During the past 10 years, Japanese language learning has become popular in Thailand, which can be seen in the rise of private Japanese language teaching institutes as well as the number of Japanese related programs provided in many universities around the country. However, in spite of the incremental increase in number of learners, most Japanese entrepreneurs consider it to be critically difficult to find qualified Japanese speaking personnel in Thailand. The main purpose of this article is to explore the reasons for this problem and find a proper solution by studying the expectations of Japan studies stakeholders towards the qualification of Thai graduates in Japan Studies as well as Japanese Studies curriculum. A questionnaire has been distributed to two different groups: those who graduated in a field related to Japan studies, and Japanese employers who live in Thailand, followed by interviews with key informants. The findings show that there is a gap between the expectation of the students and the entrepreneurs towards the qualification of Thai graduates in Japanese Studies, in other words, among the Thai and the Japanese. Most Thai students consider the proficiency in Japanese language to be the most important ability required, while Japanese entrepreneurs consider those who have the abilities of comprehension, good perspective and use of Japanese in business as most important. Moreover, the research found that both students and entrepreneurs want the curriculum to be more practical and applicable to careers.

Index Terms—Thailand, Japan studies, curriculum development, education, human resources

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Japanese in Thailand*

Japan and Thailand have maintained a long affable relationship that can be traced back to the 15th century when relations between Ryukyu, present day Okinawa, and Thailand's historical capital of Ayudhaya have been recorded. Trade between the two countries became active during the 17th century, at which time the Japanese community in Ayudhaya flourished. But after Japan adopted the policy of closing their country to the outside world in 1639, the community began to decline (Kakazu, 2010). Centuries later, the relations bewteen Japan and Thailand modern history restarted with the Declaration of Amity and Commerce between Japan and Thailand in 1887. At that time, Japanese experts in various fields were dispatched to Thailand to contribute to the modernization of the country. Symbolized by the close relationship between the Imperial Family of Japan and the Royal Family of Thailand, the two countries now engage in many forms of personnel exchange, carried out in various fields, such as politics and economics, among others. In 2007, Japan and Thailand celebrated the 120th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with many memorial cultural events (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011).

Statistics from the Immigration Bureau of Thailand reveals that although the number of Japanese tourists has tended to decline since the coup in 2006, the total amount of Japanese tourists traveling to Thailand each year was never less than 1 million people in the passing 10 years (Immigration Bureau, 2010).
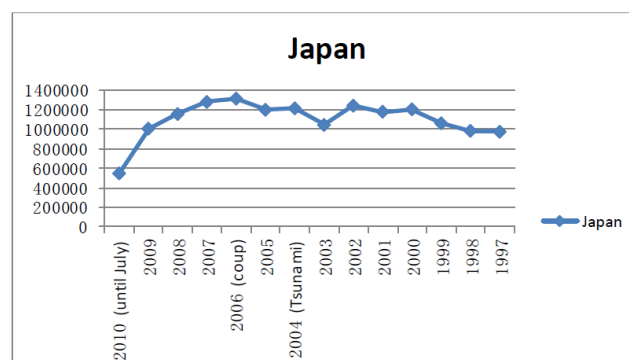
Figure 1: The amount of Japanese tourists traveling to Thailand 1997-2010.

Regarding Japanese residents in Thailand, it has been reported that in 2001 the amount of Japanese who live in the country was 22,731 people and, 10 years later in 2010, the number was 47,251, or double (Embassy of Japan in Thailand, 2010). The report also shows that highest number of Japanese residents in Thailand work at Japanese enterprises and their family. More details about reasons for living in Thailand can are shown in table 1.

TABLE 1:
REASONS FOR JAPANESE LIVING IN THAILAND (EMBASSY OF JAPAN IN THAILAND, 2010)

Reason for Staying in Thailand	Number (person)
Working at Japanese Enterprises and Family	35,019
Mass Media and Family	203
Independent Business Owners and Family	1,819
Students/Researchers and Family	2,285
Government Officials and Family	668
Others	6,238
Long Stay	1,019
Total	**47,251**

In addition, in the Annual Report of Statistics on Japanese Nationals Overseas, it has been noted that Thailand was ranked seventh in the world among countries that have a high number of Japanese national residents, and was ranked fourth in long-term settlement. Bangkok was ranked fourth among the capitals that are popular for Japanese to stay following Los Angeles Angels, New York and Shanghai (Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009, p. 8).

Regards to Japanese business investment in Thailand, the data shows that Japan is the country that has highest investment in Thailand (Department of Business Development, 2009). Moreover, a survey conducted by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Thailand or JCC (2010) reports that, currently there are a total of 1,317 Japanese enterprises doing business in Thailand which can be classified as follows: manufacturing industry, the biggest sector in the country, occupies 51.4 percent; commerce and trade 16.6 percent; aviation and transport 5.4 percent; construction 5.3 percent; hotels and restaurants 4.1 percent; finance insurance and securities 3.6 percent; retail and department stores 2.1 percent; advertising and printing 1.8 percent; travel and hospitality 1.4 percent; governmental agency 0.7 percent; non-governmental organizations 0.3 percent; and others 7.2 percent. Furthermore, the data shows that there were 1,164 companies registered in 2001, and 1,317 companies in 2010, which means that the registered rate of Japanese enterprises in Thailand over the last 10 years has increased annually (JCC, 2010). When comparing Japanese enterprises to other foreign enterprises invested in Thailand from March 2000 until May 2011, there were 2,714 foreign enterprises authorized to invest in business in Thailand while 978 enterprises, or 36 percent, were Japanese businesses (Department of Business Development, 2011). The JCC has grouped Japanese businesses and organizations which have become its members into 11 categories as follows: Manufacturing Industry occupies 51.4 percent of overall members, Commerce and Trade 16.6 percent, Aviation and Transportation 5.4 percent, Civil and Construction work 5.3 percent, Hotels and Restaurants 4.1 percent, Retail and Department Stores 2.1 percent, Finance/Insurance/ Securities 3.6 percent, Advertising and Printing 1.8 percent, Tourism and Services 1.4 percent, Government Agencies 0.7 percent, and Non-Governmental Organizations 0.3 percent (JCC, 2010, p. 8).
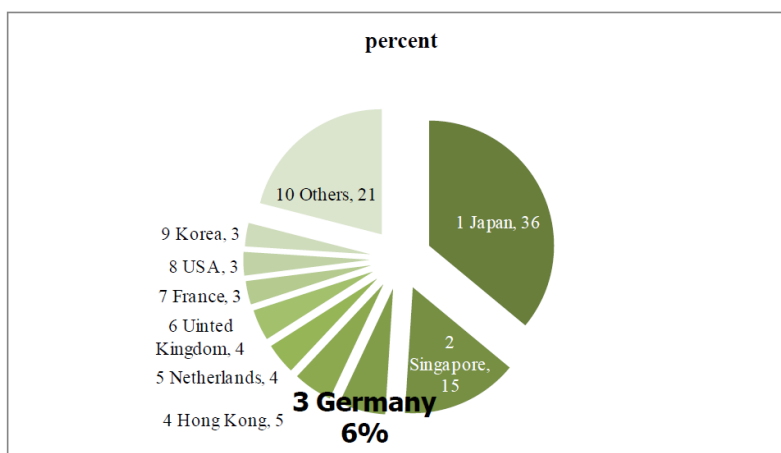
Figure 2: Foreign enterprises authorized to engage in business in Thailand from March 2001 until May 2010 separated by country (Department of Business Development, 2011).

B. Development of Japan Studies in Thailand

In Thailand, it has been recorded that Japanese language education was first introduced to Thailand in 1947 when Mattayom Wat Borpitpimuk School, which is now Rajamangala University of Technology Rattanakosin and Rajamangala University of Technology, started a basic Japanese course at secondary level. However, formal education in Japanese language began in 1965 when Thammasat University began a course, followed by Chulalongkorn

University[1] which started a similar course in 1966 and ran the first full-time undergraduate major course in Japanese in 1971. In 1981, Japanese was officially adopted at Thai secondary level as one of the second foreign languages of the National Curriculum. Since then, Japanese language courses at both secondary and tertiary levels have grown remarkably (Kakazu, 2010, p.16-17). Later, basic education curriculum, revised in 2001, enabled the establishment of Japanese language classes in lower secondary education, and accordingly, the number of Japanese teachers who graduated from universities in Bangkok dramatically increased, and Japanese language education gradually spread to other universities, even outside the capital. The statistics shows that Thailand is now placed the 7th in the world and 2nd in the Southeast Asian region after Indonesia in the number of Japanese learners, with nearly 720,000 (Kakazu, 2010, p. 17).

Recently, according to a survey of Japan Cultural Center in Bangkok in 2008, there were 89 universities from a total 112 universities in Thailand that provide Japanese language education. Among these universities, 21 have Japanese language as a major subject for undergraduate program. Moreover, Chulalongkorn University (courses mostly focus on language and literature), Thammasat University (Japan studies) and Naresuan University (Japan studies) have graduate programs related to Japanese language studies (Japan Foundation, 2010), as well as National Institute of Development Administration, which is also opening its first graduate school in Japanese Communication and Culture providing Japan studies in 2012. Only Chulalongkorn University provides a doctoral program majoring in Japanese literature. On the other hand, universities that focus on development of human resources in Japanese language teaching are Khonkaen University, which opened its course within Faculty of Education in 2004, and Burapha University, which opened its course in 2005 (Japan Foundation, 2010).

TABLE 2:
CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF JAPANESE LANGUAGE EDUCATION HISTORY IN THAILAND (JAPAN FOUNDATION, 2010).

Date	Event
1947	Mattayom Wat Borpitpimuk School started a basic Japanese course
1965	Thammasat University started Japanese course (as major subject in 1982)
1966	Chulalongkorn University started Japanese course (as major subject in 1971)
1976	Kasetsart University started Japanese course (as major subject in 1983)
1977	Chiangmai University started Japanese course (as major subject in 1987)
1980	Khon Kaen University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences started Japanese course (as major subject in 2004)
	University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce started Japanese course (as major subject in 1986)
1981	Japanese was officially adopted at Thai secondary level
1982	Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus started Japanese course (as major subject in 1996)
1983	Silpakorn University started Japanese course (as major subject in 1997)
1984	First Japanese Language Proficiency Test[2]
	Burapha University started Japanese course (as major subject in 1996)
1986	Naresuan University started Japanese course (as major subject in 1995)
	Center for Japanese Studies founded at Thammasat University
1987	King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang started Japanese course (as major subject in 1997)
1988	Assumption University started Japanese course (as major subject in 1988) Association of Japanese Language Education in Thailand
1989	Rangsit University started Japanese course (as major subject in 1998)
1997	Thammasat University started master program in Japan Studies
1998	Japanese became one of subjects for college admissions
1999	Chulalongkorn University started master'a program in sJapanese literature and Japanese language studiesr
2002	Srinakharinwirot University, Faculty of Humanities started major in Japanese Language
2003	Japanese Teachers Association in Thailand (JTAT) was founded
2004	Khon Kaen University, Faculty of Education started Japanese Language Education program
2007	Chulalongkorn University started master program in 'Japanese as a Foreign Language' (Japanese Language Teacher Training Program)
2009	Naresuan University started master program in Japan Studies

Based on data from 2009, there are a total of 377 institutions that teach Japanese language, with 1,240 teachers and 78,802 students in Thailand. The number of those who take the Japanese Language Proficiency Test tends to increase by approximately 17,000 persons each year (Japan Foundation, 2010).

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[1] Thammasat University and Chulalongkorn University are the two leading universities in Thailand.

[2] The Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) has been offered by the Japan Foundation and Japan Educational Exchanges and Services since 1984 as a reliable means of evaluating and certifying the Japanese proficiency of non-native speakers. The JLPT has five levels: N1, N2, N3, N4 and N5. The easiest level is N5 and the most difficult level is N1. N4 and N5 measure the level of understanding of basic Japanese mainly learned in class. N1and N2 measure the level of understanding of Japanese used in a broad range of scenes in actual everyday life. N3 is a bridging level between N1/N2 and N4/N5. (JLPT, 2011)

Referring to overall education about Japan in Thailand, Pasuk argued that despite a rapid increase in Japanese language education, teachers and students, there is still insufficient understanding of Japanese society and culture. As a consequence, forthcoming education related to Japan should be more focused not only on Japanese language, but also Japan history, economics, philosophy and culture (Pasuk, 2007). However, as mentioned above, most institutes providing courses about Japan tend to be putting more emphasis on Japanese language (Tuenjai, 1994). Although the importance of understanding social and cultural aspects cannot be ignored, most researches in education about Japan in Thailand usually focus on 'Japanese language' education (Teunjai, 1994; Napasin, 2006; Ikeda, 2006; Sakuma, 2006). Focusing on the needs of Japanese language use in business, Tuenjai (1994) found that Japanese language education in Thailand is still not practical enough to be applied in the professional arena and proposed that more postgraduate degrees in Japanese language should be established in order to provide the higher skill required. Ikeda's survey on the needs of Japanese speaking staff in Japanese business shows that most Japanese business in Thailand use English as a formal language to communicate more than Japanese but still require staff who has gained level 2 in the Japanese Language Proficiency Test and have good cognition in technical terms (Ikeda, 2006).

However, despite the long relationship between Japan and Thailand, the steady expansion in numbers of Japanese residents and business, and also the high demand of Japanese speaking human resources (Adecco-Asia, 2011), universities that provide undergraduate courses related to Japan is still limited and mostly focused on language education, with only four institutes having a master's program and just one university having a doctoral program. Among these, only three courses offer programs related to Japan studies which include in-depth socio-cultural aspects into the program.

II. THE STUDY

In spite of the fact that Japan has became highly recognized and Japanese language studies have been widely attractive to Thais, some data about those who have graduated in this field are very few, making it difficult to understand the whole situation concerning graduates (Japan Foundation, 2010). Aiming to understand more about the expectations towards human resources in Japanese language, including those from Japanese enterprises, as a baseline information to improve a better curriculum to produce qualified graduates for the labor market, this study tries to understand the expectations towards the quality of graduates in Japan and Japanese language studies as well as expectation towards courses related to Japan Studies by collecting data from two different target groups which are: (1) 123 questionnaires respondents and 25 key informants taken from among those who have graduated in Japan and Japanese Studies in Thailand and are currently working at Japanese-related firm; and (2) 52 questionnaires respondents and 14 key informants from among Japanese who work in Thailand and have experience working directly with Thai graduates. A questionnaire was distributed to the target group followed by an interview with several key informants. In all, 175 persons responded to the questionnaire and 39 persons provided information as key informants of this study.

A. Quantitative Approach

Related to a background of those who responded to the questionnaire, the study found that 85 percent are women, while only 15 percent are men. The reason why choosing Japanese language as their major subject is not much different, most said because they like Japan and Japanese pop culture or some dreamt about a high income after graduation. When separated by job category, more than half of respondents are interpreter/translator (working in Japanese firm or freelance), coordinator or Japanese language teacher. Among the respondents, 35 percent works as an interpreter in the manufacturing business. From the data above, it can be assumed that a career path for those who graduate in Japan or Japanese language studies has little variation.

The result of the study can be categorized in three points: (1) related to the employment of the graduates, (2) related to expectations toward the qualification of the graduates, and (3) related to satisfaction with the quality of the graduates.

Related to expectations toward qualifications of the graduates, the study found that almost all Japanese businesses in Thailand still have demand for Japanese speaking staff considering that these staff will support better communication in the organization. Some organizations already hire Japanese speaking personnel, while some have a demand but still cannot find any proper human resources (figure 3). Only 14 percent consider it is not necessary to hire Japanese speaking staff, giving reasons such as 'All Japanese in the organization can speak Thai', 'All clients are Thai' or 'Language used in the organization is English.' Concerning the needs between hiring Japanese speaking Thai staff and Thai speaking Japanese staff, 75 percent of respondent prefer Japanese speaking Thai staff. Most of the reason for this is because 'Thai staff take lower salary', 'comfortable to work with' and 'can understand Japanese organizational pattern.' When considering about type of a job required, Japanese-speaking staff are highly necessary in sales and marketing followed by administrator, coordinator, interpreter, technician and management. More than 75 percent of the respondents found it remarkably difficult to recruit qualified human resources who can speak and work with Japanese. Only two percent do not consider recruiting Japanese speaking a problem at all (figure 4).
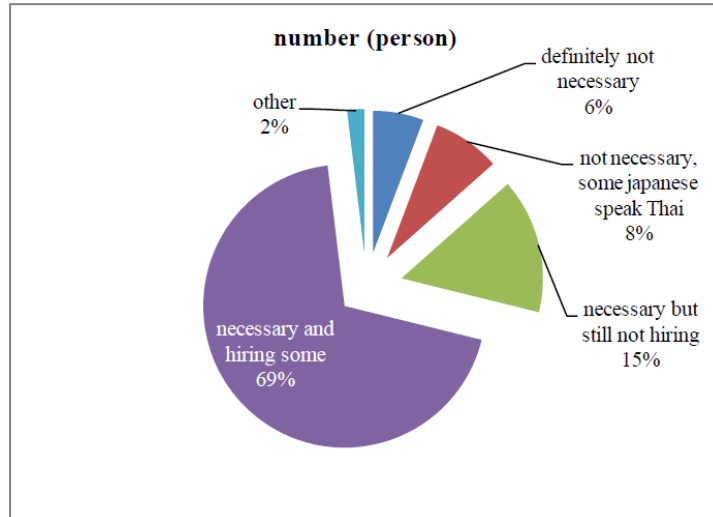
Figure 3: Need to hire Japanese speaking staff in Japanese related organizations in Thailand.
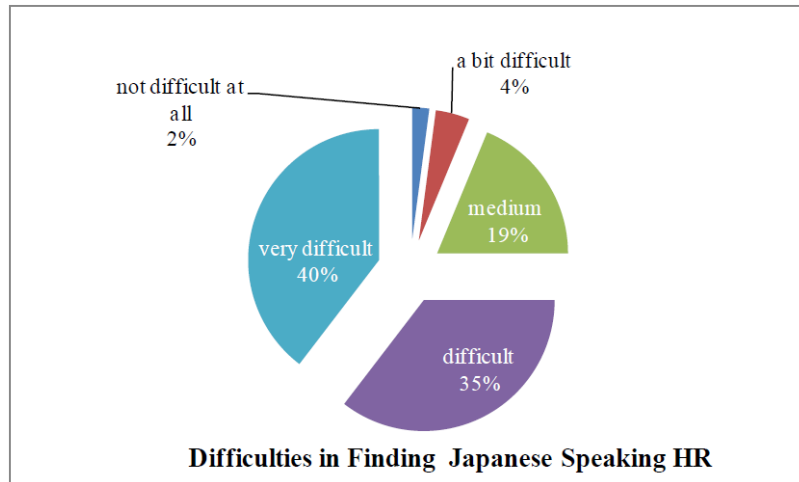

Figure 4: Level of difficulties in finding proper Japanese speaking personnel from entrepreneur's view

Similar to Ikeda's finding that most enterprises in Thailand use English as a formal language (Ikeda, 2006), this study also found that 50 percent of the enterprises who responded to the questionnaire use English as a formal language to communicate in their organization which means that main language popularly used in Japanese related organization is still English. On the other hand, organizations that use Japanese or Thai as a formal language and have a Japanese-Thai interpreter to translate the conversation are about 10 percent each (figure 5).

Among the graduates, the study found that because 40 percent of the respondents have Thai supervisors, 24 percent use Japanese occasionally in spite of working in a Japanese related firm. Those who use both Thai and Japanese in the same frequency are 23 percent. A total of 44 percent of the respondents use Japanese frequently at work while only the remaining 10 percent said they use Japanese very little or even do not use Japanese at all.
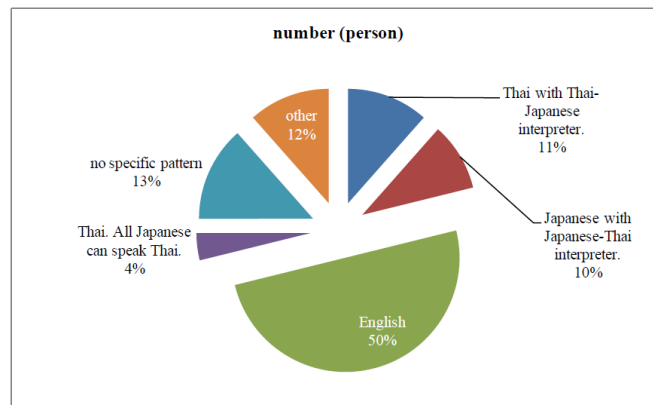
Figure 5: Language used as primary language in Japanese related organizations in Thailand.
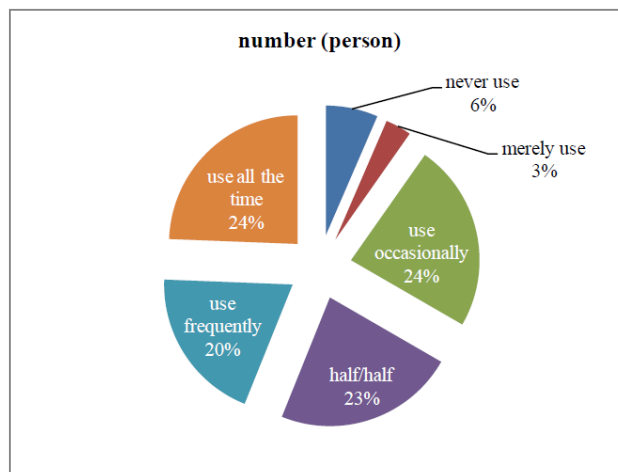
Figure 6: Percentage of Japanese usage in current career among the graduates.

From the results it can be concluded that the expectations of the Thai graduates and the expectations of the entrepreneurs are different, with the graduates having the highest expectation in a proficiency of Japanese language using especially speaking skill, reading skill and listening skill followed by interpreting/translating skill. The other skills such as 'writing skill', 'understanding of Japanese culture', 'coordinating skill', and 'management skill' received less interest from the respondents. On the other hand, the entrepreneurs have a different perspective. They consider an ability and capacity in working in all aspects the most important and also have the highest expectation in this factor. As a consequence, they require persons who can apply Japanese language ability to the task assigned, know how to deal with problems and produce the best result that can increase the company's profit. Most entrepreneurs need to hire those who have passed level N2 of Japanese Language Proficiency Test (67 percent), followed by 23 percent that require level N1 which is the highest level of the test. Only 10 percent are satisfied with level N3 or N4 (figure 6). When separated by working skill, the study found that the skill that the entrepreneurs expect the most is 'coordinating skill' and 'accuracy.' Similar to the Thai graduates, understanding of Japanese politics and economics received least expectation also from the Japanese entrepreneurs.
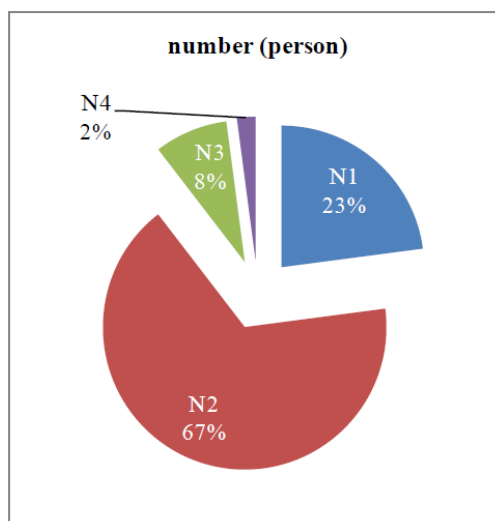
Figure 7: Level of Japanese Language Proficiency Test that Japanese entrepreneurs require.

Related to satisfaction of the quality of the graduates, both the Thai graduates, who evaluated themselves, and the Japanese entrepreneurs, who evaluated the graduates, found that ability in all skills is at the medium level. Among these, both sides consider Japanese language usage, especially in everyday conversation, the skill with highest satisfaction.

B. Qualitative Approach

In order to gather more in-depth information about problems of Thai Japanese speaking human resources and Japanese entrepreneurs have to confront as well as the type of program expected, a key informant interview with both sides was conducted. In terms of problems and difficulties working with Japanese, most Thai graduates found Japanese kind, sincere and thinking about other more than one's self. However most people think that Japanese are comparatively too serious with everything especially when relating to work which makes it difficult for the Thais to cope with, and it

is necessary to adjust oneself to get along with the Japanese and Japanese organizations. What the Thai graduates consider as difficulties working with Japanese can be separated into two factors:

1. ways of thinking and cultural perspective such as the way the Japanese concentrate seriously on work, strict system and output based structure, etc.

2. style of language usage and communication such as habit of fast-talking, different level of language usage which is difficult to use and understand, too many Chinese characters, do not express things in direct way, etc.

When focusing on factors they need to develop in order to work effectively with Japanese, most of the graduates consider basic language using (listening, reading, speaking and writing) skills as the first they need to improve while some think that working skills such as coordinating skills or problem solving skills are also important. As one key informant put it:

Listening and speaking skills are the most important when you have to work with Japanese. But Japanese language education in Thailand still cannot develop these two skills effectively, probably because it is still a 'memorization-only study' with not much focus on learning in a real situation. I think we need to learn to speak more both in everyday conversation and in business situation. It is also necessary to learn conversation that can be used in our future career.

On the other hand, what the Japanese entrepreneurs expect from the Thai graduates is much different than what the Thai graduates perceive. Basically, most Japanese entrepreneurs consider language ability a basic skill that graduates in this field need to have and not what they should expect as they believe the ability in Japanese language is obviously what all graduates in this field are supposed to have and it is not an element that should be considered as an 'expectation.' The expectation of Japanese entrepreneur towards Thai graduates required as company personnel is summarized in table 3.

TABLE 3:
EXPECTATIONS JAPANESE ENTREPRENEURS HAVE TOWARD THAI GRADUATES IN THE FIELD OF JAPAN STUDIES.

No.	Expectation	Details
1.	Overall working ability together with language skills	Understand Japanese way of thought includes Japanese working style; Use Japanese language as a 'tool' to improve working ability such as coordinating and communicating with Japanese.
2.	Personality and morals	Having common sense; Mentally strong; Do not hesitate to ask; Do not focus too much only on salary.
3.	Specific skills	Knowledge in different fields such as management, engineer, accounting; Ability in English; Ability in Business Japanese; Ability in translating Thai-Japanese.
4.	Language skills only	Few consider that only everyday Japanese conversation is enough for working in Japanese business and other skills can be developed together with work experience.
5.	No Japanese language skills required	Few consider Japanese language not necessary at all for the company since most clients are Thai and the common language in the company is English.

Related to teaching style expected in university, especially in graduate school level, both Thai and Japanese respondents require methods that are more practical and useful. Most of respondents need on-the-job training to prepare themselves for working with a Japanese company after graduation. Teaching style proposed by respondents is summarized as:

1. Practice based lesson. Can be separated into two levels: *in class activities* such as role playing, workshop, case studies, experience sharing between present students and former graduates; and *internship program* which provides students the opportunity to work in Japanese firms (factories or hospital, hotel businesses) for a short period. Applying different tools and media in class, not limited only on books or reading materials.

2. Participation with Japanese. It is important that students have to become use to communicating with native Japanese. Not only Japanese teachers, but opportunity to discuss, sharing experience or even become friends with Japanese can improve language ability as well as understanding the Japanese way of thought and culture. This activity has to be done by Japanese, arranged as often as possible and continuously in various forms, for example cultural exchange program, training program in Japanese firms, orientation to working with Japanese. Encourage students to study in Japan has also been raised as one important factor.

3. Holistic program. One problem Thai graduates confront is knowledge and skill that is too narrow. Programs should be able to provide a wider range of skills development such as business management skills, computer skills or even distress tolerance skills.

4. Lessons and curriculum based on professional development. Since it is easier to find a better job, students should gain level N2 of Japanese Language Proficiency Test and became an intern in a Japanese firm as a prerequisite for graduation. Also the program should have courses that improve interpreter/translator skills in specific circumstances. If time is not available, short-term programs should be strongly considered.

III. THE ANALYSIS: PERCEPTION GAP BETWEEN THE THAIS AND THE JAPANESE

Regarding expectations and satisfaction toward the ability of Japanese speaking human resources, the results can be summarized as follows (table 4).

TABLE 4:
COMPARISON OF EXPECTATIONS AND SATISFACTION TOWARD THE ABILITY OF JAPANESE SPEAKING HUMAN RESOURCES

	Thai Graduates	Japanese Entrepreneur	Organizations with mostly Thai Shareholders	Organizations with mostly Japanese Shareholders
Highest Expectation	development in language ability	development in overall working skills	skills in language and communication	overall working skills
Highest Satisfaction	language skill	skill in everyday conversation		
Total Expectation	high	high		
Total Satisfaction	medium	medium		

From the above findings, it can be analyzed that there are apparently differences in perception among the Thai and the Japanese, that is the Thai, both the graduates and the entrepreneurs, expect and place a heavy emphasis on language using ability, while on the other hand, the Japanese consider language ability an essential skill of those who have gained a bachelor's degree related to Japan studies. Accordingly, what they expect is more focus on the ability to work in a Japanese organization. These differences in perception indicate a weakness in the education system and results in a lack of qualified human resources for the labor market. As a consequence, graduates that have only language skills cannot fulfill the expectation of their employers. Further, the data collected also shows that despite a variation of Japanese business in Thailand, Thai graduates find job opportunities mainly as a translator/interpreter/coordinator in manufacturing business or as a Japanese teacher. All of these factors result in an unsatisfactory outcome in the production of Japanese speaking human resources that does not suit what is required in the real labor market. Also, this is a reason why employers find it is comparatively difficult to hire qualified Japanese speaking personnel for their business.

From the above findings, the following can be concluded:

• There is a gap between the level of expectation and satisfaction both of the Thai graduates and the Japanese entrepreneurs. This fact implies that despite a high expectation from important stakeholders, the quality of graduates is still not high enough and the graduates still cannot provide adequate service to society. Several reasons can be detected, but it cannot be ignored that the role of universities in teaching about Japan and Japanese should be reconsidered.

• There is still not enough Japanese-speaking graduates that also have in-depth understanding about Japan socio-cultural aspects and can satisfy Japanese entrepreneurs. Accordingly, universities and related institutes should reconsider and improve their educational program in order to produce graduates that really have qualifications that suit the real professional arena by spending more time on different skills that can lead to the improvement of capacity in working with Japanese.

• Most education in Thailand are focusing only on Japanese language while Japanese firms require human resources that are qualified not only in language proficiency but also in working performance, resulting in a shortage of properly qualified human resources.

• Most students related to Japan education consider interpreter, translator or Japanese language teacher as the jobs they can find after graduation, while the demand for Japanese speaking human resources is not limited to a specific field such as interpreter or translator, but has some variation, especially for sales persons.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The fact that most Japanese entrepreneurs in Thailand still face a problem in finding proper Japanese speaking personnel in spite of the increasing number of Japanese language learners, and also that many graduates who work in Japanese related organizations find some difficulties in working with Japanese, especially in the cultural aspect, implies that the quality of human resources in this field is still not at a satisfied level. One reason found in this study is because Japanese related education in Thailand is still focusing on language ability improvement through passive lessons focused on rote memory rather than by experiencing more real situations or providing students with more skills that can be applied in their careers. As a consequence, in order to reach the level expected, improvement in the quality of both the learner and educator is needed.

Several suggestions are proposed here. First, since there is a perception gap about the ability of Japanese speaking human resources, it is necessary to make a right understanding about what is expected by Japanese employers to both learners and educators. Either Learners or educators should recognize that focusing on improvement of language ability is important but not the only skill needed to develop because it is not enough to satisfy the expectation of Japanese employers in professional arena. Other skills such as managing skills, problem solving skills, coordinating skills, interpersonal skills, distress tolerance skills, or even English skill, are not less important if one want to be satisfied and become success in career. Universities and institutes that offer courses related to Japan studies also have to concern about this fact and provide the most practical curriculum to learners, either to improve language ability or to improve

working ability as a whole. It is also important to provide enough information about job opportunity that those graduates in this field can have, to let them know that there are varieties of businesses waiting for them to apply for, not only just manufacturing business or teaching business as they may assume.

Another important factor needing improvement is the number of Japanese speaking human resources. It can be concluded from the findings that personnel in this field are required not only to be proficient in language use but also have an understanding of Japan and Japanese culture. One of the reasons for this would be because of the education that focuses more in the development of language ability than the development of understanding of Japanese culture or working in real situation outside the university. Accordingly, more universities should offer courses in Japan Studies, which focuses also on Japanese culture and society as well as the way of thought and beliefs, and should emphasize real practice, and include the opportunity to communicate with native Japanese speakers in different situations, promote skills that can be applied after graduation.

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The Effects of Verb Tense Variation on the Fluency in Monologues by TOEFL iBT Candidates

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Abstract—**The literature on fluency and the contributing factors to it is rich (e.g., Chambers, 1997; Foster & Skehan, 1996; Freed, 2000; Kormos & Dénes, 2004; Lennon, 1990; Mehnert, 1998; Towell et al., 1996; Yuan & Ellis, 2003). Previous studies are conducted on a number of factors affecting fluency such as pretask planning and fluency (e.g., Foster & Skehan, 1996), task repetition and fluency (e.g., Bygate, 2001), the longitudinal development of fluency (Freed, 2000), or formulaic speech and fluency (Riggenbach, 1991). This study, however, adopts a fresh approach in order to assess fluency in monologues by TOEFL iBT candidates. It investigated the possible effects of changing the verb tense on fluency. To this end, the present study benefitted from 40 TOEFL iBT candidates and set out to observe the effects of speaking in past, present, and future tenses on the fluency of the responses. In so doing, the first question of the speaking section on TOEFL iBT exam was used as the model in terms of planning and response times. Therefore, three questions—one in past, one in present, and one in future—were used. The participants had 15 seconds to plan and 45 seconds to respond to each question. All the responses were recorded, and the analyses of the results indicated that, overall, the future tense responses were more fluent. Considering the growing number of university students, who intend to take the TOEFL iBT exam and pursue their studies, the findings may have some implications in second language acquisition (SLA) in general and in speaking skills in particular because those students are normally required to have a decent language proficiency score.**

Index Terms—**fluency, monologue, speaking, TOEFL iBT**

I. INTRODUCTION

Speaking fluently is surely one of the dreams of any L2 learner. However, the problem is that L2 learners normally find it very difficult to fluently speak the language they learn. This is especially a tough challenge for L2 learners in EFL contexts, where L2 exposure is not sufficient for the learners. DeKeyser (2007) found that a "majority of study-abroad students make measurable progress in speaking, especially in terms of fluency, at least in the programs of longer duration" (p. 211).

Historically, fluency typically refers to a person's general L2 proficiency, particularly as characterized by perceptions of ease, eloquence, and smoothness of speech or writing (Chambers, 1997; Freed, 2000; Guillot, 1999; Hilton, 2008; Koponen & Riggenbach, 2000; Lennon, 1990). Skehan (1992, 1996) defines the concept of fluency as follows. Fluency is the capacity to use an L2 in real time, to emphasize meanings, possibly drawing on more lexicalized systems. In addition, it has been defined as the ability to process an L2 with "native-like rapidity" (Lennon, 1990 p. 390) or "the extent to which the language produced in performing a task manifests pausing, hesitation, or reformulation" (Ellis, 2003 p. 342). Hence, from the literature on fluency, it is inferred that it is generally associated with the smoothness and continuity of the talk.

In order to find out which L2 elements contribute to L2 fluency, SLA researchers (e.g., Cucchiarini et al., 2002; Kormos & Dénes, 2004; Lennon, 1990; Towell et al., 1996) have mainly concentrated on participants' oral production and tried to recognize factors helping participants to make their L2 production more fluent. Findings suggest that fluency is a multi-dimensional element that can be categorized into some branches, such as speed fluency (i.e., rate and density of delivery), breakdown fluency (i.e., number, length, and distribution of pauses in speech), and repair fluency (i.e., number of false starts and repetitions; Tavakoli & Skehan, 2005). Moreover, previous studies indicate that both pretask planning (Foster & Skehan, 1996; Mehnert, 1998; Yuan & Ellis, 2003) and task repetition (Bygate, 2000) aid fluency by freeing up attentional resources.

Research on fluency and factors that contribute to it is extensive (e.g., Foster & Skehan, 1996; Lennon, 1990; Riggenbach, 1991, 2000; Skehan & Foster, 1999; Towell et al., 1996; Wood, 2001). However, much of the research into fluency progress, made by L2 learners, has been carried out by comparing computational differences in Interlanguage samples with assessing those samples made by native speakers in order to find what fluency measures play the most important role in fluency development. Lennon (1990) took this approach and found that change in dysfluency markers, including repetitions and self-corrections, could not explain native speakers' ratings of L2 learner fluency. Derwing et al. (2004), using a similar methodology, also found that self-repetitions did not correlate much with native speaker ratings of fluency. In spite of this fact, they could find that, especially among lower-level L2 learners, temporal measures, such as speech rate correlated well with them. Besides, other research (e.g., Riggenbach, 1991) has looked at how L2 learners of different levels differ from one another with respect to fluency measures. Riggenbach (1991) found that measures of self-repair do not play a major role in distinguishing one level of L2 learner from another. Like Derwing et al. (2004), she also found that rate of speech can be a useful factor in distinguishing one level of learner from another.

Fillmore (1979) is one of the first instances of working on fluency. In his extensive definition of fluency, he categorized the phenomenon in four different ways: First, fluency is defined as the ability to talk at length with few pauses and to be able to fill the time with talk. Second, fluent speakers are not only capable of talking without hesitations but of expressing their message coherently and dense with regard to semantics. Third, a person is considered fluent if he or she knows what to say in a wide range of contexts. Finally, fluent speakers are known to be creative and imaginative in their language use and a maximally fluent speaker has all of the abovementioned abilities.

Kormos (1999) and Dewaele (2002) have argued that there are long-term settings for fluency that depend on individual's speaking style. In spite of such settings, however, studies on task type indicate that there are variations in fluency that can be directly attributed to the properties of a given task. Foster and Skehan (1996) examined three typical tasks: a personal information exchange, a picture narrative, and a collaborative decision-making task. Their study showed that measurements of fluency-related variables on these tasks were different, depending not only on the nature of the task itself but on the availability of planning time. Ejzenberg (2000) argued that L2 learners are perceived as being more fluent in an interaction with a native speaker than in other situations because they have the advantage of using the productions of the interlocutor, too. She suggests that in monologic tasks, the cognitive demands on the speaker are greater, hence negative effects on fluency.

As for the criteria used in measuring the fluency of the oral productions in this study, two general categories were employed: temporal and hesitation. Temporal fluency was checked using two measures: mean length of runs (MLR) and speech rate. MLR was the average number of syllables produced in utterances between pauses of 0.4 seconds and above. Inoue (2010) used the same measure, but the length of pauses was 0.25 seconds and more. Cucchiarini et al. (2002), however, set 0.2 seconds as the pause length. Such values seemed too demanding for the EFL learners of this study; therefore, 0.4 seconds were chosen as a more lenient option. MLR is a contributing factor to fluency, and some studies (e.g., Freed, 1995; Lennon, 1990; M öhle, 1984) have investigated the contribution of longer runs between pauses to fluency. The second measure of temporal fluency was speech rate, which is normally used in studies on fluency (e.g., Freed, 1995; Riggenbach, 1991; Towell, Hawkins & Bazergui, 1996). Following Ortega (1999), speech rate was calculated by dividing the total number of syllables produced in a given speech sample by the amount of total time required to produce the speech sample (including pause time) expressed in seconds.

Nevertheless, one element missing in the previous studies is whether speaking about, for instance, a past event might be different from that about a present or future event in terms of the fluency of the talk. In fact, the idea behind this study was to observe which of these tenses affects L2 learners' fluency more. Therefore, the following research questions were formed to investigate the possible effects of manipulating verb tenses on fluency of the monologues:

- H_{01}: There is no relationship between changing the verb tense and the temporal aspects of fluency in a monologue?
- H_{02}: There is no relationship between changing the verb tense and the hesitation aspects of fluency in a monologue?
- H_{03}: There is no relationship between changing the verb tense in a monologue and making the talk more fluent in general?

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

A total of 40 advanced L2 learners, 20 male and 20 female, studying English at one of the language institutes in Isfahan, Iran, participated in this study. They ranged in age between 22 and 35. After administering a paper-based TOEFL exam, these participants were chosen from among 70 L2 learners of the institute; in fact, these 40 participants were the ones who scored above 500 on the TOEFL test. The participants were preparing in a TOEFL iBT course of the institute and were ready to take the exam and leave the country soon. All the participants were living in the very same city, Isfahan, Iran; consequently, the participants' geographical backgrounds were the same.

B. Materials

In order to collect the data, a language laboratory equipped with computers was used. Each L2 participant sat at a computer and recorded his or her response to the questions of the study. To record the participants' responses, the software adobe audition, version 3, was installed on the computers, too.

C. Procedure

This study was an attempt to analyze the fluency of monologues in response to three questions, which appear in Appendix. One of the questions asked for a past experience, the other for a present tense response, and the last for a future plan. The three questions were prepared in advance to elicit responses in these tenses. Prior to launching the study, the participants sat at their computers, wore their headphones, and were ready to record their answers to the questions. The procedure for planning, responding, and recording the responses was exactly similar to that of the TOEFL iBT exam; therefore, first a question appeared on the monitors, then the participants had 15 seconds of planning time and 45 seconds to respond the question. The three questions were answered following the same procedure.

It should only be mentioned that because the participants outnumbered the computers of the laboratory, data collection was carried out in several times, but it all happened in one week time.

D. Data Analysis

The present study was an attempt to analyze the fluency of the monologues by 40 TOEFL iBT candidates. To this end, this study employed two measures to check the fluency of the talks, namely temporal and hesitation phenomena. As Table 1 indicates, the temporal aspect of fluency was examined using MLR and speech rate. As explained earlier, MLR was the average syllables produced between pauses of 0.4 seconds and above, and the bigger the value for MLR, the more contribution to temporal fluency of any given talk. The same also applied to speech rate, which was the number of syllables in a talk divided by the total time spent on producing the speech sample (including pause time) expressed in seconds. In fact, bigger values of speech rate indicated better temporal fluency. Table 2 shows that better temporal fluency, both for MLR and speech rate, was obtained in case of future responses. In addition, fluency was checked under another category of fluency features named *hesitation*. It comprised three features: false starts, the number of repetitions, and the number of reformulations. Freed (2000) associated the same measures with hesitation, or repair in fluency. False starts were the number of utterances abandoned before completion; in fact, the participants sometimes decided to abandon an utterance unfinished, which was counted as a false start. Table 2 indicates that future responses on average had fewer false starts, which is a contributing factor to the hesitation aspect of fluency. The second hesitation criterion was the number of repetitions, calculated by the number of immediate repetitions of a word or a phrase. This value proved the smallest in future tense responses, which showed better results of the hesitation fluency in case of future responses. Finally, the number of reformulations was the third measuring element of hesitation fluency and was measured by the number of phrases or clauses repeated with some modification to syntax, morphology, or word order. This number was at its smallest value for present tense responses.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data gathered were, then, subjected to descriptive analyses. The aim was to find which verb-tense responses were the most fluent ones. Prior to this, though, the definitions of the variables used in this study should be explained. Table 1 shows the fluency measures employed in the present study. Although it should be mentioned that the fluency measures of this study are adapted form Inoue (2010), the present researchers modified the MLR criterion, which is explained in the Introduction section.

Using the definitions in Table 1 for each element of fluency, the researchers started to analyze the data. Comparing the means for MLR indicated that the longest MLRs at 9.29 were observed in the future tense responses. This number was followed by the present tense, and the worst results with the mean of 8.52 were related to the past tense responses. Similarly, the speech rate at 2.46 syllables per second was at its highest in future tense responses. Present tense and then past tense stood thereafter. Consequently, the best and the worst results for MLR and speech rate were obtained in future and past tenses, respectively.

The results for hesitation fluency indicted that two measures aced in future responses and one in present tense responses. The first hesitation measure was the number of false starts, which was lowest in future tense at 0.15. In past tense, though, the number of false starts was the highest, which is a negative factor in fluency of the talk. As for the number of repetitions, the second hesitation measure, again future tense obtained the best results. The mean number of repetitions observed in the future tense was 0.8, followed by 0.85 in present, and 0.9 in past tense responses. Therefore, the first two hesitation measures were at their best in future tense and the poorest results were observed in past tense.

TABLE 1.
FLUENCY MEASURES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Aspect	Measure	Definition
Temporal Fluency	MLR	Average number of syllables between pauses of 0.4 seconds and more
		…………………………………………….
	Speech Rate	Total number of syllables in a speech sample divided by the total time required to produce the speech sample (including pause time) expressed in seconds
		…………………………………………….
		Number of utterances abandoned before completion
		…………………………………………….
Hesitation Fluency	False Starts	Number of immediate repetitions of a word or a phrase
		…………………………………………….
	Repetitions	Number of phrases or clauses repeated with some modification in syntax, lexicon, or word order
	Reformulations	

In case of the last hesitation measure, the results were in favor of the present tense. The number of reformulations was 1.18 in the present tense. In case of the past tense, this value was slightly higher at 1.33, and the worst number was found in future tense at 1.9. The observed differences here were significant, indicating that in present tense, the participants were less forced to modify their responses as they were replying to the question. Therefore, a one-way ANOVA was run to investigate the probable differences between the samples of the three tenses. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics observed for the temporal and hesitation measures of fluency in this study:

TABLE 2.
THE DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR FLUENCY MEASURES

Measure	Tense	Min	Max	Mean	SD	p Value
MLR	Present	3.17	14.30	8.85	3.5	
	Past	4.50	14.67	8.52	2.9	0.46
	Future	3.95	19.90	9.29	4.7	
Speech Rate	Present	1.42	3.62	2.39	0.6	
	Past	1.76	3.48	2.32	0.4	0.25
	Future	1.46	3.90	2.46	0.7	
Number of False Starts	Present	0	2	0.20	0.5	
	Past	0	2	0.23	0.5	0.87
	Future	0	1	0.15	0.4	
Number of Repetitions	Present	0	4	0.85	1.0	
	Past	0	4	0.95	1.1	0.88
	Future	0	3	0.80	0.9	
Number of Reformulations	Present	0	3	1.18	0.9	
	Past	0	4	1.33	1.0	0.004*
	Future	0	4	1.90	1.3	

*: The observed difference is significant at the level of $p < 0.05$.

From observing the results of the study in Table 2, it can be inferred that changing the verb tense in monologues partly contributes to the fluency of the talk. The first four fluency measures used in this study present better results for future tense responses although the difference is not statistically significant. Consequently, manipulating the verb tense of the monologue could exercise some changes in temporal fluency of the talks; both MLR and speech rate were better in future tense responses. Similarly, in the case of hesitation aspects of fluency, the first two measurements, that is, number of false starts and number of repetitions, obtained better results in future tense; the last hesitation measure, however, proved better in case of the present responses. Therefore, statistically speaking, it cannot be argued that verb tense can play a role in contributing to the fluency of the monologue, but the results indicate that the future responses have been more fluent.

Overall, in response to the first research question of the study, it can be claimed that future responses contributed to the fluency of the monologue, albeit fitfully. The same applies to the second research question, that is, two out of the three measures of hesitation fluency witnessed better fluency results in the future tense responses. Finally, as for the third research question, it can generally be stated that future responses have been more fluent in this study.

IV. CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to investigate the possible effects that changing the verb tense of a monologue can have on the fluency of the talk. To do so, the participants of the study replied to three questions, one about a past experience, the other about a present habit, and the third about a future speculation.

The results revealed that the best fluency measures were overall observed in future responses. Mehnert (1998) manipulated the length of planning time and found that more planning time contributed to fluency in his participants. The present study, however, did not change the planning time as the planning time was the same for the three questions. Still, it is speculated that the participants might have had better ideas to talk about in case of the future tense question because the participants were all TOEFL iBT candidates, who were going to emigrate to other countries to further their education, and they must have had clear plans for the following years. As the participants asserted, one of the factors that contributed to the number and length of pauses in their responses was weather each given response was the truth or just a lie in response to any given question. Because the participants in some cases did not have any true experience about some questions and they were supposed to plan on their responses in just 15 seconds, they were sometimes forced to make up some responses that had not actually happened to them in reality, which could negatively affect the fluency of the talk. In fact, the analogy is that the planning time serves as a preparatory stage for the speakers to plan both on the content and the form of their responses. Therefore, due to the fact that they mostly had clear plans for their near future, they could use their planning time in favor of the form they wanted to use; hence better fluency results for the future tense responses. This is confirmed by other studies (e.g., Foster & Skehan, 1996) that associate positive effects of pretask planning on fluency. In addition, Gilabert (2007) worked on planned and unplanned talks and analyzed the measures of CAF under these two conditions. The results of that study also indicated that planned responses were more fluent than unplanned ones. Therefore, it can be argued that having a clear plan of what is going to be said contributes to the fluency of that talk. By the same token, Mehnert (1998) indicated that planning had a significant effect on fluency, especially in speech rate, which is similar to the results presented in this study.

On the other hand, Yuan and Ellis (2003) found no significant difference between the fluency of pretask planners and no planners in their study. The results they obtained are contrary to the results of their previous studies (e.g., Foster & Skehan, 1996; Mehnert, 1998; Wendel, 1997) that have all reported more fluent responses for pretask planners. Yuan and Ellis (2003) explain that, contrary to the previous studies (e.g., Mehnert, 1998; Ortega, 1999; Wendel, 1997), their participants were required to perform the tasks of the study under time pressure, and this might have caused the change in the results they obtained. The present study also required the participants to respond to the questions under time pressure, but there were differences in the fluency observed across the three responses. As the planning time and response times were both equal in the three responses, it could be argued that the observed differences might be attributed to the fact that in case of the future tense question, for instance, the participants have had better plans of how to respond and what to say, hence better fluency gains in such responses.

APPENDIX THE QUESTIONS USED IN THIS STUDY

1. Describe the happiest day of your life. Provide reasons and examples to support your response.

2. How do you spend your free time? Provide reasons and examples to support your response.

3. How do you think your life will change in the next five years? Provide reasons and examples to support your response.

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A Database Study of Dynamics for Contemporary China's Translation and Publication[*]

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Abstract—This is a data-based study of the dynamics for China's translation and publication from 1978 to 2007. Based on China's *National Bibliography* (1978-2007), the author sorted out the books translated from foreign countries and compiled a database. Drawing on this database, we have discovered: From the international perspective, the major factors that affect China's translation activities are the economic gaps between China and other countries, the relations between China and other countries, the cultural capital and cultural strategies of the source countries, of which the economic factor is overridingly important. Moreover, the powerful cultural strategy adopted by a foreign country, like ROK, was another important factor that resulted in the flow of Korean texts into China. From the domestic perspective, the key factors that impact China's translation activities are the state's administrative arrangements, the enforcement of international conventions in China, the country's economic transformation, intervention by government departments, and the state policy on the cultural industry. All these have exerted influence on China's introduction of foreign texts

Index Terms—data-based study, translation and publication, dynamics, international perspective, domestic perspective

I. INTRODUCTION

After the adoption of the reform and opening policy in 1978, China entered a special period, in which it underwent constant reforms and changes. The ever-changing era provides the background for China's translation and publication for more than 30 years. To a great extent, this background will continue to determine China's translation and publication and their developmental orientation.

"The viability of a translation is established by its relationship to the cultural and social conditions under which it is produced and read" (Venuti, 1995, p. 18). The prerequisite for that is the flow of publications, i.e. the importation of publications from one culture into another. From the perspective of dynamics, this paper analyzes the flow and reception of translated publications. Based on China's *National Bibliography* (1978-2007), the author sorted out the books translated from foreign countries and compiled a database. Because the source countries of a small number of the translated books could not be identified, they were not included in the database. Drawing on this database and studying China's translation and publication from both the international and domestic perspectives, the author tried to identify the dynamics for China's translation activities from 1978 to 2007.

II. DYNAMICS FOR CHINA'S TRANSLATION AND PUBLICATION FROM THE INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The international factors regulating the translation and publication include sovereign states and language communities participating in the exchanges and competition. The author examines the translation activities by placing them into the power relations between countries and their languages. According to the principle of dynamics, there are four main factors affecting the flow of texts.

The first factor is the uneven status of languages. Some languages, because they are widely used, enjoy a central place in the language market. For example, English has now become a global language. Some languages, like Chinese and Arabic, have a high status because of the large numbers of speakers. On the other hand, some languages are being marginalized because of the limited numbers of speakers. Generally speaking, publications flow from the globally central language(s) to marginal languages, and the communications between marginal languages have often to depend on the globally central language(s) as the inter-language. The second factor is the political and ideological relations between states. In the 1950s, for instance, China translated from the former Soviet Union large numbers of Russian texts—a result of the influence of politics on translation. The third factor is the gaps between the economic strengths of countries. A country's economic power plays a dominating role in its translation activities. The stronger a country's economic power is, the greater international influence it has, and the more culture it exports. Conversely, an economically weaker country has to import more cultures. The fourth factor is the cultural capital. If a country or region has a long history and advanced civilization, the literature written in its language has more cultural capital and is

therefore likely to be a target to be introduced and translated. The dynamics of the flow of publications is complex. Of all factors of social dynamics, the political, economic and cultural dynamics are competing with each other in an uneven way. Therefore, cultural exchanges are uneven, and there is a relationship of being dominating and being dominated. By applying those four factors of dynamics to study the translation and publication in China over the past three decades, the author explores motivation behind the works China translated.

A.   The Economic Factor vs. the Language Factor: Their Respective Influences on Translation and Publication

During the thirty years after the onset of China's reform and opening in 1978, China translated 55,323 works from English-speaking countries, accounting for 56.7% of its total translated works. This large proportion seems to suggest that language plays a decisive role in text flows. Studying the differences between countries, however, we can have new discoveries. In the 30 years, China translated 38,312 works from the U.S.A., 15,047 works from the U.K., 831 works from Australia and 1,133 works from Canada (See TABLE 1 below). The vast differences between the numbers of works China translated from different countries show that language is not a factor with great explanatory power. What is more important than the language factor is a country's overall strength featured by its economy.

TABLE 1.
COMPARISON BETWEEN THE NUMBERS OF WORKS CHINA IMPORTED FROM THE U.S.A., U.K., AUSTRALIA AND CANADA FROM 1978 TO 2007
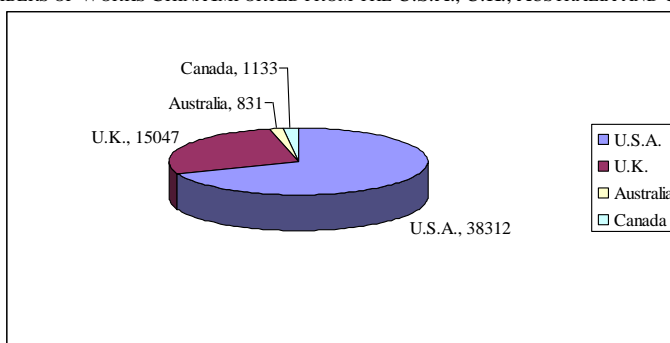
Over the three decades after 1978, China introduced 97,539 works from various countries and regions, but the main sources are five countries: the U.S.A., U.K., Japan, Germany and France. The number of the works translated from those five countries amounted to 77,535, or 79% of the total number of China's translated works, with the U.S.A. accounting for 40%, U.K. 15%, Japan 13%, France 6% and Germany 5% (See TABLE 2 below).

TABLE 2.
COMPARISON BETWEEN THE NUMBER OF WORKS CHINA IMPORTED FROM FIVE POWERS AND THAT FROM 130 OTHER COUNTRIES AND AREAS FROM 1978 TO 2007
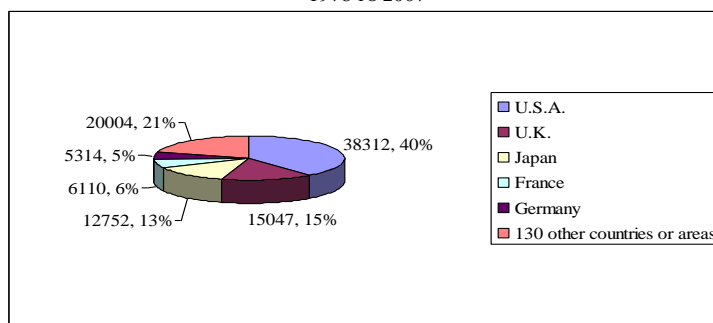
B.   The Economic Factor vs. the Political Factor: Their Respective Influences on Translation and Publication

East European countries and developing countries in Africa and Central America also constituted the sources of China's translation and publication, but the total number was much smaller than that of the economic powers. This shows that China's relationship with other countries was also a factor affecting translation flows. Owing to their similar historical backgrounds and common tasks of development, China and other third-world countries are linked to each other in destiny. At all times, China regards it as her international duty to safeguard the interests of the developing nations, support their effort to develop their economy, and attach importance to the development of her economic and cultural exchanges and cooperation with them. The number of works translated from the source countries match well with China's diplomatic relations. For example, China established diplomatic relations with Bulgaria in 1949, but in the 1960s the bilateral relations cooled down, and then in the 1980s the relations gradually improved, and the two countries resumed the diplomatic ties in 1984. Consequently, in that year China translated 10 works from Bulgaria—the peak of annual translation publications. China has traditional friendship with Egypt, which was the first African country to recognize the People's Republic of China. In 1986 the governments of the two countries signed the *Plan of Action on*

Cultural Cooperation. As a result, China translated 34 works from Egypt that year, a 5.7-fold increase from the previous year. After China adopted the market economy mechanism, the factor of state-to-state relations declined in importance. Take Bulgaria as an example again. Prior to 1992, China introduced from that country a total of 52 works, a yearly average of 3.7. After 1992, China introduced only a total of 13 works, an annual average of 0.8. On the other hand, before 1992 China introduced an average of 685 works from the U.S.A. annually and after 1992 the average number per year reached 1,796. This indicates that, under the market economy mechanism, the economic factor exerted a greater influence on text flows across nations, while the factor of China's diplomatic and political relations with other countries became less influential.

Also influenced by the economic factor was China's introduction of the former Soviet Union's texts. In the 1960s the relations between China and the Soviet Union deteriorated, and then in the 1980s the tension began to ease. After the two countries normalized their relations in 1989, the number of works China translated from the Soviet Union, instead of increasing, dropped 27%. In fact, after 1987 the number of publications China introduced from the Soviet Union kept declining—a consequence of that country's continuous economic decline. After Gorbadev became General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party in 1985, the country launched a comprehensive reform, which, however, failed to reverse the economic downturn and eventually resulted in the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the epoch of China's reform and opening, the various factors compete with each other to influence translation flows, and the state-to-state friendship cannot compete with the economic factor. In other words, the economic factor plays the decisive role. During the Second World War, the Soviet Union suffered heavy losses. After the war, it started a new period of socialist construction. "Starting in the 1950s, the country developed its economy in a well-planned way. By the 1980s, the various indexes of its economic and social development registered tremendous progress and it became an economic power second only to the United States" (Li Yonghui &Hu Minmin, 1996, p. 158). Before 1987 the number of publications China introduced from the Soviet Union followed only that from the United States. After 1987, however, the reforms by the Soviet Union failed, leading to economic setbacks. Correspondingly, the number of works China translated from the Soviet Union plunged. Comparison between the number of works China translated from the Soviet Union and that from the United States of America and the United Kingdom clearly reveals the influence of the economic factor (See TABLE 3 below).

TABLE 3.
COMPARISON BETWEEN THE NUMBERS OF WORKS CHINA IMPORTED FROM THE U.S.A., U.K. AND THE FORMER SOVIET UNION FROM 1978 TO 2007
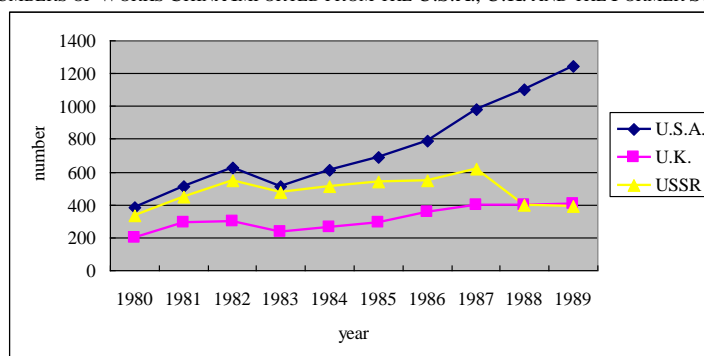
C. The Influence of the Cultural Capital Factor on Translation and Publication

If an economic analysis is made of the route of text flows across nations, the texts are then regarded as commodities, and translated works are treated as commodities of production and circulation according to the market logic. However, treatment of translated texts as ordinary commodities fails to show their unique property as cultural commodities. Translated texts not only exist in the form of commodities, but also have cultural contents. Cultural transmission has its inherent logic. Some cultures are endowed with cultural capital because of their high historical value, rich ideological contents, profound morals, or beautiful legends, thus becoming the targets of translation. Great thinkers such as Heracleitus, Socrates, Aristotle and Plato constitute the motive force behind China's repeated introductions and publications of ancient Greek texts, and even promoted the introduction of modern Greek works. Scholars such as Tertullian, Augustine, Cicero, Ovid, Tacitus and Seneca also provide motivation for Chinese publishers' introduction of ancient Roman texts. Thus, those great thinkers and their works are invested with cultural capital, and those works have motivated China's translation activities. Lebanese literary giant Kahlil Gibran's abundant works and their rich cultural connotations and oriental spirit have also driven China to translate Lebanese texts.

Winning a literary award also bestows symbolic cultural capital on the literary work. Chinese publishers often take overseas literary awards as the orientation and aesthetics of foreign literature. If the writer of a country wins the Nobel Prize, his/her work and other related works tend to become targets of Chinese publishers' translation. During the 30 years from 1978, China introduced an average of 1.5 works per year from South Africa. In 2003 South African writer John Maxwell Coetzee won the Nobel Prize of Literature. The next year China introduced 6 South African works, including 5 works by Coetzee. Of the South African works China introduced in 2006, four were written by Coetzee.

Since the start of China's reform and opening, almost all prize-winning and widely-sold works abroad have had their Chinese versions. Translated works series include the Nobel Prize-winning Book Series, the Series of Translations of European and American Prize-winning Novels, and the Series of Russian Booker Prize-winning books by the Lijiang Press; the Series of Children's Literature Prize-Winning Books Abroad, the North America Hugo Award-winning Book series, and Contemporary Prize-winning Book Series by the People's Literature Press; the Series of Famous Popular Books Abroad by the Yilin Press; the Series of Latest Japanese Mystery Novels by Shangdong Art and Literature Press; the Series of French Prize-wining Novels by the Baihua Art and Literature Press; the French Crime Fiction Award Book Series by Henan People's Press; Lifetime Achievement Award Book Series by the Shanxin Normal University Press; the Hans Christian Andersen Award Book Series by the Hebei Children Press; the International Award Book Series by the Xinlei Press; Edogawa Rampo Award Book Series by the Beiyue Art and Literature Press; the Dagger Award book Series and the Edgar Allan Poe Award Boos Series by the Mass Publisher; the Newbery Award Book Series by the North At ad Literature Press; the Canadian Prize-winning Book Series, etc. What is more, after 2000, Chinese publishers published 33 foreign prize-winning books in the form of single book. Because of a prize or award, foreign literary works have become influential cultural symbols and met Chinese readers' expectation for foreign literature.

D.   The Influence of External Factors on Translation and Publication

   The afore-mentioned factors affecting China's translation activities in the 30 years after 1978 are internal factors, which are concerned with China's internal motivation to introduce foreign publications. There are also external factors with the flow of Korean texts into China as an example. Large numbers of Koreans texts started to flow into China in 2001 as a result of ROK's strategy of invigorating the country by culture. Between 1978 and 1988, hardly any Korean texts flew into China. After 1988, however, with ROK's economic development and the enhancement of Sino-Korean cultural exchanges, China started to introduce Korean texts. From 1988 to 1922 when China and Republic of Korea (ROK) established diplomatic relation, China introduced from ROK a yearly average of 3 works. From 1992 to 2000, the number of works China translated from ROK increased slightly, reaching an annual average of 15—a quite normal number. In 2001 the number of Korean works entering China increased 840%. In 2002, the number increased 36%. The year 2003 witnessed another 200% increase. Not all the Korean works that flew into China were translated by Chinese; 53 works were done by Korean translators and then sold in China. That was the result of ROK's effort to promote its culture. The 1997 Asian Financial Crisis made the Korean government realize that it would be difficult to rely only on the traditional economic mode and turned their eyes to the cultural industry. By invigorating Korean culture, it hoped to propel economic growth. In 1998 the Korean government put forward the strategy of "invigorating the country by culture". In the following year the Korean government adopted the *Act on Cultural Industry Promotion*, and formulated the Five-year Plan for Promoting the Cultural Industry. In 2001 the government launched the Korea Culture Content Agent, which set up representative offices in Tokyo and Beijing. ROK put forward the concept of "developing Asian culture" and tried to radiate its influence to various parts of Asia and occupy a greater market share. By 2004 ROK's cultural products had assumed 3.5% of the world market, becoming the world's fifth cultural power. After 2002, in terms of the foreign publications China introduced every year, ROK surpassed Russia, ranking sixth in China (See TABLE 4 below).

TABLE 4:
COMPARISON BETWEEN THE NUMBERS OF WORKS CHINA IMPORTED FROM ROK AND THE NUMBER FROM THE FORMER USSR/RUSSIA FROM 1978 TO 2007
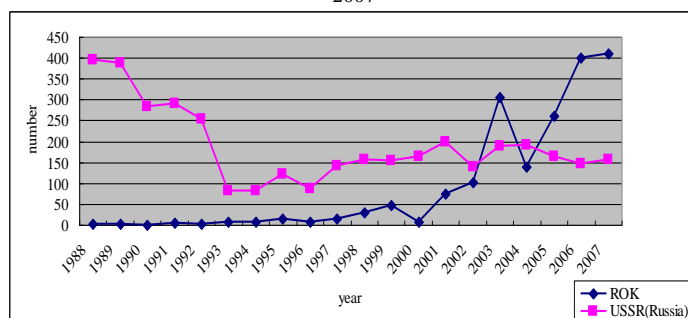
   After the above survey of China's 30-year translation activities from the international perspective, we will further study the dynamics for foreign texts to enter China from the domestic perspective.

III.   THE DYNAMICS FOR CHINA'S TRANSLATION AND PUBLICATION FROM THE DOMESTIC PERSPECTIVE

   The social attributes of translation determine that the occurrence and development of China's translation activities cannot be separated from China's social environment. The ups and downs of translation activities are closely related to the state's policies and developmental strategies. The transformation of China's social structure as well as the adjustments of the state's polices and developmental strategies certainly have an impact on translation activities. Specifically, during the 30 years' reform and opening, the state's administrative arrangements, the enforcement of

international conventions in China, the country's economic transformation, intervention by government departments, and the state policy on the cultural industry—all these have exerted influence on China's introduction of foreign texts.

Table 5 below shows that, in terms of the total number of translation publications, China's introduction of foreign works underwent a slow start in 1978, the prosperity in the 1980s, the recession in the mid-1990s, and the revitalization in the early part of the 21st century.

TABLE 5.
THE NUMBERS OF WORKS CHINA IMPORTED FROM OTHER COUNTRIES EACH YEAR FROM 1978 TO 2007
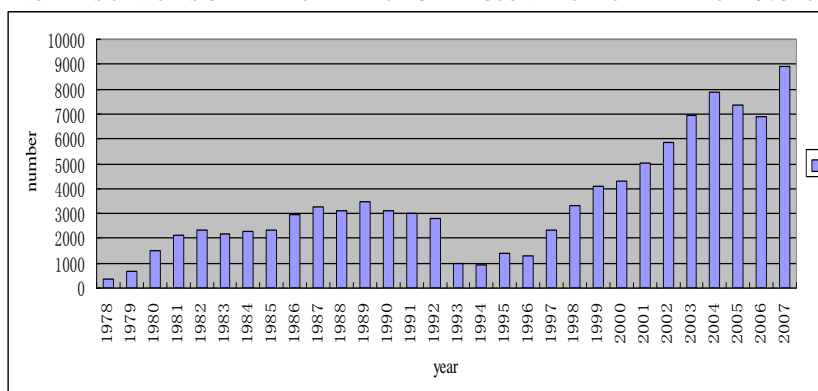
A. Translation and Publication Arranged by the Government

In the late 1970s and early 1980s the introduction and publication of foreign works in China were more or less due to the governments' administrative arrangements. To address the shortage of books in the early 1970s—a problem caused by the "cultural revolution", the Publication Bureau of the Ministry of Culture organized a dozen provincial and state presses to re-print books on foreign politics, economy, literature and art that had been published in the 1950s and 1960s. The reprinting activities continued for two years, and some books which had been translated only for internal circulation were now openly published.

Beginning in the 1980s, China entered a period characterized by "emancipation of thoughts", and translation activities resumed and developed rapidly. "In 1982 the central government approved publication of Chinese versions of world-famous works. This gave the publishers confidence" (Ma Zhuyi, 2006, p. 145). In the early 1980s the state resumed some presses (or publishing houses) and established some more. "The early 1980s marked the fastest development of presses during the three decades of reform and opening, and every year 30-40 new presses were added" (Hao Zhensheng, 2008, p. 75). The foreign Literature Press, Xinhua Press, Chinese Social Science Press and Pekin University Press were all created during this period. By 1985 the annual number of translated works reached 2,425, a seven-fold growth from 1978. In addition, publications by domestic writers also shot up. Thus, by the mid-1980s, China had basically bidden farewell to the period of book shortage. In 1985 China established even more presses, with 76 presses added that year. Thanks to the decision made at the Third Plenary Session of the 12th Party Congress to conduct an all-round economic restructuring, domestic presses started a new-round of massive translation activities. The number of translated works in 1985 rose 10.6% compared with 1984, the year 1986 witnessed a year-on-year upturn of 15.4%, and the year 1987 saw another surge of 11.8, with the year's total number reaching 3,283.

B. Translation and Publication Governed by International and Domestic Publication Rules

During the 30 years of reform and opening, China's translation activities underwent two downturns. The first downturn occurred in 1993 and 1994. On October 15 and 39, 1992 the *Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works* and the *Universal Copyright Convention* became effective in China. From then on, importation of foreign works within their periods of copyright protection should not be done without first obtaining the owners' authorization. China was not yet accustomed to these international rules in the first two years, so its translation and publication plummeted. In 1993 the number of translated works was 965, and in 1994 the number was 958. The total number in these two years was only 55% of the number in 1989, which reached 3475. After 1994 the Chinese publishing industry gradually came to understand the international conventions on publications. Also, the aim of a socialist market economy was set in China. Consequently, the Chinese publication activities became active again and market-oriented development accelerated.

In the early 21st century, an unhealthy tendency grew in the Chinese translation publication circles. Under the mechanism of the market economy, some publishers sought nothing but economic benefits. By falsely using foreign writers' names, they published "pseudographs", which are mostly popular books in the fields of economy and management. By falsely using the names of foreign writers, collecting voguish topics and content, counterfeiting comments by famous overseas media and personages, and faking good sales records abroad, they published the so-called translated works. "According to incomplete statistics, of all the 570 presses in the country, more than 30 participated in producing pseudographs. For a period of one or two years, more than 10 pseudographs were created

every month"(Yang Lei, 2005, p. 33). In early 2005, the phenomenon of pseudographs drew the attention of the General Administration of Press and Publication, and in February it issued the *Urgent Notice on Conducting Special Checks Publications Containing False Promotion Information*, demanding the various localities to crack down on pseudographs. Owing to the General Administration's rectification efforts, the total numbers of translated works published in 2005 and 2006 fell slightly.

C.   The Influence of China's Economic Transformation on Translation and Publication

In the second half of the 1990s, China's tertiary industry grew rapidly and consumption structure changed, thus boosting the development of the cultural industry. Gradually, culture got rid of the traditional concept "ideology" and was regarded as an economic sector. As Connor pointed out:

It is no longer possible to separate the economic or productive realm from the realms of ideology or culture, since cultural artefacts, images, representations, even feelings and psychic structures have become part of the world of the economic." (Connor, 1989, p. 51)

In 1996 the Sixth Session of the 14th Party Congress adopted the *Resolution on Important Issues Including the Strengthening of the Socialist Ethical and Cultural Progress*, which states that the Chinese people must observe the inherent laws of cultural development, give play to the role of the market economy, straighten the relations among the state, units and individuals, and step by step form the development pattern of the state guaranteeing the key projects and non-governmental sectors are encouraged to conduct cultural undertakings. Publication of translations as a component of the cultural undertakings must necessarily respond to the governmental policies, and in 1997 more achievements were made in translation and publication, with 2,307 translated works published, a year-on-year upswing of 77.6%. Under the guidance of the state policy, the Ministry of Culture launched the Department of Cultural Industry in 1998 and formulated the Five-Year Development Plan. These endeavors show that the cultural industry was put on the agenda of the state's culture.

By the beginning of the 21st century, China had basically established the socialist market economy, and the people's living standards had, on the whole, reached the goal of a relatively comfortable life. Starting in the 21st century, China entered the period of further developing this moderately prosperous society and accelerating the modernization drive. Along with the improvement of the living standards, people's consumption structure changed from merely enough food and clothing to a relatively comfortable life, with cultural consumption assuming an obviously larger proportion in the total consumption. The change in the consumption structure necessarily led to changes in industry structure. The greater demand for cultural consumption promoted the development of China's cultural industry. Moreover, under the market economy, the market played an important role in regulating the resource distributions. Since China wanted to merge into the globalization trend, it must improve its "soft strength" according to the laws of the market economy. In 2002, the Sixteenth Party Congress adopted the report of *Building a Society of a Relatively Comfortable Life and Creating a New Situation of the Socialist Cause with the Chinese Characteristics*. In terms of cultural development, the report points out that China should actively develop cultural undertakings and the cultural industry as well as deepen the reform of the cultural system. Thus, development of the cultural industry was taken as a national strategy.   The intervention of the state policy in the industrialization of culture embodied the policy-makers' wisdom in observing the laws of the market and guiding cultural development and prosperity in compliance with the market force. China's publication of translated works as an integral part of the cultural industry would inevitably merge into the chain of cultural industrialization and contribute to the prosperity of China's cultural industry. The share of the books introduced from abroad in the total retail market of books has rapidly expanded, which causes widespread concern of the publishing circle. The books introduced from abroad has not only promoted the growth of the book retail market, but also enlarged the book market as a whole. In 2000, China's book retail market registered a year-on-year growth of 23.53%, within which 15.80% derived from the books introduced from abroad. In 2002, the books from abroad contributed to a 21.40% increase of the total market. The books introduced from abroad, which consisted overwhelmingly of translated books, effectively compensated the inadequacy of domestic books, sharpened the presses' competitive edge, and promoted the development of the cultural industry.

After experiencing the pseudograph crisis in 2004 and 2005, the Party Central Committee and the State Council issued the *Opinions on Deepening the Reform of the Cultural System* early in 2006 and set the aim and tasks of the cultural system reform. In March 2006, the Working Conference on the National Cultural System Reform was held to summarize the pilot projects on cultural restructuring and made arrangements for furthering the reform. Thus, the cultural system reform entered a new phase of development. In 2007 China's publication of translated books made new headway, registering a year-on-year increase of 29.2% to 8,936 books.

The total number of books introduced from abroad reflected the influence of the state's strategic decisions, and similarly the number of translated books in the fields of industry and technology were also sensitive to the state's policy guidance. In the late 1990s the world's science and technology developed by leaps and bounds, the competition among countries in terms of comprehensive strength based on economic and technological strengths became increasingly intense, presenting not only a serious challenge, but also new opportunities for China's science and technology. The *Government Work Report to the Fourth Session of the Eighth National People's Congress* in March 1996 put forward the strategy of revitalizing the nation through science and technology and achieving sustainable growth. China implemented the philosophy of taking science and technology as the primary productive force, regarding education as

the foundation, and putting science and education in an important position in the nation's economic and social development.

To strengthen the leadership over scientific and educational work, the Party Central Committee and the State Council set up the State Science and Education Leading Group with Premier Zhu Rongji as the leader and Vice Premier Li Lanqing as the deputy leader. For five consecutive years starting in 1998, the Central Finance invested a total of 2.5 billion yuan in key basic research projects. In the deepening of the reform and opening, science and technology have contributed significantly to the economic construction." (PHRC, 2008, p. 369)

To implement the strategy of revitalizing the nation through science and technology, China must, while taking into consideration the actual domestic situation, learn experience from abroad. By combining its own technology with advanced technology from abroad, China can take the road of scientific progress with Chinese characteristics. Since "science is considered the primary productive force", abundant translations of overseas scientific and technological achievements became inevitably necessary. After two years' preparations, starting in 2000, the number of industrial and technological books China translated from aboard spiraled up to 792, a yearly surge of 32%, while the total number of books China translated from abroad in that year rose only 5%. Then in 2001, the number registered a year-on-year rise of 13%. In 2002 the number exceeded 1,000 for the first time, or 26% over the 2001 number. For four successive years after 2002, the annual number was about 1150. The large numbers of industrial and technological books translated from abroad would certainly stimulate the development of China's science and technology.

IV. CONCLUSION

Studying China's translation activities in the 30 years of reform and opening from the international perspective, we have found that the main dynamics behind foreign texts entering China was the economic gap between China and the source countries. However, the dynamics was complex. In addition to the economic factor, China's diplomatic relations and the strong cultural capitals that were attached to the texts also constituted important factors for cross-country text flows. When the economic factor competed with the state-to-state relationship factor, the former tended to play the leading role. Moreover, the powerful cultural strategy adopted by a foreign country, like ROK, was another important factor that resulted in the flow of Korean texts into China. All these show that China's introduction of foreign texts was driven by both internal factors and external factors. Studying China's translation activities in the 30 years of reform and opening from the domestic perspective, we have found that the translation activities were rooted in China's social development and were guided by the state policies like the state's administrative arrangements, the enforcement of international conventions, China's economic transformation, intervention by government departments, and the state policy on the cultural industry.

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Nabokov's Postmodernism: The Matter of Discourse and Survival in *Pale Fire*

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Abstract—**Postmodernist fiction, Brian McHale believes, is always about death. Nabokov's *Pale Fire* (1962) as an allegory of death and writing is about John Shade's poetic meditations on life and death. The present study is an attempt to explore the relationship between death and writing by applying McHale's theory to Nabokov's novel to show how life is equated with discourse, and death with the end of discourse and silence. The two author-figures—Shade and Kinbote—struggle to continue their narration(s) by reconstructing their selves through and into language, for they know that end of discourse brings their nonexistence. Ontologically speaking, Kinbote who can be Shade the poet provides the reader with a long commentary on Shade's poem, and extends his narration in order to delay fate and remain alive.**

Index Terms—**McHale, Nabokov, *Pale Fire*, discourse, survival, death**

I. INTRODUCTION

In most of the postmodernist novels death is dealt with in one way or another. Nabokov's *Pale Fire* (1962) as a postmodernist piece of writing is no exception. Brian McHale in his influential book *Postmodernist Fiction* (1987) goes further to conclude that postmodernist fiction is "always about death" because "death is the one ontological boundary that we are all certain to experience" (p. 231) or to quote Ong "death inhabits texts" (1977, p. 231). Sharpe believes that "the theme of death is directly linked to various motifs of revolutionary-utopian attacks on culture and humanism." He continues that death proves to be "an integral image of the dark, unrecognizable and horrifying chaos from which even the creative act is no protection" (1999, p. 116). Death is of high interest to Nabokov and his novel has been read as an allegory of death and writing. The novel is also one of discovery abound with uncertainties, wordplay and allusions, and above all an exploration of death which to Nabokov was "a means of establishing limits—between life and death, fiction and reality, text and self" (Boyd, 1983, p. 162).

Foregrounding of the literary techniques or different ontological boundaries is an undistinguishable feature of a postmodernist novel, and a foregrounding that cannot be ignored in *Pale Fire* is that of the relationship between death and writing. The present study is an attempt to explore the relationship in detail taking into consideration McHale's point that "life is equated with discourse, death with the end of discourse and silence." Ipso facto, existence depends on the act of narration or "continuing to tell stories" (1987, p. 228).

The equation of life with discourse and writing means that it is fear of death that keeps the story of Kinbote with his "fantastic relocation of a thoroughly realistic poem" (Boyd, 1999, p. 47) going on in the novel. What will be discussed is the fact that through narration and providing the reader with such a lengthy and sometimes impertinent commentary, Kinbote tries, to quote Sukenick, to "filibuster … fate" (1969, p. 55) and prolong his existence. By providing the reader with such a commentary the source of which is his imagination—Maddox believes there is also a second source and that is "Kinbote's agonizing sense of loss; while we are never exactly sure what he has lost, it is clear that he not only wants but needs to return to the past and reconstruct it" (2009, p. 16)—Kinbote continues the narration in order to transcend death, for he knows silence equates death and no wonder Shade who can be Kinbote himself is shot after placing his unfinished "poetic meditations on life and death" (Morris, 2010, p. 53) on the shelf. What Kinbote wishes to do is reconstruction of his self through language and capturing an identity other than Charles. Maddox believes that "Kinbote's belief in the literally life-giving and life-sustaining power of art is a function of his need to establish a satisfying version of his own identity" (2009, p. 18).

Waugh states that "postmodernism represents the dissolution of the self into language" and Kinbote desires to dissolve his self into his writing to create a new identity, evade Shade's fate, and filibuster his own death. What Kinbote does is creation of a long commentary which is an attempt to "articulate" his "subjectivity" (1992, p. 64) and fix himself in the narration. As a refugee from death, Kinbote seeks a shelter—New Wye—and a new identity to be confirmed through his self-conscious act of narration and commenting on Shade's poem. The Foucauldian relationship between writing and death is a dominant theme in Russian metafiction. Foucault believes that "the conception of spoken or written narrative as a protection against death has been transformed by our culture." He continues that "writing is now linked to sacrifice and to the sacrifice of life itself … where a work had the duty of creating immortality, it now attains

the right to kill, to become the murderer of its author" (2000, p. 175) which signifies that the narratives formed by both Shade and Kinbote are sure to bring them death.

II. Shade's Discourse

The author, in McHale's words, is "a plural" (1987, p. 200) and what can be perceived in *Pale Fire* is a distribution of Nabokov that gives birth to the two figures of Shade and Kinbote located at different ontological levels in the novel. One hypothesis regarding Shade and Kinbote is that Shade's poem is Kinbote's biography and Kinbote is Shade himself commenting on the poem to continue the narration and go beyond death. In this case Shade's poem becomes a means of Kinbote's survival. What is noteworthy here is Shade's obsession with the idea of death. Lines 173 through 176 read: "There was the day when I began to doubt / Man's sanity: How could he live without / Knowing for sure what dawn, what death, what doom / Awaited consciousness beyond the tomb?" Having experienced his parents' and daughter's deaths, Shade is much concerned with "a time when I am not alive" and tries "to imagine your   nonexistence" (Hofstadter, 1980, p. 698).

The obsession pushes Shade into writing his poem which becomes a means of experiencing death by getting in touch with what has occupied his mind for a long time. Therefore, the poem changes into a quest, a "lifelong quest to discover what lies beyond the self, especially in the ultimate, all-resisting secret of death, and to make what he can of life in the face of the uncertainty of death" (Boyd,1999, p. 71). Thus, if Shade and Kinbote are ontologically not taken as two different figures, the poem becomes the starting point of a narration which is continued by the commentary resulting in Kinbote's extension of life. Lines 177 through 179 read: "And finally here was the sleepless night / When I decided to explore and fight / The foul, the inadmissible abyss [of death]." Shade lost his parents, lost his daughter, and now, out of fear of losing himself starts composing the poem. Shade or the egotistic Kinbote obsessed with the idea of death has had a near-death experience and starts composing his poem to protect and immune himself against it. Poetry in Shade's hands changes to a weapon by which he tries to conquer death and shape it into his own language–discourse of survival.

At the close, Shade sets his unfinished poem back on the shelf awaiting the sunset. The silence turns the sunset into the sunset of his life making the end of his narration the end of his existence. Shade, then, becomes projected into Kinbote who has to continue the discourse if he wishes to stay alive. Boyd believes that "Kinbote has been feeding Shade the story of the king" (1999, p. 21) and the poem is Kinbote's story to be continued by himself in the commentary.

Shade, being obsessed with the idea of his daughter's suicide and his own mortality, composes his poem based on death and this motif foreshadows later events. Shade has been struggling to understand life and death, life and the hereafter, life and what may lie beyond it. His attempt is reflected in the opening lines of the poem where he is likened to "the waxwing" flying into "the false azure in the windowpane; … in the reflected sky" (ll. 1-4). The waxwing seems weak for the window reflecting the sky which indicates what lies beyond life. Shade in these lines projects himself, imaginatively, into the waxwing, as if it were still flying beyond death and into the reflected azure of the window, as if that were the cloudlessness of some hereafter, even as he stands looking at "the smudge of ashen fluff" of the dead bird's little body. These opening lines suggest that Shade's poem is going to be an evasion of the hereafter, or an exploration of death. Vera Nabokov states that the "principle theme of Nabokov's work [is] the hereafter" (Pifer, 2003, p. 8).

The death motif introduced in canto one continues into canto two where Shade begins his quest of "the inadmissible abyss" while he knows that he cannot be paying-off in his quest of finding out about death and he is helpless in his confrontation with the mystery of death which foreshadows his own death. Shade knows that his poem cannot continue and will stop at a line to mark his disappearance.

In canto three, Shade who recollects memories from the past is beyond life: the canto refers to Shade's near-death experience, a vision of afterlife where life may be peaceful and a continuation of the life on earth which is again an indication of Shade's obsession with death and his desire to conquer it. Desperate in his need, Shade tries to see behind life the ability to do which comes through his art.

Canto four confirms Shade's poem as the only way of dealing with death, and poetry as the only way of understanding life. No wonder this canto begins with "now" in which Shade tries to remain. This "now" is the now of his composition which seems the only way of survival. Through his composition, Shade even realizes the harmony between sounds of the poem and the order in the world. As long as the harmony exists, Shade can live in "now:" "And if my private universe scans right, / So does the verse of galaxies divine / Which I suspect is an iambic line" (ll. 975-77). Shade sets the poem on the shelf awaiting the sunset which changes into the close of his life. Failing to conquer death and before he breaks off, the only achievement seems to be, through art, the celebration of his everlasting love for Sybil and Hazel to the point that even after his death he wants to keep the memory of every detail of his life in his poem. McHale believes that "every ontological boundary is an analogue or metaphor of death; so foregrounding ontological boundaries is a means of foregrounding death, of making death, the unthinkable, available to the imagination" (1987, p. 231) which here is true of *Pale Fire* projecting the hereafter and making it somehow questionable through the power of imagination.

Shade's approaching the hereafter is a trespassing of ontological boundaries and he believes that "the uncertainties of death can be accounted for institutionally" (Belletto, 2006, p. 764). This signifies that Shade is after finding a way to manage death: "Institution (I) of Preparation (P) For the Hereafter (H) (ll. 503-4) is the institution in charge of exploring

what lies in the hereafter. Shade imagines transcendence, and through art wants to manage death. By imagining, he is able to possess and control the hereafter. Linda Hutcheon refers to Humbert Humbert who can possess Lolita only imaginatively: he cries to the readers not to "skip these essential pages! Imagine me; I shall not exist if you do not imagine me" (1983, p. 122). McHale states that "postmodernist writers have attempted to imagine transcendence, filibustering fate even beyond the supposedly ultimate limit of death itself, they project discourse into death" (1987, p. 230). However, Shade is not a voice to be heard from the hereafter or from beyond the grave, and fails to extend his discourse any farther. He is unable to do anything apropos of the quality of the hereafter, to cope with, to manage such an experience and to project the poem into it. Being unable to do so he meets death where his narration has stopped.

III. KINBOTE'S DISCOURSE

Through fiction it is not impossible to become another self and project one's self into another being. It is not hard to imagine Kinbote as a human subject who tries to be recognized through another human subject that is Shade. Kinbote can be taken as the projection of Shade into another human subject meaning Kinbote who bound Shade to himself by first integrating himself within every aspect of Shade's life and by acting as a god of poetry to Shade to start the story of this very god of inspiration. When Shade dies, Kinbote takes control of the poem to fit his own purpose of integration on the New Wye literary circle as a way of securing a new identity in New Wye and later on his existence.

Kinbote, in desperate need of a long discourse, extends the poem by his comments just to extend his life and career. However, Kinbote is not a good poet, at least not as capable as Shade, and is "a poor reader." The narration continues in a totally different form—comments—because Kinbote is an excellent writer and "a natural storyteller full of … invention" (Boyd, 1999, p. 74).

Through the comments Kinbote's self is shaped and in order to protect his self or new shape the "chance events" are ordered as "a casual chain" (Belletto, 2006, p. 770) so he may extend the narration as long as he can. Accordingly, Kinbote becomes paying-off in controlling both the reader and the narration. The narration is composed of the events of Zembla whose king—Kinbote—is a refugee from death and the rebels who want to assassin him. By concocting the tale of Zembla, Kinbote extends the narration and provides the reader with more than 100 pages of commentary. However, an end must be put to the commentary therefore, in his mind, Kinbote is always awaiting the arrival of a second Gradus who will "presently … ring at my door" to equate end of his narration with his nonexistence. Kinbote concludes that as soon as his work is over and the poet in him dead, a "more competent Gradus" will not be far away to shoot the right person (*Pale Fire*, p. 236). What is noteworthy in Nabokov is that "the key structure is the hero's obsession" and his plots "tend to show the accumulating pattern of a single life, the whole distinctive pattern of a hero's past, the unique rhythms of his "fate," the special design of a person's individuality that extends through a life and often into the moment of death" (Connely, 2005, p. 35).

At the end of the Foreword Kinbote claims that "without my notes Shade's text has no human reality at all" and continues to affirm that the "reality" accorded to the poem is provided by "only my notes" (*Pale Fire*, p. 25). Waugh believes that "the fictional content of [such a metafiction as *Pale Fire*] is continually reflected by its formal existence as text, and the existence of that text within a world viewed in terms of 'textuality.' Waugh refers to McHale's suggestion that "such contradictions are essentially ontological (posing questions about the nature and existence of reality)" (1984, p. 15).

The words carry a touch of agitation and show that Kinbote is caught in a state of despair and horror. Too much worried about the narration, Kinbote "does not bother to trace sources in the original language, [and] fails to identify natural objects" (Boyd, 1999, p. 69). Kinbote has lost his kingdom and Gradus is on his way to take his life. Kinbote knows that the only way to stave off silence is writing and starts the commentary section which tends to become too personal and autobiographical—mainly where he suggests that he is the Zemblan king—to immortalize himself in Shade's poem. This is the reason for first, the many points in the narrative commentary being irrelevant; second, Shade's poem and its aesthetic values being ignored; third, the comments being in favour of Kinbote's interests and line of story; fourth, the idea of Hazel—a major theme in Shade—ignored in favour of Kinbote's own life and Zembla narrative and fifth, the ignorance of allusions employed with great sensitivity.

All Kinbote is after is to stave off silence, that is why in addition to providing readers with such comments, he asks the reader to read the comments over and over. The language employed by Kinbote is important in revealing his life and the related details. The language is not there to clarify Shade's poem's meanings. As a matter of fact, the intended meanings are dissolved in the discourse which is crucial to Kinbote's survival, and surprisingly the reader comes to comments on the unwritten line—1000. It is the act of narration that protects him and ensures his survival. Kinbote creates the events of commentary which at first seem accidental and impertinent, however encouraged by his own comments and mastery of manipulation he cries "I shall continue to exist … I shall try to exist" (*Pale Fire*, p. 236).

IV. A WORD ON ZEMBLA

"As soon as your poem is ready, as soon as the glory of Zembla merges with the glory of your verse, I intend to divulge to you an ultimate truth, an extraordinary secret, that will put your mind completely at rest" (*Pale Fire*, p. 171) are part of Kinbote's words in his comments to lines 433 and 434. Kinbote, at first, does not reveal his true identity but

introduces another line of story—Zembla—to continue the narration. It is noteworthy how Kinbote imposes the Zemblan theme on Shade yet hiding his true identity from him. As a matter of fact, Kinbote needs the Zemblan story to be put in verse in the hands of a poet like Shade. In order to survive, the discourse must be kept going and Kinbote tries to shape Zembla into his own language. The mythical Zembla provides Kinbote with the chance for further commenting and keeping the discourse alive. The Zemblan theme explored in Shade's poem is the story of Kinbote's narration and survival. Accordingly Shade's poem is the production of Kinbote's image in the narrative of his survival. McHale believes that "the postmodernist author is even free to confront us with the image of himself or herself in the act of producing the text" (1987, p. 199). The projected fictional world of Zembla is a writerly text of Kinbote and his mythical kingdom providing the reader with Kinbote's image as the king and the whole novel as the king's narration in which a variety of ideas and events exist to ensure continuity of the narration. Kinbote can be regarded as the "postmodernist author" of the myth of Zembla in which the ontological boundaries are foregrounded.

What Boyd says seems to be a confirmation of Kinbote's success in his act of narration: Shade helps Kinbote compose the commentary from beyond the grave. Now Kinbote is beyond death, has conquered death and is in command of his narrative. As far as he is in command, a second Gradus will not appear or if appears will not be successful at shooting the right person. However, the narration is likely to end somewhere and all Kinbote is able to do now, being obsessed with the thought of Gradus, is to create an image of himself based on every detail crossing his mind. And even if the details of the story including Gradus are fantasy springing out of Kinbote's troubled mind, they add significantly to Kinbote's narration confirming the importance of Kinbote as a creative narrator keeping his discourse going. He has to avoid silence by manipulating language into shaping his story.

One of Heidegger's arguments is that "the work of art has a finite life-span" (qtd. in Clark, 2002, p. 63) which can be attributed to the life-span of every narration as well. A limited span of time and space pushes Kinbote into manipulating the discourse, the reader, and extension of his narrative. The close or the final sunset of his life is confirmed through the approaching of Gradus who will put an end to Kinbote's art. Kinbote's attempt is to extend the life-span of his narration and delay Gradus's arrival.

In a postmodernist novel such as Nabokov's *Pale Fire* where ontological boundaries are explored and foregrounded, it is not easy to draw lines between characters and distinguish them. Even the worlds, fictional and real, are mixed and apt to the free play of meanings. The only "real reality" seems, according to McHale, to be "writing itself" (1987, p. 198). What Nabokov has written is about the discourse(s) of two author-figures, who may not be different in identity, and introducing them into the structure of the novel. One is Shade, a poet who has seemingly composed a poem on the Zemblan narrative imposed onto him by the second figure Kinbote who is in desperate need of remaining alive through his discourse. According to McHale's theory, in such a text, death is equal to silence: "death for each character is equated with the end of her or his story" (1987, p. 229). Shade composes the cantos and then Kinbote continues the narration by commenting on them to extend his narration. Kinbote's story holds many events that require re-reading of readers to be interpreted. As long as there are complex comments and the reading takes place and new interpretations are aroused, the narrative has the potentiality to ensure Kinbote's survival. Kinbote, by making the commentary complicated and open to different layers of interpretation and discovery, hopes to keep his reader active, excited and involved in the continuation of his own narrative.

V. CONCLUSION

In contrast with Shade who tries to play with life and death privately, Kinbote attempts to "translate private fate into public significance." For Kinbote "personal failures are the result of carefully planned human conspiracies, and death is the relentlessly advancing assassin, Gradus" (Maddox, 2009, p. 19). The fear Kinbote feels, and the obsession with the thought of the end of his narrative or death meaning Gradus's appearance and shooting the right person, make him more eager in enthroning himself somewhere like Shade's poem rather than wanting to make a place for himself in the poem. Therefore, what he has to do is either kill himself to end every disturbance and trauma he is exposed to or continue narrating to extend the span of his art and the existence of his own self. An egotistic character like Kinbote will continue narrating and projecting his image in the discourse to evade silence, as long as he can, and evade appearance of a second Gradus. It is "in Kinbote hands [that] Shade's poem becomes a coded key to the wonders of an imagined world" (Maddox, 2009, p. 17).

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The Study of EFL Students' Requests Based on Politeness Theory

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Abstract—This study is carried out to see if the politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) is applicable to data elicited from EFL students attending a language institute in Iran. Students were asked to email their teacher as a class activity and make a request in an appropriate and polite form. Different viewpoints regarding the status of request in politeness perspective and also student-teacher relation in language classrooms in Iran were discussed. Based on Holtgravesand Yang's (1992) coding scheme, email requests were analyzed and the result showed that apart from a few emails almost all the requests could be cinsidered as polite and just two of them located somewhere in the middle of scale of politeness. Since the analysis is not an absolute objective one, we can conclude that most of the students expressed their requests in a polite, formal and indirect way through long sentences as an attempt to save the negative face.

Index Terms—politeness theory, face, face threatening act, request, imposition

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Norris (2001), learners of another language need to learn sociolinguistic norms of language behavior, politeness strategies of the target language and the ability to appropriately use these rules in communication.

This research was aimed at determining to what extend data from Iranian EFL students' email requests are based on the politeness theory. Academic student-professor emails were the activities which manifest requests. Through a precise coding system, the politeness strategies of the participants' requests were explored.

Statement of the problem

Iranian learners of English interact with very few foreigners because of the current political status; there is absolutely no general need to communicate properly with English speakers that are not familiar with the Persian language and culture. In most EFL situations learners have specific needs, like applying for a job at a foreign company or talking to a foreign professor at the university. The most interactive exposure of language learners to native speakers in Iran is through movies. Most language learners do not exploit the internet for such purposes. University students in particular use the English portion of the internet or article searching for university projects. The Persian portion of the net however, has become a main channel of communication and interaction amongst Farsi-speaking people throughout the world. Chat rooms and weblogs are exploding with members posting and waiting for comments and messages every day. So, to say that the Iranian community doesn't use the internet would be completely false. The extent of which the Iranian community makes use of the English portion of the internet is questionable however. Thus an immediate need must be created for the community of Iranian language learners.

One way to create such a need is to enforce a rule that the students must ask their questions via email and their professors could refer them to a certain text or answer them also via email. For this to happen, there are many preliminary steps involved. Professors must have access to the Internet on campus, they must be trained how to use the system efficiently, there should be a webpage for each professor to post general questions publicly so he or she will only have to answer each question once. That would be a really demanding task because as an attending graduate student, I have emailed a professor only to get an oral response twenty days later asking what the email was about. The example was mentioned to show the extent of artificiality of email in the academic context of Iran.

II. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

In this study, e-mail has been chosen as a form of computer-mediated communication. It promotes interactive language learning and the opportunity for authentic use of the target language (Chun, cited in Li, 2000). It also serves to foster student empowerment (Warscauer, cited in Li, 2000). It is used in hope of motivating the students and promoting the functional use of second language.

Gonglewski, Meloni, and Brant, 2001 discuss the pedagogical benefits of using email in EFL classrooms. The following are some of the benefits they mention: Extending language learning time and place, providing a context for real-world communication and authentic interaction, expanding topics beyond classroom-based ones, promoting

student-centered language learning, and encouraging equal opportunity participation. Specifically in regard to email between the teacher and the foreign language learner, they believe that the learner gains self-assurance along with experience using electronic media in the foreign language.

According to the article, the most important benefit of email in an EFL classroom is "potential to offer learners opportunities for much more valuable communicative interaction in the target language than was ever possible in the traditional foreign language classroom." (Gonglewski, Meloni and Brant, 2001, p.13). Speech acts and pragmatics are part of exactly such "valuable communicative interaction" which needs to be focused on particularly in EFL contexts. Email is a medium through which much can be explored and learned.

What are speech acts?

Searle (1969, cited in Schmidt 1994, p.4) believes: "speaking a language is performing speech acts, acts such as making statements, giving commands, asking questions, making promises… these speech acts are the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication." Speech acts are the set of realization patterns typically used by native speakers of the target language, any one of which would be recognized as the speech act in question, when uttered in the appropriate context (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983, cited in Cohen, 2004). Speech acts are those patterned, routinized phrases used regularly to perform a variety of functions such as requesting, refusing, complimenting, greeting, thanking and apologizing (Cohen, 2004).

For thirty years, language educators have been trying to teach second language learners; not just the form of speech acts but also their place in speech and the combination of them with other speech acts. Learning speech acts is of great importance. Cohen (2004, p.3) mentions: "Learners of a language can have all of the grammatical forms and lexical items and still fail completely at conveying their message because they lack necessary pragmatic or functional information to communicate their intent." Unfortunately in Iran, many language schools see teaching grammar as the main goal of their curriculum. They add so-called communicative tasks to liven the class up.

Requests were selected to be investigated because of its direct relation to politeness theories and the cultural issues attached to requests. Within the universals of politeness, every language and culture has its own politeness configurations. Offering (help, for example) before the person requests it, repeatedly refusing offers before accepting, and not declining requests (even if they are out of the person's range of doing them) are highly valued in the Iranian culture. Another reason is that students -as participants- have the potential to encounter requests more than other speech acts (e.g. complaining or apologizing).

Research in the field of requests in the form of academic emails has been carried out, the earliest of which is probably the study done by Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig in 1996. Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1996) analyzed perlocutionary affect e-mail requests sent by NS and NNS graduate students to professors. They concluded that, in general, NNS e-mails did not adequately address imposition, which negatively affected perlocution. In addition, NNS messages consisted of fewer downgraders and other mitigating supportive moves such as grounders and apologies, which negatively affected the impact of the requests.

Ford (2003) refers to a line of research into linguistic variation in written e-communication that has possible implications for pragmatics research if it can be shown that different pragmatic strategies are required to successfully communicate in different electronic environments for different purposes. He cites Gaines (1999) who studied a large corpus of business and academic e-mails and concluded that the academic data contained evidence of new written genres with unique textual features. Lan (2000) is also cited by Ford (2003) for examining and comparing e-mail messages from two universities, one in Hong Kong and one in England. The research concluded that formal, semi-formal, and friendly e-mail messages from both NSs and NNSs of English all contain varying degrees of conversational style.

In the academic field relatively few studies have analyzed cross-cultural differences in e-communication. Chen (2001) analyzed and compared e-mail requests sent by Taiwanese and U.S. graduate students to their professors. She claims that the Taiwanese students used different request strategies than the U.S. students due to culturally different perceptions of power relations, familiarity, and imposition. This study helps shed some light on written e-communication strategies used by students from different cultural backgrounds.

Ford (2003) claims that results in the area of email pedagogy indicate that student language use strategies through e-mail communication vary considerably according to perceived formality of the e-mail task and depending on whether or not the task involves an actual audience with an exchange of dialog. Chen (2001) illuminates the possibility of divergent culture-specific pragmatic strategies employed by even advanced-level ESL students when making e-mail requests in the academic setting.

Kankaanranta (2001, cited in Ford 2003) reported that Finnish and Swedish colleagues of one European company showed significant differences across first language groups in their use of politeness strategies in English e-mail messages. She found that her subjects prefer imperative and interrogative request forms, which can negatively affect politeness and increase the threat to the hearer's face.

According to research done by Ford (2003) there are patterns in the development of e-communication pragmatics, strategies, and usage, corresponding to academic level and university education experience in an English setting. His research showed tendencies of his subject groups, which may imply general knowledge of the use of certain pragmatic

features to attain locutionary intents, and inform pedagogy about possible focuses of instruction in the area of e-communication.

Politeness Theory

Based on earlier work on 'face' by Goffman (1955) Politeness theory was presented by Brown and Levinson (1987). To answer the question of why the most direct and the clearest way of speaking is not always chosen in people's social interactions, Brown and Levinson proposed that face has two aspects: negative and positive. Negative face is defined as ''the want of every competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others'' (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 62) and ''want to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded'' (129). Positive face is defined as ''the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others'' (62) and ''perennial desire that his wants (or the actions/ acquisitions/ values resulting from them) should be thought of as desirable'' (101). In other words, people are motivated by these two desires or needs: to remain autonomous or independent and to be approved or connected to others.

Goffman's viewpoint about the speaker whom put himself in danger in the process of interaction, was the basis for the concept of face threatening act in Brown and Levinson's theory (1978). To maintain their own face, people save other people's positive or negative face in an interaction. On the other hand starting a conversation including suggestions, requests, or criticism is inevitable. Thus, According to politeness theory, any statement that threatens other people's face is considered a face threatening act. Based on Brown and Levinson's view, face threatening acts can appear in all of the interactions and to redress the effect of theses possible threats, "mitigation strategies" or politeness strategies are used. Duthler (2006), clarifies the notion through an example:

If a student need to meet a professor to discussed a concept out of office hour, based on politeness theory , the request threatens the professor's negative face because it endanger the professor's desire to be left alone. In the process of making a request students can choose among various actions. the student can simply make the request Baldly or On Record in the imperative and most direct way (e.g., "Meet with me!"); the student can express affinity by making the request using Positive Politeness ("Let's meet to discuss your ideas."); the student may minimize the imposition by making the request with Negative Politeness ("Would you be willing to meet with me for just a minute about this concept?"); the student can make an Off-Record request by hinting or using ambiguous language to minimize the threat ("Usually when I talk through a concept, I can understand it better"); or the student may not make the request at all.

Therefore, each person chooses a strategy based on the seriousness of the face threatening act. The speaker estimates the social situation and accordingly chooses a strategy. According to Brown and Levinson, some factors are important in this selection process: degree of imposition, power relation and social distance.

The degree of imposition of face threatening act defined as "a culturally and situationally defined ranking of impositions by the degree to which they are considered to interfere with an agent's wants of self-determination or of approval (negative and positive face wants)" , is evaluated by the speaker (p. 77). Some impositions are greater than others. Highly imposing acts like requests need more redress to soften their increased threat level. The elative power of the hearer over the speaker, defined as "the degree to which the hearer can impose his own plans and his own self-evaluation (face) at the expense of the speaker's plans and self-evaluation" is considered by the speaker (p. 77). In a given situation the speaker speaks differently with those who are socially equal to him and those with higher or lower status.

The speaker evaluates the social distance between the speaker and the hearer which is defined as the "symmetric social dimension of similarity/difference within which the speaker and hearer stand for the purpose of an act, and can refer to the frequency of interaction and the kinds of goods exchanged between the speaker and the hearer" (p. 77). In other words the speaker distinguishes a friend from a stranger who is at the same social status with the speaker but still is separated by social distance. For example in speaking with family, a speaker may choose a positive rather than a negative politeness.

Brown and Levinson's theory has received criticism mostly because of it pessimistic nature that sees all interactions as face threatening acts and fundamentally dangerous. According to Nwoye (1992:311, cited in koutlaki, 2002) "if the view of constant potential threat to the interlocutors' faces is always true, It could rob social interaction of all elements of pleasure". Ethnocentricity in Brown and Levinson's viewpoint is another factor that account for the criticisms mostly from non-western languages. In their work on Japanese politeness, Matsumoto (1988) and Ide (1989) cited in koutlaki, (2002), have criticized Brown and Levinson's work that cannot explain their data since it is based on "Western ideals of each individual's value and territorial rights". Similarly, researches done by Gu (1990) and Mao (1994) cited in koutlaki (2002) on Chinese, have shown that the Chinese face is different from Brown and Levinson's model and challenges its universality.

Regarding the concept of request which is the main issue in this research and the status of request in Iranian community in particular, two opposing views were discussed in the literature.

The request is considered as a highly imposing act by Brown and Levinson. On the contrary, a study by Koutlaki (2002) which describes some aspects of social organization in Iranian society and analyzes Persian face, express the idea that in Iranian community as well as some non-western cultures, requests are not considered as face threatening acts:

The concept of negative face threatening acts in Brown and Levinson's model does not seem right for Iranian culture. In the same situation, offering for instance, does not put the freedom of hearer in danger and threaten the negative face. In Brown and Levinson's description of face, the "individual's self-image" is taken into consideration while in a non-western language like Persian, the face is public based, in other words it is oriented towards "an ideal social identity". In such community the anti social behavior causes embarrassment both to the person and also more importantly, to the group to which he belongs and group interest is every member's priority. Therefore the exchange of services is part of everyday life in this society and request is not considered a face threatening act by the members of this group. Politeness is then considered as an expected behavior among the members of society and the commitment to that behavior is socially contracted. The analysis seems to be true but, the idea cannot be applicable to all sample community in Iranian society.

Regarding the power relation in language classroom the teacher's knowledge determines the dominant position of the teacher over the students. The teaching is monolingual and the relation between the teacher as the "all-knowing" authority and the students as the individuals who are doomed to listening is unidirectional. The teacher is responsible for delivering the knowledge and has all the unquestioned power in conversation: the authority of deciding the conversation topics, class activities or determining the next turn in talk. The students' autonomy is ignored through the unequal power relation in Iran's language classrooms. In such a formal setting, based on the politeness theory, since the requests threaten teacher' negative face, students are expected to express their requests in a polite, formal and indirect way through long sentences as an attempt to save the negative face.

Research Question

The question is that to what extent data from the email requests of an Iranian student community confirms politeness theory?

and what are the politeness strategies used by EFL students in their email requests?

III. METHODOLOGY

The participants of this study were twenty-one female Iranian learners of English as a foreign language. Their English proficiency could be classified at intermediate level and their age ranged from 17 to 26 years old. The study was carried out during the students' regular English classes in Farzaneh English Institute, where the researcher conducted the study during the summer 2009.

There was a session of email discussion for the students, leading to cultural and pragmatic awareness raising. Following their textbook, the students were assigned an activity to email a common request that they make, to the researcher who was also their teacher, in an appropriate and polite form. The topic and the number of the request were not specified. As seen in Appendix A, an email discussion handout was compiled by the researcher. The email discussion includes eight pragmatic and cultural questions to be worked on in groups in class.

Considering the completely abstract nature of the task, the participants of the study tried their best. With the exception of one or two, they tried to imagine the context in which they felt the need to email a professor. For many individuals, the imagining part can be very difficult.

Since in Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, there is not any precise measure of politeness, Holtgraves and Yang's (1992) measure of politeness for email requests is used in this study. A coding scheme for politeness considers three factors: Formality of address phrase, degree of imposition and directness.

I. Formality of address phrase: the more formal the address phrase, the more polite the request

The greeting at the beginning of the email request is called address phrase which could be formal, informal or even absent. The use of appropriate titles such as Dr., Mr., etc., makes a formal address phrase. Informal address phrase consists of use of nicknames, first names, or inappropriate titles such as Prof., teach, doc, etc.

II. Degree of imposition: Highly imposing requests via email will be rated higher on measures of politeness.

In the following parts the features of email request with high and low degree of imposition are shown in order for the data to be analyzed.

• A request with low degree of imposition:

1. Getting attention

2. (Supportive sentences)

3. Requesting

4. Thanking

• A request with high degree of imposition:

1. Getting attention

2. (Small talk)

3. *Supportive sentences*

4. Requesting with *modifications*

5. Thanking

6. (Closing a conversation)

The following table mentions various types of supportive sentences along with their examples. The next explanation is related to modifications used to mitigate the effect of email requests.

♦ Supportive Sentences:

Supportive Sentence	Example
Ask the potential availability of the hearer or ask for the hearer's permission to make the request.	Are you busy right now? Do you have a minute? I have a question to ask you. Could you do me a favor?
Give a reason or an explanation for your request.	I missed class yesterday. Could you give me a handout?
Promise a reward for the hearer if the request is carried out.	Could you give me a lift? I'll pay for the gas or take you out to dinner.
Reduce the imposition placed on the hearer by the speaker's request.	A: Maybe this weekend. B: This weekend works fine. Whatever works for you.

♦ Modifications: The following words and phrases soften the force of the request.

a) Clean your room *please.*

b) Clean your room *a little* before dinner *please.*

c) *Could you please* lend me your book?

d) *Do you think I could* borrow your book?

e) *Do you mind if* I borrowed your book?

f) *Would it be OK if* you help me?

g) *I was wondering if* you could write it for me.

Based on Holtgraves and Yang's (1992) coding scheme, different types of direct and indirect strategies are shown in the tables below immediately following by similar tables which exemplify the students' data.

III. Directness: the use of indirect strategies is more polite.

Direct Strategies	**Example**
On record	Close the window.
Giving an order with please	I would like to ask you to close the window please.
Showing speaker's desire	I want you to close the window.
Using Contractions and slangs	It's very kind of you if you can close the window.

Direct Strategies	**Example**
On record	So help me and I need your advice that pass it this course.
Giving an order with please	please give me some suggest for my problem.
Showing speaker's desire	so I like to request you some guidance to improve this skill, please.
Using Contractions and slangs	Because I'd like to be better speaker, introduce books about conversations, please

Indirect Strategies	**Example**
Suggesting	How about closing the window?
Asking about the hearer's ability	Can/could/will/would you close the window? Would you mind closing the window?
Off record	You have left the window open… It's cold in here.
No request	

Indirect Strategies	Example
Suggesting	What do you think about telling me more about final exam?
Asking about the hearer's ability	would you please e-mail me that paper if it is possible for you.
Off record	I like to speak english well and I like to improve my Knowledge so I'm so sad because I went to institute for two Years but I have lots of problem in grammar.
No request	

IV. Data Analysis

Students' email requests are analyzed in this part. The parts in *Italic* are the analysis embedded in the original emails. There was no change made in the spelling or punctuation of the requests. The researcher did however change the color and size of the font. Some of the emails had pictures and signs (roses and hearts) attached to them which were deleted. Students' names are not mentioned in the study as they wish. Since the content of some emails are much the same as others, ten out of twenty-one emails are shown with their analysis following by the teacher's answers to the requests. (See the rest of emails in appendix B.) The subjects of emails were analyzed and the most frequent subjects were entitled as "request" or "a/the request". The following table shows the distribution of each subject:

THE DISTRIBUTION OF EMAIL SUBJECTS

Request	I need/want sth.	Please	Hello	Others
55%	12%	9%	18%	6%

1

> Dear Mrs. Elmi getting attention
> How are you? Are you good? greeting
> Would you mind sending me names of different dictionaries? request and modification
> It is very kind of you. Thanking Because I am going to buy a proper one.(explanation) supporting sentences And if
> you don't have a good dictionary because you said, just tell me to buy you and it is really no problem for
> me.offer/(promise reward) supporting sentences
> Thank you so much. thanking

This request is short, to the point and easily understood. It is adequately polite, but not as polite as an obscure, drawn-out request. The Address phrase is formal and the request was constructed through the use of two supportive sentences and two thanking. The request is accompanied by modification and is Asking about the hearer's ability. Therefore, the indirectness and the high degree of imposition show its high level of politeness.

Teacher's answer:

Dear student,

Thank you for your email. I would suggest LONGMAN Dictionary of contemporary English. The digital version including pronunciation, lots of examples, grammar lessons, exercises and writing assignments would be a great help to you in particular.

Kind Regards

2

> Dear Miss. Elmi getting attention
> Hello! How do you do? greeting
> I hope have a good time.small talk I would love english language very much. (explanation) supporting
> sentence I like to speak english well and I like to improve my knowledge so I am so sad beacuse I went to
> institute for two years but I have lots of problem in grammar. (explanation) supporting sentence

It begins by attempting to establish a rapport with the recipient. However, its personal flavor is inappropriate for an academic request. On the other hand the use of supportive sentence and more importantly, the use of off record strategy demonstrate the degree of attempt to enhance the face with just giving a hint and not requesting. The address phrase is formal and the whole request is indirect and although there is not any thanking at the end, the degree of imposition is high. This request is considered a polite one.

Teacher's answer:

Dear student,

Thank you for your email. As your teacher I think that you do not practice what you are taught. Language learning is not all about interest. You need to work hard to get the accuracy you need.

Kind Regards

3

> Professor: getting attention
> I hope you are fine and every thing is ok with you. small talk
> Last week you assigned us to do a paper; unfortunately I've lost it. (explanation) supporting sentence Would you please e-mail me that
> paper if it is possible for you? Request andmodification Monday it will be my brother's birthday and I'll be very busy, because I should
> help my mom in doing house work. (explanation) supporting sentence so if it's available send it to me by Sunday night.request
> I want tell you something else. (asking permission) supporting sentence My family and I will be very happy if you can come for my
> brother's birthday.request/ (promise reward) supporting sentence My mother will call you to invite you herself, so come if please.
> Request+modification/ offer   Thanks a lot.thanking

This student has too many excuses (which she describes in great detail) and two requests strung together in an email. Although there is a direct request showing speaker's desire in the email, it is accompanied by two other indirect ones asking about the hearer's ability. The address phrase is formal and the level of imposition is high. Therefore although the politeness is not that extensively high, the email is considered a polite one.

Teacher's answer:

Dear student,

Thank you for your email. I am attaching your assignment. I send my regards to your family.

Kind Regards

4

> Hello professor. getting attention How do you do.greeting What do you think about telling me more about final
> exam.request+modification Can I request of you that fail lecture because it is very hard for me.
> request+modification And I have busy mind. (explanation) supporting sentence
> Because I'd like to be better speaker, introduce books about conversations, please. request+modification I very
> mistake the mean words and sometimes, I forget mean some words. (explanation) supporting sentence
> Please give some suggest for my problem. request+modification

This email shows the grammatical incompetency of this participant; however the grammatical errors are not our concern in this study. The first thing that comes to mind is the number of requests in this email: two direct request of giving an order with please and two indirect requests, one Asking about the hearer's ability and the other one suggesting. The request is accompanied by supportive sentences and the Address phrase is formal but there is not any thanking strategy at the end. With regard to the presence of direct requests, the request is not considered that polite on the scale of politeness, although the level of imposition is high.

Teacher's answer:

Dear student,

Thank you for your email. Your final exam has four parts of speaking (taken as oral exam), listening, reading and writing. The lecture would definitely be a part of final assessment. Focusing on your current text book would be the best. Regarding your difficulties in language learning, I prefer not to suggest any extra material.

Kind Regards

5

> Dear teacher getting attention
> Hello greeting
> First, please excuse me since my mail became so late, because of some problem in my mailbox. (forgiveness) supporting sentence
> Many of my classmates and I are poor in speaking skill. (explanation) supporting sentence so I like to request you some guidance to improve this skill, please. request+modification
> I would be glad if I can do anything for your favour regarding being a better student. (promiss) supporting sentence/offer
> Your presence in our class is in great request,and make me so happy. small talk

This participant assures her teacher of how highly she regards the status of teacher and feels that complimenting a teacher in this way is not only acceptable, but will help her to acquire what she has requested. The sentences are well constructed containing supportive sentences of asking for forgiveness, promising and explanation. Thanking seems to be quite appropriate and the request comes with modification, thus the degree of imposition is high. The address phrase is formal but the request is of direct one Showing speaker's desire. Altogether the whole request is regarded a polite one.

Teacher's answer:

Dear student,

Thank you for your email. To improve your speaking skill, you need to expand your knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Reinforcing the listening skill affect your speaking proficiency level as well. Reading questions and trying to answer them loudly would also be helpful.

Kind Regards

6

> Hi teacher, getting attention
> If you want me to improve give me some extra class and help me to improve. Please. request+modification

The imperative short style which reflects an order rather than a request would not be considered a polite request. No formal address phrase, no thanking and no supportive sentence cannot compensate for the presence of modification of *please* for the request. Therefore the imposition degree is low and the request is a direct one giving an order with please. The email request is not definitely regarded as a polite one.

Teacher's answer:

Dear student,

Thank you for your email. You do not need some extra class. You just have to study!

Kind Regards

7

> Hello Professor, getting attention
> I cannot pass it my linguistic course. (explanation) supporting sentence So I have problem in this course. (explanation) supporting sentence So help me and I need your advice that pass it this course.request I'm looking forward to any feedback you can provide.closing conversation

The sentences are short and clear. When speaking in Persian, this learner may be able to elaborate on issues more extensively. The reason of terseness may be the written form of the request, or it may be difficulties in trying to phrase her statements in English, in which case it goes back to the issue of essentiality of linguistic and grammatical competence as a basis for being polite. On the other hand, the request is of on record strategy without any modification and there is not any thanking feature. Therefore although address phrase is formal and the conversation is closed appropriately, the degree if imposition is low and also the request is a direct one. With regard to low degree of imposition and the directness of request, the politeness level is low.

Teacher's answer:

Dear student,

Thank you for your email. The one who can help you to pass the course is you. You have to believe in your capabilities and more importantly, you should study well and work hard to be successful.

Kind Regards

8

> hi mrs elmi getting attention
> i hope you have enjoyed your weekend.small talk i was absent last week because i was sick. (explanation)
> supporting sentence so would you please email me the lists of things that we should do ?request+
> modification thank you your helping.thanking

In this email request, the borderline of establishing a personal interest is the issue. Many learners do not attempt to establish a personal interest in fear of being rude. Others go overboard and seem inappropriate. The informal address phrase cannot fade the effect of small talk, proper thanking and the supportive sentence. The request is accompanied by a modification and therefore the degree of imposition is high. Besides, the indirect request of Asking about the hearer's ability, assures the politeness of the request.

Teacher's answer:

Dear student,

Thank you for your email. Last week we worked on the second part of grammar and finished the reading comprehension. You are supposed to do the exercises from page 56 to 60 and specifically, pay attention to your writing assignment.

Kind Regards

9

> hi dear elmi getting attention i have had an accident last week &i am sick now so i cannot be present in class (explanation)
> supporting sentence would you please record your voice in a mp3 player when you are teaching in the class? request+
> modification because i think it will be useful for me&i can listen it at home (explanation) supporting sentence
> p.s: if you want you can borrow my dictionary cause you don't have a good dictionary do you want it? (promise reward)
> supporting/offer

the first thing that comes to mind is that since this request is beyond the norm, it should be much more persuasive to be granted but the influential factors in determining politeness are degree of imposition and directness. The request comes with modification together with supportive sentences. The informal address and the absence of thanking are not extensively taken into consideration in determining the politeness level. The imposition degree is then high and the request is of indirect one Asking about the hearer's ability. The email request is considered polite.

Teacher's answer:

Dear student,

Thank you for your email and sorry for what happened to you. Regarding your request, I think you had better ask your friends and classmates to do so.

Kind Regards

10

> Miss Elmi, getting attention
> with best regards, small talk/greeting
> I have very difficulty in speaking English and I like to speak better. (explanation) supporting sentence Would you help
> me to speak it better? request+ modification and give me a guidance.request

"With best regards" after the getting attention phase is meaningless. That is not a polite beginning in an English email request. Referring back to participant's first language the transfer from Persian is obvious: The similar translation in the same part of letter. The request contains direct request of giving an order with please and indirect request of Asking about the hearer's ability. Although the address phrase is formal, there is no thanking and both criteria of imposition and directness are somewhere in the middle of measurement. Therefore the politeness level is in the middle of the scale.

Teacher's answer:

Dear student,

Thank you for your email. To improve your speaking skill, you need to expand your knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. Reinforcing the listening skill affect your speaking proficiency level as well. Reading questions and trying to answer them loudly would also be helpful.

Kind Regards

In the following table the formal address phrase with the distribution of 75% is the leading category.

THE FREQUENCY AND DISTRIBUTION OF ADDRESS PHRASES

Address phrase		
Formal	Informal	absent
75%	25%	0

THE FREQUENCY AND DISTRIBUTION OF REQUEST STRATEGIES

Request strategies								
Getting attention	Small talk	Supportive sentences				Request		Thanking	Closing a conversation
98%	30%	Explanation	Asking for Permission	Promise a reward	Asking for forgiveness	Request	Request with modification	34%	3%
		87%	11%	40%	3%	28%	83%		

Regarding the politeness strategies used in students' requests, "*getting attention*" with distribution of 98% is the most frequent one following by "*explanation*" for the request as a supportive sentence. On the other hand, participants in this study have rarely closed an email request (3% distribution).

Among the request strategies to be analyzed, "please" and "thank you" are not so culturally embedded in the Iranian culture as they are in western cultures, and the form of thanking isn't seen as explicitly as greetings; therefore, the rate of 72% usage of the politeness marker "please" is a large figure. This represents the transferability of pragmatic and politeness strategies.

In the Iranian culture saying greetings is considered very important. "Salam kardi?" "Did you say hello?" or "Did you say your greetings?" is asked repeatedly by parents trying to raise their children the proper way. One is to answer the greeting with a longer form of the greeting to be considered polite. The closest cultural equivalence to this in the west is 'please and thank you'. "What are the magic words?" parents remind their children to use these terms to be polite.

In Holtgraves and Yang's coding scheme, greeting is considered as equivalent to address phrase. Regarding the status of greeting in Iranian culture, in this study phrases such as "Hello. How are you?" are considered as a greeting. In some cases back-translation was needed to comprehend the greeting. In the last instance "with best regards" after "Miss Elmi" means nothing in English. It means "ba arze salam" in Farsi which is an expression used in that part of a letter on formal occasions. In the following table the frequency of three strategies of "please", "thanking" and "greeting" is demonstrated:

Please	Thanking	Greeting
72%	34%	85%

V. CONCLUSION

Politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) is supposed to be universally valid for all cultures and languages. In this study the data from Iranian EFL students estimates if the theory is applicable to the participants' email requests. Holtgravesand Yang's (1992) coding scheme is the used criterion to analyze students' emails, addreessed to their teacher in a polite form. Measure of politeness for email requests considers three factors: formality of address phrase, degree of imposition and directness. Data analysis shows that most of the students expressed their requests in a polite, formal and indirect way although the analysis could be regarded as subjective.

Although in this study steps have been taken in determining patterns of usage of politeness strategies in email requests made by Iranian learners of English, Comments and questions regarding cultural and pragmatic factors concerning requests and also language competency of the participants should be taken into consideration. Despite the fact that in this study the focus was on pragmatic and politeness features and the researcher tried to overlook all grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors and kept in mind that the requests are coming from a foreigner, grammatical and pragmatic features are integrated and cannot really be separable in email request analysis.

APPENDIX A: EMAIL DISCUSSION

1. Should we ask how our professor is doing or feeling?
2. What is the appropriate address form in such an email?
3. Should the email have a certain format?
4. What can you ask him/her to do and what can't you?
5. What tone should/shouldn't we take with our professor?
6. Should you set a deadline for him/her to finish our request?
7. Is there a difference in the words we choose when we email our professor?
8. Which pronoun is appropriate to use in our email: we or I?
9. Other group comments:

APPENDIX B: THE REST OF EMAIL REQUESTS

11
Dear miss elmi
How are you?

I want ask is it ok if I hand my writing paper a week later? I had some problem in this week. That's very kind of you. Thank you and see you in class.

12

Hello Miss Elmi. I was sick last week and I dont feel very good this week so I can not come to class. I dont want miss some marks so i ask if i can do extra job to get the mark. Would you mind tell me what should i do? Tnx for your kindness.

13

dear teacher elmi

i am weak in conversation and i need help to improve my conversation and i should think when i want to say in english please give me guidance to better english conversation thank you very much

14

Dear Mrs. Elmi

I hope you are ok and every thing is good. My mother is a english teacher too but I can not work with her because I don't feel her a teacher and so I canot improv. would you please tell me guidance? I try to study every day but I fail.

15

Hello teacher how are you? Would you mind lend me your dictionary please? I need a dictionary but I can not buy it now. If you have a dvd dictionaty I can use it too. You are very kind.

16

Dear teacher Elmi

I am going to take a trip with my family next weak and I wonder if you can give me information about what are you going to teach when I am absent.

Thank you

17

Teacher elmi I have problem in talk and understand and I study at home but I am weak and have lot of problem, is it possible for you help me? please.

18

Daer teacher, how are you?

Thank you for all you do in our class. I think about the subject of final lecture and I am doubtful to select the topic. I wonder if you can provide me with some suggestions.

Thank you and have a good weekend.

19

Please I want to know how is final exam? How you measure? Can you tell me I can pass or fail?

20

Hello and good day

I wonder if you can inform me of any institute that is uniqe for ielts exam. I don't care about the fee and the place but I am going to study abroad and I need ielts degree to apply. I am good in speaking and listening but I need more practice. please informe me if you can.

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The Effect of Different Tasks on L2 Learners' Acquisition of Grammar

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Abstract—In order to address the issue of noticing accompanying different tasks in grammar acquisition, this study investigated the effect of three different tasks in task-based grammar instruction on Iranian adult intermediate EFL learners' intake and acquisition of negative adverbs. Using 3 intact classes totaling 74 students who were at the same level of proficiency, 3groups were formed: dictation group (DG, n=24), individual reconstruction group (IRG, n=22), and collaborative reconstruction group (CRG, n=28). Following a pretest, immediate posttest and delayed post test design; the three groups received explicit instruction accompanying these different tasks related to negative adverb. The analysis of the participants' performance on grammatically judgment test (GJT) demonstrated that the three groups gained grammatical acquisition over time in some immediate post tests, and in nearly all the delayed post tests. DG outperformed the other two groups, and they benefited more from this task. As a result, the efficacy of tasks in establishing new grammatical knowledge was proved. The tasks effectiveness which was asked through an interview from some of the participants, chosen randomly from each group, was in line with the above mentioned results. Further, the type of tasks did affect the degree of the utility of them in developing grammar knowledge and can contribute to the task-based grammar instruction. Hopefully, the findings of this research study could attract EFL and ESL teachers' attention to utilize the same tasks type in the classroom through class activities and could provide EFL and ESL students with an effective way of grammar intake and acquisition.

Index Terms—noticing, acquisition, intake, tasks, explicit instruction

I. INTRODUCTION

Grammar according to Rutheford (1987) is "a necessary component of any language teaching program" (p.9), and thus plays an important role in language teaching. With the advent of communicative methodology in the 1970s, the role of grammar instruction in second language was found out to be not only unhelpful but also detrimental. However, the need of formal instruction for learners to master the high level of accuracy has been shown in recent studies. This has led to a shift in grammar teaching. Accordingly, the role of grammar teaching in second language acquisition has been the focus of attention of so many current studies. Task-based approach is an approach which can be used to teach grammar in communicative methodology. Task-based approach to grammar instruction involves the use of tasks making the learners engaged in meaningful interaction and negotiation which result in focusing on integrating a task. Using of tasks can truly contribute the learners to be prepared for real-life communications in order to acquire implicit knowledge. "It is clear to me that if learners are to develop the competence they need to use a language easily and effectively in the kinds of situations they meet *outside* the classroom they need to experience how language is used as a tool for communicating *inside* it" (Ellis, 2003, p. ix).

The focus of this piece of research is on the effects of the different tasks, *instructions* and the extent to which they lead learners to language form. Different instructions can force learners to focus their attention to, or make use of, specified linguistic knowledge.

Such tasks are named as "structure trapping" which means that they help learners to pay attention the gap in their own knowledge by employing them to generate some specific linguistic aspects. Loschky & Bley-Vroman (1993) suggest that "there are varying degrees to which the use of a certain structure is needed for task completion". According to Reinders (2008)

'Task-naturalness' refers to the extent to which a grammatical structure may arise naturally during task completion. "Task-utility" refers to the situation where use of a particular structure facilitates task completion, but where it is not essential. "Task essentialness" refers to the situation where use of a particular structure is needed to complete the task. The authors point out that task essentialness is difficult to achieve. (p.3)

They also asserted that in order to gain the better results, greater amount of learning and the clear feedback is needed for each of these tasks. They pointed out that "there is no guarantee that a task in which a structure naturally occurs will, by itself, trigger the initial acquisition of that structure, even if the structure is modelled, primed, or otherwise 'taught' in the task" (p. 131) and the utility of this type of task is to automatizing the existing knowledge, rather than learning the new ones. According to Reinder (2008), Willis (1996) argues "

The role of the teacher is not to push learners towards using particular structures but to help them notice what language is required to do a particular task. One way to do this is by including in the task specific instructions that draw attention to aspects of the language in the input. Although there has been a range of studies investigating the relative effects of instructions that are more explicit compared with those that are more implicit, this has not been the case for studies into the effects of tasks (which is the subject of the present study).

The study reports on the effects of three types of tasks, on participants' acquisition and intake of English grammatical structure of negative adverbs. However, more research is necessary to see if there is any difference between the different tasks and the explicit instruction accompanying them to draw learners' attention in acquiring grammar structures. Furthermore, the feelings and attitudes that learners have towards the use of tasks and their effectiveness in general and the type of the tasks involved, in particular, have not been the focus of enough number of research studies.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of the current study is to find the immediate and delayed effects of reading based task on vocabulary acquisition as follows:

1. Does the use of D, IR and CR tasks have any effect on the intake of negative adverbs from pre-test to immediate post test?

2. Which task has a more facilitative effect on the intake of negative adverbs?

3. Does the use of each task have any effect on the acquisition of grammatical item from the immediate to the delayed post test?

4. Is there any difference among the experimental tasks in delayed post test?

5. What is the participants' attitude towards the use of the target tasks for grammar teaching?

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

To accomplish the objectives of this study, 100 Iranian undergraduate EFL students (females and males) from Azad University of Najaf Abad were given a version of an OPT, (Edward, 2007). From among these learners, 74 learners, whose scores were within one SD above and below the mean (Mean=27.47, SD=4.24) were chosen as learners of similar language proficiency. These learners were second year English students, who were attending a *grammar course 2* at the time of the study. Hence we had three intact grammar classes. Each class was randomly assigned to one of the tasks used in the study.

B. Instruments

The instruments in this study were a version of OPT (Edwards, 2007), a grammatical judgment test (GJT), as pretest, immediate and a delayed posttest, audio recording short passages, three different tasks (dictation, individual reconstruction and collaborative reconstruction), and an interview.

C. Procedures

The present study was conducted in the spring of 2011 in three grammar classes at Najafabad Azad University. The researcher granted permission from the English department and also the teachers for taking their class and their time. The participants were made aware that results were completely confidential and would not influence their final course scores in any way. The treatment phase of the study continued over 5 weeks of the whole term. 30 minutes of each class time were allocated to the treatment. The general procedure was as follows.

In the first session (week one) the participants received the OPT (Edward 2007), consisting of 50 grammatical multiple choice questions, to screen those who could participate in this study. That is, based on the participants' scores on the OPT test; the decision was made about the homogeneity of the subjects. In other words, only students whose scores on the OPT test were one standard deviation (+1SD) above and one standard deviation (-1SD) below the mean were selected to take part in this study.

In the same session, all participants completed the pretest consisting of a GJT developed by the researcher to determine their existing knowledge of the target structure. The same test was used as the posttest and finally, as the delayed posttest, but items were presented in a different order. From among different grammatical structures, only one grammatical structure, due to the shortage of time, i.e. negative adverb, was chosen. The participants had almost no familiarity with the aimed grammar structure, namely, negative adverbs. During this treatment period the researcher, who was also the instructor of all the three groups, taught the target grammatical structure explicitly through focused tasks (DG, IRG and CRG) as mentioned in section 3.4.4 before in all the three groups.

After the pretest, groups were randomly assigned to one of three treatment types (DG, IRG, or CRG) with explicit instructions. The first treatment took place one week after the pretest and treatments two and three in one-week intervals after that. The final treatment was followed by an immediate posttest and two weeks later by a delayed posttest. The weekly intervals were chosen for practical reasons; two weeks were considered the minimum between test administrations to avoid a practice effect.

The researcher used four short passages during each administration containing three target items each, four per week for a period of three weeks, i.e. a total of 36 target items.

All texts were grammatically correct and thus participants were provided with positive evidence of the target structures only. This applies to all three treatment types. The estimated time for each task was 20 minutes, and the sheets gathered after that time and in all groups participants noticed the target structure by the explicit instruction which was given to them by the researcher in L1 and in L2. The only difference in this study was, about the nature of each task which administered randomly among groups.

Group 1 (DT)

One week later after the pretest, each different task was given to the participants in one of the experimental classes. By having permition from the teacher of the class of *Grammar 2*, task Dictation was given to this group (group 1). Although the instructions of the task were on top of the sheets in English, the participants were instructed by the researcher in L1 and L2. The researcher also drew the participants' attention on the target structure and gave an example of it by giving the explicit instructions.

In the DT participants were asked to listen to a passage of about 60-70 words on a computer, during which they were not allowed to take notes. Next, they heard the passage again but this time part by part. Each part contained no more than 10 words but mostly around seven or eight. Next, they were asked to write in the provided sheet, what they had heard. The treatment thus involved immediate recall.

Group 2 (IRT)

In the IRT participants were asked to listen to the passage, as described before, twice and then to reconstruct it. This task thus involved delayed recall of what was heard. This time participants were allowed to take notes. This time participants received explicit instruction in L1 and L2 from the researcher on the sheets in order to notice to the target structure.

Group 3 (CRT)

This task was similar to the IRT except that two participants were paired and were asked to reconstruct the text together. It also involved delayed recall. These treatments were administered three weeks. After the third week, and after gathering the worksheets, the immediate posttest was administered to the participants in each group. They were instructed in L1 and L2 on how to do the GJT by the researcher. In the posttest participants were shown a total 50 sentences, half in grammatical and the other half in ungrammatical form. Of these 50 sentences, 20 were target sentences and 30 distractors. The test was designed to assess the participants' intake. The students were asked to decide whether each sentence was correct or incorrect, while participants completed the test, the researcher was present to give clarification where needed.

Two weeks later the same GJT test was administered to the participants as delayed posttest. The estimated time four each administration of posttest was 25 minutes and the sheets were collected after that time in each administration of posttests. As mention before, to ensure the validity and reliability of the tests, they were piloted with another group before administering them to the experimental group.

After gathering the delayed posttest, a few participants from each class were selected randomly to have an interview. They were asked to assert their ideas in L1 about the task they had done and how each task helped them learn the meaning of the target words. No specific time was allotted. But it took about 10 minutes for each interviewee to interview and for the researcher to write.

IV. RESULTS

In order to determine whether there were any overall differences among the experimental groups in the pretest, their descriptive statistics were calculated. Table 1 displays the results.

The table shows that the highest and the lowest mean scores of the immediate post test belong to DT and IRT groups respectively. The results of one way ANOVA showed level of significance, regarding the knowledge of target structure, is bigger than .05. $F (3.77) = .945$, $p = .394 > .05$, Therefore, there is no significant difference among the participants' performances in the three groups before the treatment. Groups are equal regarding their knowledge of the grammatical structure in focus.

In order to determine whether there were any overall differences among the experimental groups in the immediate posttest, their descriptive statistics were calculated. Table 2 displays the results.

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF IMMEDIATE POST TEST SCORES

Descriptives

test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
dictation	24	18.0000	4.76400	.97245	15.9883	20.0117	8.00	27.00
individual reconstructed task	22	12.3636	4.31548	.92006	10.4503	14.2770	6.00	24.00
paird reconstructed task	28	15.4286	5.24531	.99127	13.3947	17.4625	8.00	28.00
Total	74	15.3514	5.26147	.61163	14.1324	16.5703	6.00	28.00

The table shows that the highest and the lowest mean scores of the immediate post test belong to DG and IRG groups respectively. The results of one way ANOVA showed a significance difference among groups, F (3.77) = 7.823, p =.001<.05, and the results of the post hoc test comparisons indicated that the mean score for DG (M=18.00, SD=4.76) was significantly different from IRG (M= 12.36, SD=4.31). CRG (M=15.42, SD= 5.24) did not differ significantly from either group 1 or 2.

Table 3 shows the results of the descriptive statistics of the delayed post test scores.

TABLE 3
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF DELAYED POST TEST SCORES

Descriptives

delayed test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
dictation	23	19.5652	4.52092	.94268	17.6102	21.5202	10.00	26.00
individual reconstructed task	22	19.5000	3.37709	.72000	18.0027	20.9973	15.00	27.00
paird reconstructed task	25	19.0400	3.75810	.75162	17.4887	20.5913	13.00	28.00
Total	70	19.3571	3.86750	.46225	18.4350	20.2793	10.00	28.00

Table 3 shows that DG group scored the highest in the delayed posttest while CRG scored the lowest. This means that out of the three tasks, DT was the most effective in facilitating acquisition and its effectiveness was considerably superior to tasks IRT and CRT. The results of one-way ANOVA showed that the difference among groups was not significant, F (3, 77) = .129, p =.879. The results of the post hoc test confirmed that DG significantly showed better acquisition than IRG and CRG (p =.000<.05).

In order to compare the performance of participants on the pretest and immediate posttests a series of t-tests were run. The purpose was to see if all tasks helped learners to intake of the target words in their short memory. The results showed a significant difference between the mean scores of pretest and immediate tests in DG, t (22) = 4.720. It means that DT led to intake of negative adverbs.

Furthermore In order to compare the performance of participants on the immediate and delayed posttests again a series of t-tests were run. The purpose was to see if all tasks helped learners to acquire of the target structure in their long term memory over two weeks. The results showed a significant difference between the mean scores of immediate and delayed tests in DG, IRG, and CRG tasks, t (22) = 2.29, p =.032, t (21) = 6.870, p =.000 and t (24) = 4.35, p =.000 accordingly. It means that all three tasks led to the acquisition of negative adverbs over two weeks.

All in all the results reveal that DT was more effective than the other tasks for both intake and acquisition. However, all tasks led to significant acquisition from the immediate to the delayed posttests.

Next the interview questions were analyzed qualitatively. The questions asked interviewees to evaluate the task, to express their intention in having the same tasks in their regular classes for grammar learning, and to talk about features of the class in general.

The Results of the Analysis of Interview Questions

The participants who took part in the DT were more comfortable in writing meaningful sentences with the negative adverbs. They noticed the target structure more than the other parts. Some of them also mentioned that the negative adverbs were more salient and noticeable for them. Then, at least they declared that tasks rather than traditional method of their class were more interesting and practical for them. They believed that listening, noticing and writing the passage by their own simultaneously, seemed to be more effective than just doing meaningless exercises out of contexts. Finally they showed their interest in having the same tasks in their class as an activity to enhance their grammar learning by their own teacher. IRG had almost the same opinions about their own tasks.

Learners in IRG stated that although the task seemed difficult at first, it was conductive enough to grammar acquisition and retention. Another positive point mentioned by them was the using listening while doing the task. But processing of the whole task at the same time seemed to be difficult for them since they were not enough familiar to get the whole meaning from the task and reconstruct it. Listening, memorizing noticing the new structure and reconstruct it

were difficult. Learners in IRG agreed to have the same tasks as their own class activity on and off to acquire more grammar in their classes. Finally, they have no problem with the time of administration.

CRG, found their task more interesting than other groups because group work made them motivated for completing the task. They tried to reconstruct the sentences together so they learn more. It was so impressive for them. They believed that the task was time-consuming.

Generally, all the groups had positive attitudes towards using tasks in their regular classes. They found it more beneficial to integrate this method with their current methods. They believed that, these activities teach them to take more responsibility for their own learning. They should act as active participants not as passive recipients, in order for them to carry out the tasks. Here the students are given opportunities to express their own ideas and opinions, and in so doing they have a choice not only about what to say, but also how to say it.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The main concern in the first and second research questions was to examine whether noticing accompanying these three different tasks assisted significantly the intake of the targeted grammatical structure. Therefore, analysis was conducted to discover the loci of the differences. As the results are shown, the three groups' mean scores on the post test are higher than those on the pretest. Moreover, the posttests mean score of the DG is higher than those of the two other groups. Hence, it can be concluded that the DG outperformed the other two groups on the post test. As a result, explicit instruction accompanying dictation task was found to be significantly effective in improving learners' grammatical acquisition of the aimed target structure. In other words, this task had a significant effect on the learning of negative adverbs.

The third research question asked whether any of the presented tasks, can lead to better grammar acquisition. This question can be answered by examining the results of the delayed post test. This test was administered to assess acquisition of the target structure. As mentioned before in chapter 4, it was expected that the participants in the IRG perform worst on acquisition, and to be significantly outperformed by the CRG. Surprisingly, the descriptive results showed it to have done considerably better than CR task and this difference reached significance for negative adverbs.

The results of the study regarding the fourth research question indicate that dictation task is significantly better than the other two tasks, and is more conductive in grammar acquisition; however, all the three tasks had beneficial effect on acquisition of the target structure.

The fifth question asked whether learners' beliefs about the task effectiveness are in line with the statistical results of this study. The answer to this question is in the results of an interview done with some of the participants of the study. Although all three tasks indicate their effectiveness in grammar acquisition, the participants' attitudes to the questions shows that DT is more effective than the other two tasks.

To summarize, based on the above discussions, the following findings emerge from the present study:

1. The DT resulted in the greatest intake, the IR task in the smallest from the pretest to immediate test

2. The different tasks employed in this study were in many cases able to affect acquisition of the target structures.

3. In most cases the three task types did differentially affect acquisition. In summary then, tasks that make great attentional demands, require processing that is cognitively demanding, and that are explicit in nature, are the most likely to affect learning.

4. The three tasks differentially affected intake and acquisition. The DT led to high intake and high acquisition than the more demanding IR task that led to low intake but greater acquisition. The CR task was the most consistent for both intake and acquisition of the three.

5. As the result of the interview showed all the participants in three groups found using tasks an efficient way of learning new structure. They all agreed to have the same tasks as an extra activity in their classes to help them better grammar acquisition.

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A Comparative Study of the Deep Structure of Culture Reflected in English and Chinese Social Proverbs

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Abstract—**Social proverbs contain life philosophies and experience as well as moral standards; aspects of social life are reflected in the mirror of social proverbs. Social proverbs are of both language and culture. Because of their abundant cultural information, social proverbs have been studied from the point of culture in many researches. Although many researches have been done to reveal the cultural similarities and differences between English and Chinese proverbs, they hardly focus on the deep structure of culture reflected or refracted in them. A comparative study on English and Chinese social proverbs, by illustrating their connection with the deep structures, is provided. The differences between the deep structures of Western and Chinese culture can be therefore revealed.**

Index Terms—**The deep structure of culture, Chinese and English social proverbs**

I. INTRODUCTION

Along with the development of English language education and researches in China, English-Chinese comparison has become a hot spot in linguistic studies. As cultural-bound expressions, idiomatic expressions turned into a popular study object of the comparative studies. However, comparing with other idiomatic expressions especially idioms, proverbs are to some extent neglected. The majority of limited amounts of monographs deal with structural and rhetorical features of English and Chinese proverbs, their teaching and translation, as well as the cultural information contained in them. Although many researches have been done to reveal the cultural similarities and differences between English and Chinese proverbs, they hardly focus on the deep structure of culture reflected or refracted in them.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Definitions of the Proverb

1. Definitions of the English Proverb

As a master proverb researcher, Archer Taylor used an entire book—his famous classic study *Proverbs*—to define the proverb, and he finally reached a conclusion proverbial itself:

The definition of a proverb is too difficult to repay the undertaking…. An incommunicable quality tells us this sentence is proverbial and that one is not. Hence no definition will enable us to identify positively a sentence as proverbial…Let us be content with recognition that a proverb is a saying current among the folk.

(qtd. in Mieder, 1989, p. 14)

After conducting a survey by requiring various people of the 1980's living in an industrial and progressive society to write down their definitions of the proverb and studying the frequencies of certain words, Mieder (1989) found that from four to twenty times in the collected definitions appeared the following words: a phrase, saying, truths, morals, experience, lessons, advice concerning life and which has been handed from generation to generation and then he formulated a simple definition of the proverb that "a proverb is a short sentence of wisdom"(p. 15).

Major authoritative English dictionaries all provide definitions of the proverb, which to some extent vary from each other but also share some similarities. According to *Webster's Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* (1979), a proverb is a short saying in common use expressing a well-known truth or common fact ascertained by experience or observation; a maxim; an adage. The definition in *Longman Modern English Dictionary* (1976) gives more details on the content of the proverb, a proverb is a brief familiar maxim of folk wisdom, usually compressed in form, often involving bold image and frequently a jingle that catches the memory.

2. Definitions of the Chinese Proverb

As the most famed and influential linguistic work of ancient China, *Shuowen* is regarded as a general reference on Chinese linguistic study. In his masterpiece, Xu Shen of Han Dynasty gives a brief definition for the proverb: "谚，传言也". While the so-called "传言", in Duan Yucai's note, are "古语也，凡经传所称之谚，无非前代故训 (maxims handed down from ancestors) …".

Wen Duanzheng (1985) points out in *Proverbs* that "谚语在古代典籍常常单称为'谚'或'语'…古人所说的谚语，是

指在群众中广泛流传并世代口耳相传的通俗而简练的语言形式 (proverbs in ancient Chinese classics refer to common and pithy language uses popular in the general public and transmitted throughout generations)." (p. 1-4) Also in this book, Wen classifies proverb definitions into two categories: In the broad sense, proverbs are taken as folk adages, which means "流传在人民群众口头上的一切俚修俗语 (all kinds of folk adages used among common people in their daily talks)" (ibid, p. 4). In the narrow sense, "谚语是以传授知识为目的的俗语 (proverbs are folk adages conveying knowledge)" (ibid).

Chinese authoritative dictionaries also give definitions for the proverb. According to *Word-Ocean Dictionary* (1979), the proverb is defined as follows: proverbs are short and popular sayings pregnant with profound meanings among the masses, most of which reflect the experience of people's life or their struggles. *Modern Chinese Dictionary* (1992) defines the proverb as set phrases popular among the masses using simple words to reflect profound wisdom.

B. English and Chinese Proverbs as the Same Linguistic Phenomenon

Scholars, either abroad or home, work to narrow down the definition of the proverb. The proverb has pushed back its boundary comparing with that in the ancient times. Although many hopes of giving a satisfactory definition of the proverb have been given up, a proverb can still be distinguished by pointing out some of its crucial features. Such an attempt will be based on a close examination of English and Chinese proverbs and a summarization of definitions and sources presented in the preceding parts.

Both English and Chinese proverbs are idiomatic statements on sentence level. "Idiomatic" here refers to the features of semantic unity and structural stability. A proverb functions as an undividable unit and its meaning is not a mere addition of literal meanings of its component words. Applying figurative or metaphor expressions, proverbs carry profound cultural and historical implication. "大鱼吃小鱼，小鱼吃虾米", using a metaphor of food chain in the natural world, refracts the hierarchy and power relationship in human society. The form of proverbs is fixed and only slight modification can be tolerated. For instance, the proverb "割鸡焉用牛刀", with its traceable origin in *Analects of Confucius*, has undertaken little formal change through thousands of years; only some minor alterations in such characters as "割" can be accepted. A small change "Money makes the mare to go" from its original form "money makes the mare go" may make this proverb odd.

Both English and Chinese proverbs contain profound wisdom. Knowledge ranging from general truths rooted in experience to life philosophy with deep depth features the proverb. For thousands of years, they serve as guidelines to instruct and inspire people. From proverbs such as "早霞有雨晚霞晴" and "nurture is above nature", people get advice or counsel for their everyday life. Social morality is also reflected in proverbs. Individualism and collectivism held respectively by Western and Chinese cultures are obvious in such proverbs as "pull yourself up by your own boot straps" and "众人拾柴火焰高".

English and Chinese are similar in their respective sources. Most of English and Chinese proverbs are of folk origin and enjoy wild popularity among the general public; containing folk wisdom and general truths, they are crystallizations of human wisdom and carriers of culture. In *Summary of English Proverbs*, Zeng Zili (1983) holds that most English proverbs are from the colloquial speech of common people. Wang Dechun et al. (2003) also argue that common people are creators and users of proverbs; only with their acceptance and widespread popularization can an expression become a proverb. English and Chinese proverbs cover almost every aspect of social life; they reflect collective wisdom of the masses. People from all walks of life contribute to the creation, polishing and dissemination of proverbs. Although many proverbs, English and Chinese alike, come from written materials such as religious and literary classics, they acquire their essence as being proverbial by winning the acceptance of common people and getting frequently used in their daily talks. What is more, the true authors of the proverbs with roots from classic works are in doubt; those classics may only preserve, polish and popularize the proverbs, which might have existed and spread by mouths for long time.

The features shared between English and Chinese proverbs which are listed above lay the foundation for this comparative study. Either the English proverb or its Chinese counterpart, as their essential features are all in common, can be to great extent regarded as the same linguistic and cultural phenomena.

C. Typologies of Proverbs

The typologies of proverbs, both Chinese and English, like definitions of the proverb, vary from different angles. This paper aims to study proverbs mainly from cultural perspective, so the classification by Wen Duanzheng is adopted. Wen (2005) classifies proverbs into two major categories: Natural proverbs contain experience of production and relevant knowledge about production, e.g. "犁地要深，耙地要平". Social proverbs are about social life of people. They can be further categorized into proverbs reflecting philosophical thoughts, e.g. "无风不起浪", proverbs preserving social experience, e.g. "言多必失", proverbs serving to strengthen morality, e.g. "宁伸扶人手，莫开陷人口". (ibid, p. 36-49)

III. SOCIAL PROVERBS REFLECTING OR REFRACTING THE DEEP STRUCTURE OF CULTURE

Culture in the broad sense, called Culture with a capital "C", is an all-embracing concept; it can refer to both spiritual and material things created by human beings. It 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" (D. G. Bates & F. Plog, 1990, p. 28).

According to Samovar et al. (2000), the deep structure of culture refers to such issues as the relation between God and man, the individual and the group, among families, as well as differing views of the relative importance of liberty and authority, equality and hierarchy, rights and responsibilities. Those issues together construct the deep structure of culture, which endures for centuries and helps define the certain culture. The deep structure is the core of culture; it is its most essential and stable part.

In the deep structure can each culture find the source for its unique way to view the world. "World view is a culture's orientation toward God, humanity…and other philosophical issues that influence how its members perceive their world." (ibid, p. 88) It deals the questions about the meaning of life and man's existence. The world view originates in the deep structure of culture and lies at the heart of the cultural system. It can influence all aspects of perception. (ibid) World views spread through various channels. Religion is considered by westerners as the predominant way to transmit the world view due to the prevailing religious culture in the West; while in China, the world view take the form of life philosophy, especially those philosophical thoughts from Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism.

As the central cultural element, the world view consequently affects cultural belief and value systems. Belief systems are people's beliefs to truth; they tell people how the world operates. (ibid, p. 58) Based on belief systems, value systems can be formed. A value can be defined as "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to another." (Rokeach, 1973, p. 5) A value system is "a learned organization of rules for making choices and for resolving conflicts." (ibid, p. 161) It is a set of criteria to judge behaviour, which represents people's requirements, expectation, and prohibition. Any culture, although with different individual beliefs and values, contains cultural ones permeating the entire milieu. Belief and value systems, together with other patterns including norms, attitudes, etc. of a culture influence its members' perception of reality and finally shape their behaviour—their reaction to the world.

According to Wen (2005), social proverbs mainly comprise those of life philosophy, morality, as well as social experience. World views as well as belief and value systems closely originated from the deep structure of culture can be generally found in social proverbs.

The world view on such issues as God and men, life and death, individual and group, parents and children, equality and hierarchy etc. are straight reflected or indirectly refracted in social proverbs, for example:

God is above all.

生死有命，富贵在天。

Better bend than break.

好死不如赖活着。

If you want a thing well done, do it yourself.

众人拾柴火焰高。

The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children.

父母之命，媒妁之言。

Jack is as good as his master.

小鬼斗不过阎罗王。

Originated from the world view, cultural belief and value systems also present themselves in social proverbs to exert their influence on the masses:

God is where he was.

离地三尺有神灵。

Heaven's vengeance is slow but sure.

不是不报时候未到。

Do well and have well.

善有善报，恶有恶报。

多行不义必自毙。

Every one must carry his own cross.

The philosophies or morality contained in social proverbs depending on which men conduct and the society operates lie at the heart of social life; they reveal the deep structure of culture. Comparing with other cultural phenomena, due to their close link with world views as well as cultural beliefs and values, the reflections or refraction in social proverbs are much more obvious.

IV. A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND CHINESE SOCIAL PROVERBS

Social proverbs reflect or refract the deep structure of culture, so cultures with different deep structures must have sets of proverbs showing distinctive cultural orientations. The Western and Chinese cultures are notably different. By comparing English and Chinese social proverbs, the dissimilarities of the deep structures between the West and China can be disclosed.

The typology of orientation by Kluckhohns and Strodtbeck for analyzing cultural patterns is applied to the study into

English and Chinese social proverbs. Kluckhohns and Strodtbeck (1960) make this typology on the basis of the conclusion that the following five conceptions are the paramount concerns of most cultures: the relation between humankind and nature; the character of human nature; the relationship among people; the orientation toward activity; the value placed on time. The human and nature, human relationship, and time orientations dominant in Western and Chinese cultures, which possess obvious distinct features, will be revealed by studying English and Chinese social proverbs. Hofstede's (1991) value dimensions of individualism-collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and masculinity and femininity are also used partially in the research.

A.   Social Proverbs about the Relationship of Humankind to Nature

The relation of humankind to nature is an essential problem in every culture. Behind the differences of desire, attitudes, and behaviour among different cultures always hide sharply distinct views towards nature.

1. English Social Proverbs about Humankind's Mastery over Nature

Western culture takes a mechanistic world view towards nature. (Samovar et al., 2000) Westerners consider nature as a physical system operating according to scientific laws, i.e. a mechanism; as a mechanism, nature can be understood, worked on, or even redesigned. To some extent, this mechanic view of nature owes to the Biblical tradition in the West. In Christianity, God creates everything; nature, no matter environment or animal and plant species, is no more than a creature and enjoys no superiority. On the contrary, man are created in the image of God and as the master over other creatures. Human and nature, in Christian tradition dominant in Western culture, do not form an integrated whole but are separated. There is a line drawn clearly between humankind and nature; man is endowed by God with a role superior to nature. Westerners separate themselves from nature and seek to conquer nature. English proverbs "human is the soul of the universe" and "human is the measure of everything" make clear that the human's unique and irreplaceable role over nature and other creatures. The proverb "nature is conquered by obeying her" is another example to illustrate the Western view to nature. From its literal meaning, this proverb warns people to abide by nature, but the verbs "conquer" and "obey" uncover the belief hidden deeply behind of taking nature as an opposite of man. It can be taken as a refraction of the orientation of humankind's mastery over nature.

Influenced by the orientation of humankind's superiority to nature and clinging to the belief in human rationality, westerners suppose that fate can be mastered and think highly of active behaviour. The proverb "God helps those who help themselves" literally put emphasis on the highest role of God as all mighty, but essentially suggests people act actively in their lifetime and not to yield to the destiny. "Every man is the architect of his own fortune" frankly let out the belief that man can shape their life by themselves.

Taken as a mechanism, nature actually becomes an object of humankind's observation and research. This partially contributes to the formation of westerners' dualistic view towards the world. "The West often perceives the world as being composed of separate pieces to be manipulated and examined." (ibid) Therefore, the thought pattern of westerners is analytic and the difference is focused in Western culture. From the proverb "where nothing is, nothing can be had", a dualistic view of "is" or "not-is" is shown obviously.

2. Chinese Social Proverbs about Humankind in Harmony with Nature

The predominant value in Chinese culture is the harmony of humankind with nature, which is called "天人合一" in Chinese. Chinese civilization is based on agriculture; man and nature together form an integrated system. Chinese proverb "百业农为本，民以食为天" reflects the importance of agriculture to Chinese culture. Chinese people mainly depend on earth to get food; they have to obey laws of nature to survive.

Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism profoundly affect the deep structure of Chinese culture. Taoism is against the aggressive behaviour to nature and promotes the returning of humankind to nature. Buddhism prevents people from killing. "返璞归真" and "放下屠刀，立地成佛" respectively reflect Taoist and Buddhist views on life.

Taoism naturalizes man, while Confucianism personifies nature; they both regard nature and man as an interrelated and inseparable entirety. The word "天(sky)" is used in Chinese to refer to nature; it can also mean the way in which nature and society operates or even some concept or existence governs the world. In proverbs such as "天命不可违" and "天无绝人之路", "天" can be interpreted from the perspectives of both nature and society. Chinese culture transforms the awe of nature into the obedience to social morality. Nature and human society, therefore to some extent are combined. Nature, in Chinese culture, serves a superior power as God in the West; either individual life or social change is under its charge. Comparing with Western culture, Chinese people tend to accept what nature brings them in order to sustain the harmony with nature; as a result, the attitude to life held by Chinese is relatively passive or even slightly fatalist. Some Chinese proverbs may reflect or refract this sort of attitude:

谋事在人，成事在天

人算不如天算。

命里有时终须有，命里无时莫强求。

有福不用忙，无福跑断肠。

守命安分，顺时听天。

Because of the nonmechanistic view toward nature, Chinese culture places emphasis on the intuitive wisdom. According to Fisher and Luyster (1991), the Eastern view including that of Chinese maintains that "intuition transcends

the data of the senses and the manipulation of the mind to perceive truths that seems to lie beyond reason" (qtd. in Samovar et al., 2000, p. 104). The Chinese proverbs "只可意会不可言传" and "书不尽言，言不尽意" refract the significance of intuition in gaining knowledge.

The view of taking humankind and nature as a unity make Chinese adopt a holistic thinking pattern; Chinese take the world as a unit—aspects from the tiniest details to grandest features are linked with each other, e.g. in "牵一发而动全身". Chinese culture stresses the connection within the world. Chinese view events in connection to the totality and "middle values are articulated and a reciprocal relationship between the two extremes is emphasized" (ibid, p. 129). Folk idioms such as "物极必反", "乐极生悲", "福祸相依" all reflect Chinese holistic thinking of the world. Some popular proverbs including "三十年河东，三十年河西", "分久必合，合久必分"refract that even the opposite extremes are close connected to each other and may exchange their position in some conditions.

B.   Social Proverbs about Social Relationship

Relational Orientation is about how people perceive their relationships with others. The relational orientations on the continuum range from authoritarianism via collectivism to individualism. (ibid, p. 78-79) Cultures holding authoritarianism as their view towards social relationship believe that some people are born superior to others. Collective cultures consider the group as the most important unit of social entities. Groups have priority over individuals. Cultures valuing individualism believe every member of a society should have equal rights. Hofstede (1991) offers four value dimensions, among which the individualism-collectivism may be the most influential. "Hofstede's work was one of the earliest attempts to use extensive statistical data to examine cultural values." (Samovar et al., 2000, p. 66) According to Hofstede's (1991) statistics, English spoken countries including the United States, Australia, Great Britain, Canada, New Zealand as well as many European nations tend towards individualism. Trandis (1990) estimates that "about 70% of the population of the world lives in collective cultures" (qtd. in Samovar et al., 2000, p. 68). Although no information of mainland China has been provided, Taiwan and Hong Kong whose dominant culture is also Chinese culture ranks among top countries or regions valuing collectivism. (Hofstede, 1991)

1. English Social Proverbs about Individualism

Individualism refers to "the doctrine, spelled out in detail by the seventeenth-century English philosopher John Locke, that each individual is unique, special, completely different from all other individuals, and 'the basic unit of nature'"(Samovar et al., 2000, p. 62). As the basic unit of nature or society, the uniqueness of individual is considered to have the highest value in cultures promoting individualism. In those cultures, values, rights, and duties originate from individualism; an "I" consciousness is widespread. (ibid, p. 68) Personal achievements supersede group ones; members have no tendency to feel dependent on organizations and institutions; individuals have the right to their liberty, private property, unique thoughts, etc; competition instead of cooperation is preferred and individual initiative and decision making are encouraged.

Individualism has a long history in Western culture. It can be traced to the democracy in ancient Greek city-states. Christianity as the dominant religion in the West also contributes in an important way to the prevailing individualism in Western culture. In Christian doctrines, God has a special relationship with every man in which God sees and hears, rewards and punishes. Everyone is important to God. Western culture values most the individual; individualism is at the heart of Western culture. Groups should not sacrifice individual freedom, rights and happiness to their development; they are on and for individuals; the freedom and development of individuals is the ultimate destination of any society. Any group is merely means for individuals to fulfill their aims; the loyalty of individuals to groups is weak and individuals are apt to change membership for their own need. Many English proverbs reflect or refract individualism. "Pull yourself up by your own boot straps" emphasizes the individual initiative. "Do your own things" and "he is only bright that shines by himself" stress the self-independence. The proverb "God helps those who help themselves" also puts emphasis on individual initiative and self-independence. The proverb "a man's home is his castle" uses "castle" as a metaphor to describe the exclusive nature of home as one's territory and refracts the privacy valued in Western culture. The proverb "a man may well bring a horse to the water, but he cannot make him drink" requires people to respect individual decision and freedom. Many English proverbs reflecting individualism can be found:

Every man should take his own.
Every man is a king in his own home.
He who depends on another dines ill and sups worse.
It is the squeaky wheel that gets the oil.
Self comes first.

Equality is closely linked to individualism. In Christianity, everyone is created equal. The concept of covenant permeates the *Holy Bible*. Covenant means both rights and duties. Everyone has the right to be chosen by God if he fulfills the duties God expects; in turn God will protect the chosen people. Everyone whoever he or she is will get the Last Judgment. Behind the belief in all-mighty God, a value of equality prevails. In Western culture, all have a right to pursuit happiness and succeed regardless of their backgrounds, sexes, or races. The society should also equal opportunities to ensure the right. The value of equality is widespread in both the relationship within families and that among friends and colleagues. It is taken as one of the basic principles of people's behaviour. Many English proverbs reflect or refract equality. The proverb "all men are brothers" uses the word "brother" to indicate the close and equal

relationship among people. The proverbs "all things in their being are good for something" and "everything is good for something" refract the value on equality by literally taking everything as a useful thing. "Great men are not always wise" refracts the negative attitude of Western culture towards hierarchy or authority. Other proverbs about equality are as follows:

A cat may look at a King.

Jack is as good as his master.

Six feet of earth make all men equal.

The best charity is justice to all.

We are all Adam's children.

As a result of individualism and the high mobility in society, Western culture stresses the competition among individuals. In cultures highly valuing individualism, people take the initiative in advancing personal interests and behave assertively and aggressively in interacting with others. The competitive nature is encouraged from the early childhood; open confrontation and even some abrasiveness can be tolerated or expected. Children get less support in cultures fostering individualism; they must learn quickly to be independent and courage. The proverb "a horse never runs so fast as when he has other horses to catch up and outpace" refracts the value of competition. The word "outpace" contains the information that men should try to succeed others. "Better be envied than pitied" also refracts the encouragement to competitive nature and aggressive behaviour in Western culture; the word "envy" indicates that people should try to lead a better life than others. Many other English proverbs valuing competition can be found:

He that looks not before, finds himself behind.

He who does not advance loses ground.

2. Chinese Social Proverbs about Collectivism

Triandis gives a definition for collectivism that collectivism puts greater emphasis on the requirements and achievements of groups rather than individuals, social norms and duty given by the group instead of behaviour to pursue pleasure, beliefs shared among group members rather than that highlighting individual uniqueness, and readiness to cooperate with in-group members. (see in Samovar et al., 2000)

In collective societies, there is a clear line between those in and out of a particular group. People depend on their groups like extended families or clans to get support and protection, and in turn they owe loyalty to the groups. Comparing with the "I" consciousness above, a "we" consciousness prevails in collective cultures. (ibid) Groups invade private life; individuals attain their identity from their groups; they feel belonging to and emotionally dependent on organizations or institutions. Other behaviour such as indirect ways of communication, concern for others, cooperation are intimately linked to collectivism and can be observed easily in collective cultures.

As mentioned above, the foundation of Chinese civilization is agriculture. Generations of Chinese peasants were tied to the land on which they lived and worked. Little mobility was made, socially or geographically, by Chinese peasants except for the wartime and famine. The agrarian lifestyle of living and working stably together for thousands of years partially makes Chinese value collectivism. Collectivism has a long history in China; Confucianism, with its principal role in Chinese society, strengthens collectivism and makes it the mainstream in Chinese culture. In Confucianism, individuals rely on groups; only with the help of group can individuals defend their interests and fulfill their value. Responsibilities and duties of individuals towards groups are emphasized in Chinese culture. The relationship among Chinese people is mutual-dependence and mutual-trust. "中国文化中的自我是依存的自我，而西方文化中的自我是独立的自我 (the self in Chinese culture is interdependent self, while in Western culture the independent self)." (胡文仲, 1995, p. 248) Many Chinese proverbs straight reflect or indirectly refract the orientation of collectivism. The proverb winning high popularity that "三个臭皮匠，顶个诸葛亮", employing a remarkable metaphor of a well-known historical figure, emphasis the collective strength. Some other Chinese social proverbs about collectivism are as follows:

双拳难敌四手，好汉架不住人多。

一家不够，百家相凑。

孤雁难飞，孤掌难鸣。

一人不成阵，独木不成林。

一人计短，百人计长。

众人一条心，黄土变成金。

一个篱笆三个桩，一个好汉三个帮。

In this kind of collective culture, the uniqueness of individual and aggressive behaviour can hardly be valued; on the contrary, individuals tend to satisfy the need and principles of groups in order to protect his membership and avoid conflicts with others. The proverb "枪打出头鸟" refracts Chinese culture's objection to individual uniqueness and put emphasis on the principle of mean as an effective way to coexist with others. People conduct their behaviour according to social morality in order to own and maintain interpersonal harmony. Chen and Xiao (1993) suppose that "it is without a doubt that harmony is one of the primordial values of Confucianism and of the Chinese culture." (qtd. in Samovar et al., 2000, p. 84) Confucianism takes harmony as the final goal of man's behaviour, because it can lead people to pursue a conflict-free and group-oriented human relationship. The proverb "天时不如地利，地利不如人和" shows the

foremost importance of harmonious interpersonal relationship in Chinese culture. Chinese families maintain and transmit this value by teaching children social skills for group togetherness, respecting others, and interdependence in relationship. Many Chinese proverbs reflect the pursuit for interpersonal harmony:

君子成人之美，不成人之恶。

己所不欲，勿施于人。

得饶人处且饶人。

忍一时风平浪静，退一步海阔天空。

不看僧面看佛面。

冤家宜解不宜结。

Confucius uses a famous sentence "君君，臣臣，父父，子子 (king is king; subject is subject; father is father)" to stress the hierarchy in Chinese society. Hierarchy minimizes the mobility and alteration of China so that to stabilize this collective society. China has undergone around 2000 years of feudalism and the concept of hierarchy has permeated into every corner of Chinese culture. The proverb "吃得苦中苦，方为人上人" literally asks people to be industrious and work hard, but the part "人上人" refract the view of hierarchy. The word "上" indicates that people are organized into a system with ranks or levels from the lowest to highest. People are judged according to their social status or "importance" to society; some are superior to the rest. The proverbs "鸡蛋碰不过石头" and "胳膊拧不过大腿" metaphorically implie the different levels of importance of different things or persons in society. Many Chinese proverbs convey the view of hierarchy:

力微休负重，言轻莫劝人。

大鱼吃小鱼，小鱼吃虾米。

官大一级压死人。

宰相家人七品官。

C.   Social Proverbs about Time Orientation

Cultures vary greatly in the conceptions of time. Some cultures value the future and the present while others stress the past. Future-oriented cultures emphasize the future and expect it to be grander and nicer than the present; present-oriented cultures hold that the moment is of the most significance and enjoyment comes in the present; past-oriented cultures believe in the significance of prior events and the past such as history, established religions, and traditions serves as the guide for making decisions and determining the truth. (ibid, p. 77) In Hofstede's Value Dimensions, uncertainty avoidance is linked with people's conceptions of time. Based on the truism that the future is unknown, uncertainty avoidance refers to "the extent to which a culture feels threatened by anxious about uncertain and ambiguous situations" (ibid, p. 69).

1. English Social Proverbs about Valuing the Future

Western culture values the present and the future, especially the future. Because the future is where the happiness is, Western culture places importance on change and progress. English proverb "expectation is better than realization" reflects the beauty of the future. The proverb "new things are fair" uses a praise for new things to imply people's admiration on the future than the past. In the proverb "a wise man changes his mind, a fool never", the importance on change is obvious. "A constant guest is never welcome" uses an experience in life to refract the avoidance of static situation in Western culture. Many English proverbs directly reflect the value on the future and change:

Newer is truer.

Change brings life and Variety is the spice of life.

This value produces a wide range of behaviour patterns such as optimism, taking risks, etc. In terms of Hofstede's (1991) Dimensions, cultures valuing the future have a low-uncertainty-avoidance need. These cultures accept the uncertainty in life more easily; they are more flexible so that they are willing to take risks and tolerate the unusual. "Come what may, heaven won't fall" refracts a dare to take challenges and enter into unknown territories. "Fear not the future; weep not for the past" straightforwardly reflects westerners' value on the future rather than the past. Some other English proverbs are also about such values:

All is not lost that's in peril.

He who risks nothing gain nothing.

Western culture prefers youth because the youth stands for the future. In the proverb "age is honorable and youth is noble", both the elderly and youth are valued literally; but the word "noble" indicates the premier quality of youth.

2. Chinese Social Proverbs about Valuing the Past

Chinese culture respects the past. "Each Chinese derives his or her strongest sense of identity from history." (Samovar et al., 2000, p. 116) Chinese worship ancestors, ancient great figures as well as those classics; they respect the previous experience and promote traditional morality. Chinese tend to judge surroundings with the criteria established and handed down from the predecessors. The idiom "人心不古" directly uses the word "古" to refer to merits. Many Chinese proverbs reflect or refract the value on the past. "前事不忘，后事之师" emphasizes the importance of the past as the teacher of present life. The famous maxim and subsequently popular proverb by Confucius "温故而知新"

stresses the past by suggesting that the new knowledge is not gained by discoveries but reflection on the past. "不听老人言，吃亏在眼前" highlights the experience achieved in ancient times through kind of warning.

Cultures stressing the past avoid uncertainty; they prefer stable life and are not willing to take risks; they rather maintain the traditional customs and tolerate the current difficulties than make any changes. Many Chinese proverbs reveal this tendency. The proverb "知足者常乐，能忍者自安", by advising people to be content of the present life state, prevents its addressees from alterations. The high-uncertainty-avoidance can raise a passive view on taking risks. Proverbs "不求有功但求无过", "宁走十步远，不走一步险" and "小心驶得万年船" reflect or refract the negative attitude towards risks.

Valuing the past determines Chinese to respect the elderly, because to some extent they are ancestors around us and stand for the past. "姜还是老的辣" metaphorically put emphasis on the elderly and previous experience. Filial piety is highly valued in Chinese culture. "慈母手中线，游子身上衣" literally describe the moving love of a mother to her son far away but actually refract the filial piety by reminding people of their close and forever link with their parents and the responsibility to them. Many Chinese proverbs reflect this merit:

父母在，不远游。
十恶淫为首，百善孝为先。
千里烧香，不如在家敬爹娘。
谁言寸草心，报得三春晖。

V. CONCLUSION

Proverbs are idiomatic expressions on sentence level which are culture-bounded. Social proverbs contain life philosophies and experience as well as moral standards; aspects of social life are reflected in the mirror of social proverbs. The deep structures of Western and Chinese cultures, which show sharp distinction, are reflected or refracted in corresponding social proverbs.

There are inevitably limitations and defects in this study; accordingly, some improvements should be made in further researches. English and Chinese social proverbs have not been studied comprehensively in this study. The proverbs selected for the case study are limited in number and some of them may lack typicality. A thorough investigation into social proverbs as well as quantitative research methods may need in future studies to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. The author's inadequate ability may make the interpretation in the case study superficial; extensive reading on relevant issues of Western and Chinese cultures is required in future researches.

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The Orbit of Pursuit in Johnson's *Rasselas*

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Abstract—*Rasselas* **(1759), a story of the quest for a life of flawless happiness, could be read as a rejection of the facile assumptions and assurances of philosophical Optimism in the context of the Enlightenment. In this article an attempt is made to follow Rasselas along his quest and see, through his eyes, the emerging picture of the insatiability of man's desires. The aim is to throw into high relief the central humanist motif of the circular orbit of human desire as it revolves in harmony with all other particles of the material universe, and to trace the text as it recoils on itself in an allegorical manifestation of Rasselas' pursuit.**

Index Terms—**Samuel Johnson,** *Rasselas*, **human desire, optimism, Enlightenment**

I. INTRODUCTION

Rasselas (1759) is a moral fable written by a writer who, along with Voltaire, intellectually stands alone in his "penetrating rejection of the facile assumptions and assurances of philosophical Optimism" (Barnouw, 2008, p. 441). In other words, *Rasselas* could be read, among other things, as a tale of the vanity of human wishes. Hence, the motif of the insatiable nature of man's desires becomes central. Human beings are never satisfied with their condition, but most do not fathom this and suppose a time in the future when they will have no more desires. We human beings desire not to desire; we anticipate to be freed from our longings by embracing those very longings. Samuel Johnson highlights this theme in a masterly combination of elaborate rhetoric and delightful narrative in *Rasselas*.

Johnson was an artist conscious of his craft who, in his own words, "had early laid it down as a fixed rule to do his best on every occasion" and never attempted "to deliver his *thoughts without arranging* them in the clearest manner" (Boswell, 2000, p.72, emphasis added). The occasion for writing the fable, paying off the debts due to his mother's funeral, seems to have been an excuse. In the words of Grant, "We can of course rule out totally non-literary intentions as obviously irrelevant. One intention Dr Johnson had in writing Rasselas was to pay for his mother's funeral, but nobody would claim that this fact bears in any significant way on the work's content" (2001, p.397).

The story is a philosophical fable, hence the 'exotic' Eastern setting and characters in line with the universalist impulse of Eighteenth-century literature – the Enlightenment thought - the story as an allegory of human desire for knowledge and happiness was to be read and relived over and over again and the quest into the inner-most corners of human mind and spirit pursued repeatedly.

II. RASSELAS

The story starts with a recommendation: if you think the future will bring absolute unchallenged happiness in this world, listen to the tale of Rasselas, the prince of Abssinia. Here at the very beginning, the seminal theme of the narrative is imparted, one important to Johnson as is evinced by its mention elsewhere, e.g. in *Rambler* 29: "It is generally allowed, that no man ever found the happiness of possession proportionate to that expectation which incited his desire and invigorated his pursuit" (cited in Folkenflick, 1994, p.339). It is the theme of man's aspiration for perfect happiness, the perpetual whispers of the hopeful anticipation of future bliss echoing in man's ear. Is this the echo of a ripple running ceaselessly over man's soul, like the mysterious sound of water in deep hidden caverns? If so, then every person hears his or her own spiritual whispers and cannot but listen to their resonance. Or, is it a cosmic, universal echo continually sounding throughout creation and detectable only to the human soul? If so, man can willfully choose between two options: hearkening to the invitation of bliss, or turning a deaf ear to it. The desire for perfection, in keeping with the idea of human perfectability in the Enlightenment era, is treated as a salient human disposition.

Rasselas is the fourth son of the mighty emperor of Abyssinia living in a sort of earthly paradise. The valley where he lives is perfectly safe, no one can enter or leave unless the gates are opened, which happens only once a year when the emperor comes to see his children. The talented Abyssinians compete in order to gain admission to the valley, a haven where no worldly pleasure remains unfulfilled. It is the greatest wish of any Abyssinian to enter this paradise where the blessings of nature are present but evils are excluded, and life is sheer bliss for all those who dwell there. Rasselas, however, is restless: not content with a life in which there is only pleasure.

The paradox in Rasselas' situation, naturally, provokes the reader to muse. How can pleasure be displeasing? Maybe Rasselas has a defective nature setting him aside from others or maybe his condition reflects a deeper, hidden truth.

There is no sign of any sort of lack or defect on Rasselas' behalf; on the contrary, the impression is that he is rather more mature than his peers so the seeming contradiction must be explained by a deeper meaning.

Rasselas is the restless, demanding, seeking soul who, though not neglecting the beauties of his valley or despising what it has to offer, simply seeks a reality of a different nature. It could be said that like Johnson himself, he does not feel at home; "For Johnson, man's nature is such that it can only be temporarily satisfied by anything on earth and therefore his discontent is a sign that he is not truly at home anywhere" (Finch, 1989, p.201).

Rasselas spends his time in reclusion, pondering over the unanswered questions which prod insistently at his confused mind. His aged instructor wants to know the reason for Rasselas' reclusiveness. "I fly from pleasure because pleasure has ceased to please." (Johnson, 1984, Ch.3 lines 16-17) is Rasselas' answer. He adds that he does not know what he wants. Here we have a principal issue.

The needs and desires of the body are self-revealing and if subject to deprivation, very demanding. The body knows what it wants and calls for what it wants. But spiritual desires are often unknown to the human subject. As Rumi, the renowned Persian poet, puts it, " Do not seek water, seek thirst, it will draw water toward you from all sides" (Rumi, n.d. 496). Seeking water is the superficial manifestation of a deeply embedded desire; the nature of this desire must be realized; thirst must be felt. Man needs to know what he truly desires and why, otherwise he will respond to any urge and the satisfaction of one fancy can only anticipate a new longing for the next. In taking the contemplative path toward which Johnson directs us, we confront some very challenging abstractions. Which desires are legitimate? Indeed, is there such a notion as an illegitimate desire? What authority can approve the extent to which a desire can be deemed legitimate or otherwise? Does human logic have the potential to analyze human desires and reveal their nature, thus determine legitimacy? If so, whose faculty of logic? That of each person for him/herself. A representative individual or group? Or is logic itself an integral part of a larger network that we call desire, functioning as the conductor of this network, interpreting the outside world in such a way as to subordinate it to and legitimize its manipulation for, desire? If so, with what scale can each individual measure his/her rationality; indeed how can he/she distinguish between logic and desire?

This ambiguous treatment of reason in *Rasselas* is understandable in the light of the verdict in Johnson's thought on the role of logic:

"We can understand much of the ground of Johnson's thinking if we recognize the very equivocal status that reason has in his work. On the one hand it is a necessary tool for understanding our feelings, prejudices and habits, and as such an important instrument in the acquisition of intellectual freedom. And on the other, it is itself terribly suspect and apt to lead man into error." (Finch, 1989, p.196)

On telling the counselor sage the cause of his discontentment, Rasselas asks the wise man to present something to him which he could desire. Having never been confronted with such a problem, the sage has no ready answer; he simply asserts that if Rasselas had seen the miseries of the world, he would not disparage his present situation. Ironically, this response intended to re-establish Rasselas' pleasure in living in the valley sparks his excitement giving him aim and direction. "This first beam of hope… rekindled youth in his cheeks and doubled the luster in his eyes" (Johnson, 1984, Ch.4 lines 15, 16). Rasselas now has a desire, even though a vague one. What is foremost is the change that this desire promises:

such are the vicissitudes of the world, through all its parts, that day and night, labour and rest, hurry and retirement, endear each other; such are the changes that keep the mind in action; we desire, we pursue, we obtain, we are satiated; we desire something else, and begin a new pursuit (Rambler 6 as cited in Pierce, 1982, p.325).

The young prince living in a haven of pleasure seeks the miseries of the world. A person living in misery would cherish the life of Rasselas whereas he himself wants change. Such is the head-after-tale chase of human desire.

Considering that Rasselas wants to flee from pleasure to see misery, wants to turn away from that which others want to embrace, in order to experience that which others turn away from, the question which arises here is: Does there exist a condition in which man would not want change? Johnson does not offer an explicit answer. Maybe Rasselas's personal quest for his own choice of life argues for individual inquiry – that each person should seek the summit of contentment for him or herself. He does, however, portray a vivid picture of the trajectory of this quest. The central paradox of *Rasselas* for Knoblauch is that "the process of discovering significance is always more valuable than the significance discovered" (1980, p.262)

In time Rasselas makes up his mind to escape, but the valley is bordered on all sides. What once may have seemed to be the cause of safety, of tranquility, is now the cause of imprisonment, "the Valley is, paradoxically, not only a refuge but a prison" (Whitley, 1956, p.55). The outside world changes shade in accordance with man's vantage; a mountain range can be a temple for worship of the Deity, it can be the killing snare for any outside enemy, it can, also, be the depressing monotonous and never-ending wall of a prison, even if that prison be a small paradise. But is not living in Paradise the aspiration of mankind? Johnson's Rasselas is curious to see what there is beyond utmost pleasure. Adam and Eve gave way to Satan's temptation. Is Satan now whispering in Rasselas ear? Or is there an urge from within? Or is it that he does have a real desire originating from his inner being but not knowing what it is, the Devil can play on his doubts and mislead him to moving forward instead of rising up to a higher level of consciousness? Whatever the case, Johnson has Rasselas seek what he wants in the outside world which is probably a reflection of his own temperament: 'Johnson greatly enjoyed travel, and according to Boswell "talked with an uncommon animation of travelling into

distant countries; that the mind was enlarged by it, and that an acquisition of dignity of character was derived from it….his chief longing, he declares, is to observe mankind, and "to obtain some knowledge in the ways of men"' (Donaldson, 1986, pp.784 785).

Rasselas is now impatient. As if he had heard an ancient call from the distant past of his own lost history and was now hurrying to seek its origin. As if the high-flying eagle of his being were caged in the sensuous prison of the beautiful valley: "He was now as impatient as an eagle in a grate" (Johnson, 1984, Ch.5 line 5). Johnson found no stable place in man's constitution for uniformity. As Havens puts it, he admitted that "upon the whole, all pleasure consists in variety," that "novelty is the great source of pleasure"; uniformity, "must tire at last, though it be uniformity of excellence. We love to expect" (1943, p.249). Johnson recognized "that insatiable demand of new gratifications, which seems particularly to characterize the nature of man" (Havens, 1943, p.249). This quest, however, was not one to avail easy success; the more he sought the less he found. "He met a thousand amusements which beguiled his labour … and found the place replete with wonders" (Johnson, 1984, Ch.5 line 22-25). Rasselas, is as a restless soul; the valley as his body. As he searches for a way to free himself from the bonds of bodily imprisonment he experiences novelties to which he finds himself a complete stranger. It seems that Johnson's prose indirectly answers a principal question: Is the search for spiritual freedom from worldly pleasure worthwhile on condition that it end with success, or is it an aim within itself? Johnson's answer is: "[Rasselas] found the place replete with wonders, of which he proposed to solace himself with the contemplation, if he should never be able to accomplish his flight, rejoicing that his endeavours though yet unsuccessful had supplied him with a source of inexhaustible inquiry" (Johnson, 1984, Ch.5; lines 24-28).

At this point in the story, external forces take over and give the story its first major turn; Rasselas who has up till now been seeking alone meets Imlac, the wise, mature, experienced poet, one with whom Cameron believes a figure such as Shelley might have identified himself (1943, p.63). Rain introduces Imlac to Rasselas. Rasselas has no choice than to postpone his search for a way of escape till later and his remaining indoors leads to his acquaintance with the poet without whom his later episodes would never have taken effect. Maybe Johnson's implication here is that fate puts the seeker on the right path of his quest when finding it is beyond his voluntary reach. Johnson was a believer in Providence; as Fisher in his comparison of Johnson and Hawthorne asserts "Both men [Hawthorne and Johnson] believed implicitly in the workings of Providence and in the futility and downright danger of attempting to alter or even hasten the inscrutable processes of a force superior to human means……….They were both emancipated puritans – men who found that a devoutly spiritual attitude would contribute to, rather than hinder, a man's life among other men." (1958, pp.195, 196)

Imlac relates the many ups and down's of his adventurous life to Rasselas. He tells him how after having experienced all that experience has to offer he secluded himself to the safety of this valley. He portrays a picture of the ruthless life of the outside world and contrasts it with the heavenly tranquility of their dwelling place. Rasselas listens eagerly to Imlac, but does not "feel" what he says. Eventually Rasselas confides in Imlac and tells him of his plan to flee. The poet warns him of the harsh life in the outside world but seeing the prince's determination admits his own tendency to leave the valley. The interesting point here is Imlac's desire to depart. Rasselas is curious, knows no other life, wants new experience, but Imlac has seen all there is to be seen in the outside world, has in fact taken refuge from that very world to this small paradise; nevertheless he wants to go back to where he once dreaded and escaped from. Imlac wants to go back to where he started. His life and his desires circulate; starting and ending and starting again in the same place; revolving on one plane, going nowhere. He is supposedly a wise, mature poet, but either this world does not offer a new course for him to take or, if it does, he does not know of its direction. He is caught within the circular orbit of desire; his choice of path is one in which he returns involuntarily whence he began.

After a long, tortuous journey our travelers reach Cairo and having taken gold and jewelry from their home valley where such things are not valued highly, become prominent members of society who are able to choose and do whatever they may please. Rasselas is happy in his new circumstances. He does not realize that his circumstances have changed and the shadow of dull repetition has yet to fall on this new life, as it had done so before. The resonant call for change which had reached so high a pitch as to compel him to do what no other had done in his home valley, again, begins to echo. In time he loses his initial vigour for life and gloom begins to set in.

All around, he sees people with happy smiles on their faces and wonders of the reason for his own dullness and their gaiety. He presents the matter to Imlac. The poet introduces the concept of dual personality to the innocent prince. He tells the prince that people show gaiety on their countenance and hide what manifests in their heart. Sometimes man has such strange logic; he shows liveliness when in fact he is bored, only for the sake of proving to others that he is not. Is it a matter of proving to others, or does he also want to prove it to himself by denying its contrary? If he admits that there is a lack in his life, he may suppose it incumbent on himself to contemplate seriously on his habits; this, not many people are willing to do due to their enjoyment of the transient pleasures of life even at the expense of long intervals of stagnation. Whatever the case may be, in most minds, the faculty of logic does not question the validity of the reasoning behind such action. This adds emphasis to what was previously mentioned regarding the ambiguous role of logic. On the other hand he knows of his own emotions, of his own never ending dissatisfaction just as he knows that the emotional elements are basically the same in all humans, yet heartily believes that others are different; that whereas he has not yet reached true happiness, others have. Why? Johnson may not give a complete answer, but he does give a sure direction, "We are long before we are convinced that happiness is never to be found, and each believes it to be

possessed by others to keep alive the hope of obtaining it for himself" (Johnson, 1984, Ch.16 line 60-63). As long as this hope is alive, the orbit of desire is there.

The quest for the most suitable choice of life goes on; Rasselas is far from the idea that true happiness is unattainable. He decides to be in the company of those in the prime of life but finds their ways crude and far from wisdom. Therefore he looks towards more mature people and finds what he deems maturity in the person of a sage whom he first sees giving lecture to an audience as he is passing one day. The sage is phrasing wonderful rhetoric on the virtues of contentment in life, of parting from greed, of siding with simplicity in one's life. After hearing his enchanting speech Rasselas asks the man to accept his company in response to which the man does not show much enthusiasm, but being offered a bag of gold changes his mind quickly. A man who has barely finished warning his audience of the dangers of seeking material life, of being strapped down by the bonds of earthly wishes, accepts to give guidance to a young man desirous of finding the best way of life in return for a purse of gold which he accepts with a mixture of joy and wonder! Thus is human nature presented by Johnson.

Johnson's prose raises the reader so high that everything is clearly to be seen; the episode of the rhetorician – which according to Kolb (1953) Johnson aimed at stoical pretensions – is presented so vividly that the value of rhetoric in the storms of emotion in real life is all too evident. Rasselas also sees the obvious and is convinced of "the emptiness of rhetorical sound and the inefficacy of polished periods and studied sentences" (Johnson, 1984, ch.18 last two lines).

Still the quest goes on. Here again, it seems we are given a foreshadowing of the circular nature of this inquiry; that there is no end to the search for the best life just as there is no end to human desires. Hearing of a hermit whose life passes in solitude, the four – Rasselas, Imlac, Nekayah and her maid – set off to find the hermit's dwelling. When they find the man, we are faced with a situation not unlike that of Imlac himself.

The hermit, an older version of Thales in "London: A Poem" according to Bogel (1979, p.468), relates his story of how he fled from society and evil to a life of recluse. But now he regrets his choice and wants to go back to the very place from where he fled. Imlac's own revolving path of life comes immediately to mind; his flee to the hidden valley and his subsequent regret. The hermit has realized that he not only fled from evil, he also deprived himself of the virtues of association with good people. "In solitude if I escape the example of bad men, I want likewise the counsel and conversation of the good" (Johnson, 1984, Ch.21; lines 61-62). Where there is vice and virtue, avoiding the first and seeking the other can be promising, but fleeing from both to a life of meaningless recluse has no fruit. The hermit, like Imlac had chosen to go back to where he began. He too, only knew the orbit of all other particles of the material universe. By accompanying the seekers back to Cairo he gives the answer to the seekers' question as to the virtues of a life in reclusion.

They go back whence they had set off and the quest starts again. The prince is to continue the inquiry within the circles of power, and the princess within the confines of domestic life.

Rasseslas not only finds the realm of power and politics outside the compass of his quest but also quite intolerable: "almost every man who stood high in employment hated all the rest and was hated by them…and every eye was searching for a fault" (Johnson, 1984, Ch.24; lines18-23). Perpetual suspicion, hatred, and desire for higher office are the fruits which grow on the tree of power. Nekayah finds much the same situation in domestic life, the difference being only in the level of social hierarchy; high office sparking bitter hatred, household affairs evoking petty competitions. Even among the poor the situation is the same, "their pleasures, poor as they were, could not be preserved pure, but were embittered by petty competitions and worthless emulation" (Johnson, 1984, Ch.25 line 8-10).

By matching various levels of social hierarchy and presenting a general profile of similarity Johnson expresses a very fundamental issue. The corruption that the prince sees, implies that it is not the world of politics that corrupts the politician, it is the corruption embedded in the politician – as human – that makes a world called politics. Why? Because the conflicting elements embedded in human character are seen by Nekayah in everyday life just as vividly as they are seen by him in the rivalry of political competition; whether in the heart of the politician or the layman, the propensity for rivalry and hatred is equally strong. The prince and the princess's experience expand greatly but their quest remains without answer. The ideal life, complete tranquility and the satisfaction of desire is still beyond reach.

On a visit to the great pyramid Imlac states what may be the essence of the whole story, "it seems to have been erected only in compliance with that hunger of imagination which preys incessantly upon life…those who have already all that they can enjoy must enlarge their desires" (Johnson, 1984, Ch. 32 line 18-22). In Imlac's view new desire is a "must". Johnson's final verdict on the fate of his character's wishes, however, is: "of these wishes that they had formed they well knew that none could be obtained" (Johnson, 1984, Ch. 49; line 26-27).

Ironically one of these "wishes" is to go back to Abyssinia. But we should remember that, in the words of Jeffrey Barnouw,

"Rasselas and the other characters in Johnson's moral fable do not return to Abyssinia or anywhere; they 'deliberated'and 'resolved' to return, and Johnson has forcefully revealed the danger of confusing resolution with actual doing in chapter 4. […]Rasselas and his sister make considering and resolving into alternatives to engagement and action. They are unwilling to risk disappointment and take the 'hap' out of happiness. Johnson reveals an obstacle to earthly happiness in the mind-set of which his main characters all develop some variant." (2008, p. 441)

Could it be that Johnson wants to imply that it is providence that circumscribes man's life, hence the orbit-like course of man's wishes, its vanity? Or do we have a more subtle hint here, that the world of desire is, in nature, the same as the

orbits of the material world whence it nourishes and develops: circular. The whole universe is revolving; heavenly bodies revolve around themselves or around other bodies, beginning and ending at the same point, each particle pursuing the ones in front of it, never reaching the end of its pursuit, yet never realizing there is no end.

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China's Secondary School EFL Teachers' Situational Restraints in the Implementation of Mediation*

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Abstract—This paper is aimed at exploring China's secondary school EFL teachers' situational restraints in the implementation of mediation. In order to address the proposed question, a questionnaire survey was employed for the data collection regarding teachers' situational restraints in their classroom practices. The results indicate that most EFL teachers are unable to play mediators on account of situational restraints that they have encountered. Most of them refer to the shortage of suggestions and recommendations from related specialists or experts and the lack of cultivation training in terms of the execution of mediation as the most influential of all the restraints. The paper thus attempts to bring out reflective implications for language teacher practitioners by means of the provision of reference evidence for policy makers and curriculum developers.

Index Terms—EFL, mediation, implementation, situational restraint

I. THE PROBLEM

Current education reforms imply that it seems necessary for teachers to implement the teacher role as a mediator instead of disseminator in the language classroom since the value of adult mediation in children's learning can never be overstressed (Seng, Pou, & Tan, 2003). Given the facilitation of children's education quality, this paper seems to be great importance in that the majority of secondary school students in China fail to express themselves in proper oral and literal English (Y. Li, 2004; Liao, 2000; Ye, 2007). Conversely, they are exposed to finite language knowledge laying emphasis on grammatical forms of language (Ting, 1987). The most ideal foreign language instructional programs, however, ought to "involve the whole learner in the experience of language as a network of relations between people, things, and events" (Savignon, 1987, p. 236, cited in Chen, 2005, p. 3). Mediation offers young students more occasions for them to practise systematic English rendering the linguistic learning more effective since it views all language users start from birth to develop relationships with people around them (Feuerstein, 1990; Williams & Burden, 2000). Through constant interactions with others, learners attempt to apply language and make sense of the world (Vygotsky, 1978). As such, the teacher role as a mediator ought to take priority in the linguistic instructional program (Feuerstein, 1990).

The National Standards of English Curriculum for Basic Education of China (hereafter referred to as *Curriculum Standards*) was generated on the notion that "learners individually possess diverse learning styles and intelligences" (Ediger, 2000, p. 35) and social-constructivism which "provides various ways to access the students' multiple intelligences" (Teague, 2000, p. 9). Now, the execution of the *Curriculum Standards* is in process throughout China, whose implementation seems indispensable in that "the current situation of English education still does not meet needs of the economic and social development" (MOE, 2001, p. 2).

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study focuses on investigating why mediative classrooms are rare in China and what can be done to generate more mediative classrooms. To achieve this goal, one question that follows to be addressed is proposed:

What situational restraints prevent EFL teachers from implementing mediative functions?

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Feuerstein (1980) generates a program about teaching students learning strategies named Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) in which a special quality of interaction is elucidated between learners and the mediator via 12 parameters: significance, purpose beyond the here and now, shared intention, a sense of competence, control of own behavior, goal-setting, challenge, awareness of change, a belief in positive outcomes, sharing, individuality, and a sense of belonging (pp. 289-290). The program consists of 400 cognitive tasks constructed to instruct the skills as models in terms of issues on mental activities, problem solving, and learning strategies (Feuerstein, 1980; Feuerstein & Feuerstein, 1991).

Feuerstein (1980) believes that there are 12 various ways of mediation rooted in these 12 MLE criteria, which might provide adequate flexible space for the teacher in the language classroom to conduct mediation (Seng et al., 2003). The first "three criteria are also considered universal, in the sense that they can be present in all races, ethnic groups, cultural entities, and socioeconomic strata" (Seng et al., 2003, p. 36). Comparatively, "the remaining nine criteria are considered responsible for the process of diversification of humankind in terms of cognitive styles, need systems, types of skills mastered, and the structure of knowledge", and "these nine criteria are also considered situational because they need not always be present in every MLE" (Seng et al., 2003, p. 36).

IV. INSTRUMENT

To secure data to address the question, a questionnaire survey was adopted relying on the question item that participants were requested to indicate to what extent each of the 20 factors influenced their teaching practices and allowed to add other restraints as well with reference to Williams and Burden's *Mediation Questionnaire* (2000) testing teachers' classroom practices respecting Feuerstein's 12 MLE parameters on top of Liao's *Communicative Language Teaching Questionnaire* (2003) (see Appendix).

V. RESEARCH SITES AND PARTICIPANTS

The target population of the current study consisting of all China's secondary school EFL teachers to which the researcher really prefers to generalize is rarely achievable (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007), which was thus carried out in Henan situated in eastern central China for the reachable population (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007). Henan, whose capital is Zhengzhou, is the most populous province of China, having a gross population of 100 million in 2008 with 31% urban residents and 69% rural ones, and it is traditionally regarded as the cradle of Chinese civilization (National Bureau of Statistics of China [NBSC], 2008; New World, 2008). Since the majority of the province is south of the Yellow River (*huanghe* in Chinese), it was thus named Henan (River South), covering an area of 167,000 square kilometers (NBSC, 2008). With the growing, profoundly economic, and social innovations and development of China, Henan has gradually become the centre of Chinese cultures, transportation, education, and economy (New World, 2008).

Deng Xiaoping's extensive and holistic educational reform policy, involving all levels of the education system, focused on narrowing the gap between China and other developing and developed countries, and so it was with Henan province (New World, 2008). Secondary education in Henan was rearranged and now is developing steadily on the basis that a more closely integrated educational system has already taken shape (New World, 2008). By the end of 2007, there were 7,492 secondary schools in Henan with 7,698,650 students enrolled and 454,540 teachers, involving 25,000 secondary school EFL teachers compared with a total of 572,000 in China (NBSC, 2008). The researcher used to work as a secondary school EFL teacher and is familiar with the situation of this career, so the investigation into secondary school EFL practitioners in China is an alternative of interest. Furthermore, China's secondary school students have to sit for the national matriculation English test (NMET) before tertiary education, which is referred to as one of the most serious situational constraints to hinder teachers' application of the mediative role (Liao, 2003; MOE, 2001).

A vital difficulty with the questionnaire survey is that a smaller percentage of pre-sampled participants tend to answer questionnaires (Liao, 2003). Out of the 350 distributed survey sheets, 152 valid copies (43.4%) were returned, but "power is not an issue" in that the sample size concerned is larger with over 100 participants (Stevens, 1996, p. 6, cited in Pallant, 2007, p. 205).

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The survey requested the participants to scale the 20 statements by circling the figure from 1 to 6 implying *not sure* to *quite a lot*. The mean for each item was 3.5, with the minimum scale total 20 and the maximum 120. The majority of the respondents ($n = 147$) made an answer involving 17 missing values, and five participating teachers ($n = 5$) left this item blank whose missing data did not threaten the wanted validity of the survey as the valid sample size exceeded 100 (Stevens, 1996, cited in Pallant, 2007). No other situational restraints were added while the respondents scaled the

survey item. The 20 statements fell into three segments associated with (a) China's current educational system (*a-d*), (b) the learners (*e-g*), and (c) the teacher participants themselves (*h-t*).

As per the statistical results, the mean of 75% of the restraint statements ($n = 15$) exceeded 3.5(M > 3.5). The top five restraints tended to be "lack of advice from relating specialists" (1st), "lack of cultivation being a mediator" (2nd), "lack of financial support for teacher role training programmes" (3rd), "large-sized class instruction" (4th), "lack of mediation role effectiveness testing instruments" (5th). The remaining 25% of the restraints ($n = 5$) were perceived least influential (M < 3.5), which tended to be "lack of cultural knowledge" (16th), "mandatory textbooks" (17th), "mandatory syllabuses" (18th), "lack of oral proficiency in EFL" (19th), and "attitudes towards instructional work" (20th).

Among the situational restraints the respondents uttered in the questionnaire, those in relation to the teachers' cultivation as the role of mediation were assumed to be the most serious. The majority of the respondents attached great importance to the re-education concerned with the role of mediation, which showed that they had positive attitudes towards mediation and desired to be equipped for the mediation role with the assistance of related training programs and experienced specialists. Of the restraints related to the education system, large-sized classes and grammar-based exams seemed more serious than mandatory syllabuses and textbooks which were believed to provide adequate convenience for implementing the mediator role (MOE, 2001). The restraints linked to the students' low proficiency in EFL appeared to impact heavily on the teacher participants' classroom practices. The situational restraints respecting the teachers' "shortages" such as "low oral proficiency in EFL" and "lack of knowledge of mediation" were least serious likely due to social desirability (Liao, 2003).

VII. IMPLICATIONS

The current paper looks at investigating why there are so few medative classrooms in China's secondary middle schools and what can be done to make EFL classrooms more mediative. The results displayed that the teachers' situational restraints hindered them from playing the mediator. The following implications suggest solutions to the situational restraints that the teacher participants came across in the case of (a) EFL teachers' re-education cultivation, (b) the current EFL educational system, and (c) the promotion of learners' proficiency in EFL.

A. Implications for EFL Teachers' Re-education

Based on the survey, it could be seen that the teacher participants argued that the lack of advice from relating specialists and of cultivation of the execution of the role as mediator was the most influential of all the restraints. This confirms Grosser and Waal's (2008) argument that mediation instrument cultivation or re-education programs are to "provide the necessary knowledge, skills, and moreover attitudes to pre-service teachers to become mediators of learning in order to ensure the development and growth of thinking skills" (para. 1). Meanwhile, numerous specialists on mediation claim that the implementation of mediation is pretty tough to educators (e.g., Bligh, 1971; Feuerstein, 1990; Higgins, 2003; Seng et al., 2003). As Seng et al. (2003) put it,

The roles of teachers will have to change dramatically if they are to remain relevant to a new generation of students. The challenge is indeed for educators to design new learning environments and curricula that really encourage motivation and independence to equip students with learning, thinking, and problem-solving skills through good mediation. (p. 17)

EFL teachers thus need to secure professional cultivation respecting mediation so as to act as true mediators. According to Wu (2001, cited in Liao, 2003), an ideal EFL teacher re-education program in China's current educational settings should promote teachers' subject knowledge, skills, and pedagogy. In view of the results of the current research, promoting teachers' proficiency in EFL and cognition of mediation appears to be greatly important.

B. Implications for the Current EFL Education System

In this study, the teacher participants reported that constraints such as large-sized class teaching and grammar-based examinations seriously hindered them from mediating the students' learning. First, in the present exam-oriented education system, they had to teach what would be examined, so they considered teaching the students more language points to be the most important of all (e.g., Teacher ID No. 23; Ting, 1987) rather than comprehensive linguistic skills due to the pressure from the schools and parental expectations (e.g., ID No. 85). Second, in a large class, advanced students could accomplish given tasks, but backward students failed (e.g., ID No. 145). Language interaction in a large class seemed a big challenge to the teacher, and the execution of activities made the entire classroom noisy and in a mess (e.g., ID No. 145). As such, implications are thus offered for the EFL education system respecting the reduction of the large-sized class and the innovation of grammar-based exams.

C. Implications for the Development of Students' Proficiency in EFL

In the current research, the students' low proficiency in EFL and the lack of motivation of learning EFL were more influential factors that inhibited the teacher participants' execution of mediation functions. Most of the teacher participants complained that their students were unable to apprehend their learning tasks given in EFL. They were to talk bilingually, and the students communicated with each other in the native language. Some of the students held negative attitudes towards EFL learning, for, on most occasions, the learners merely listened and took notes as the

teacher talked in the classroom. Therefore, the enhancement of students' proficiency and motivation to learn EFL should be put on the agenda.

China is a large agriculture-based nation with around 70% of the population residing in rural areas, "while members of the Standards writing group and textbook writers are all urban residents" (J. Li, 2004, p. 227). These writers are more familiar with urban learners and thus neglect the situations and requirements of rural students, and even "some teachers have suggested the MOE should provide alternative curricula to teachers of rural students" (J. Li, 2004, p. 227). Considering other unfavorable conditions in rural areas, the present curriculum contents require to be further facilitated to relieve the situational restraints of implementing mediation caused by learners' low proficiency in English.

The following innovations are expected to help raise rural students' proficiency in EFL: (a) providing salary and career incentives for EFL teachers who would like to work in rural schools and (b) investing in a large-scale system of distance education in which the Internet, cable, and satellite technology enable excellent teachers to "teach" in rural schools (Education in China, 2005).

Likewise, learner strategy training seems to facilitate the development of students' EFL levels since the facilitation of students' autonomous learning is among the most valuable targets of language training (Wenden, 1985), which is also one of the functions for the teacher to conduct while mediating students' learning. Students' intrinsic motivation of learning EFL facilitates their proficiency promotion in language, without which students manifest negative learning attitudes and resistance to classroom participation as reported in the current study (Brown, 2001).

VIII. CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to reveal why there are so few mediators in secondary school EFL classrooms in China and tried to bring out effective measures to render more mediative classrooms in the future. As such, the present research study is expected to be one of the initial attempts to investigate the mediation execution of China's secondary school EFL teachers. On the basis of the survey results, a conclusion is drawn that the majority of EFL teachers among secondary schools in China are unable to mediate the language cognition of their students in the classroom in the current educational settings. It is damn challenging for EFL teachers to implement the role as a mediator readily on account of situational restraints in relation to the current educational system, learners, and EFL teachers themselves as well. Particularly, the majority of the participating teachers refer to the shortage of suggestions and recommendations from related experts or specialists and the lack of training cultivation regarding the implementation of mediation as the most serious of all the situational restraints. It is therefore proposed that China's secondary school EFL teachers re-orient their own instructional roles from traditional knowledge-givers to mediators with the assistance of teachers' re-education of mediation-based knowledge so as to meet the need of the current social progress.

APPENDIX MEDIATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Listed below are 20 situational restraints. Kindly indicate how much each restraint factor affects your instructional role by scaling the figure from 1 to 6 representing *not sure* to *quite a lot*. If you have other factors that prevent you from implementing mediation, please list them and likewise scale the relating figure implying the extent to which each factor affects your part in the classroom.

1= Not sure; 2= Not at all; 3= Only a little; 4= Fairly; 5= A lot; 6= Quite a lot

Situational restraints	Not sure	Not at all	Only a little	Fairly	A lot	Quite a lot
1). The mandatory syllabus	1	2	3	4	5	6
2). The mandatory textbook	1	2	3	4	5	6
3). Grammar-based examinations	1	2	3	4	5	6
4). Large-sized class instruction	1	2	3	4	5	6
5). Learners' low proficiency in EFL	1	2	3	4	5	6
6). Learners' passive attitudes in learning	1	2	3	4	5	6
7). Learners' resistance to class participation	1	2	3	4	5	6
8). Your lack of oral proficiency in EFL	1	2	3	4	5	6
9). Your lack of mediation knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	6
10). Your lack of cultural knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	6
11). Your lack of support from your school	1	2	3	4	5	6
12). Your lack of mediation-based instructional materials	1	2	3	4	5	6
13). Your lack of mediator-related instructional aids	1	2	3	4	5	6
14). Your lack of mediation role effectiveness testing tools	1	2	3	4	5	6
15). Your lack of time to prepare mediation-based lessons	1	2	3	4	5	6
16). Your lack of cultivation being a mediator	1	2	3	4	5	6
17). Your lack of financial support for teacher role training programmes	1	2	3	4	5	6
18). Your lack of recommendations from relating specialists	1	2	3	4	5	6
19). Your lack of collaboration with colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	6
20). Your attitude towards instructional work	1	2	3	4	5	6

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On the Viability of Vocabulary Learning Enhancement through the Implementation of MALL: The Case of Iranian EFL Learners

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Abstract—**The augmented interest, at the wake of the new millennium, apropos different modes of computer assisted instruction gave rise to the naissance of a new generation of CALL-based research known as MALL. As research over MALL might be said to still be in its infancy, a multitude of untouched areas remain to be dealt with, among which mention can be made of the way mobile assisted programs can bring about a better implementation of vocabulary instruction. Hence, in the current study, the viable effect of using MALL-operated vocabulary instruction technique on the process of vocabulary acquisition has been scrutinized. To this aim, forty elementary learners (all females) studying at the Iran Language Institute (Mohabad branch, Iran) were selected. To tap the data, the researchers utilized a variety of instruments including questionnaire, interviews, and a multiple-choice vocabulary test. The statistical analysis was mainly carried out through the use of ANCOVA. In tandem with the gained upshots, it was revealed that treatment through the application of mobile assisted vocabulary learning had been quite effective in improving learners' vocabulary acquisition. The results also indicated that the use of this technique had been effective in changing the learners' attitudes towards the proper use of mobile phones for pedagogical purposes.**

Index Terms—**MALL, SMS (Short Message Service), text messaging, MALL-operated vocabulary instruction**

I. FOREWORD

Once-queer terms and notions like connectivity, computer and mobile-assisted language learning, synchronous learning as well as computer and mobile-mediated communication have now turned to commonplace verities in today's technologized world. As Benson and Chik (2010), among other, hold "emerging globalized online spaces provide new opportunities for language learning to occur autonomously as part of learners' everyday literacy practices" (cited in Hafner & Miller, 2011, p. 70).

In the fast moving world of educational technology, innovative but unusual ways of meeting the ever-changing learning needs of people are proposed. In this world, where individualization is the catchphrase (Chaudron, 2000; Horwitz, 2000; McGinley, 2006; Yu, 2007), institutions hinge mainly on e-learning capacities for coordination of their various activities, for example, simultaneously working on a project physically scattered. Today, every big or small institution wants to incorporate e-learning in their system. This has resulted in a wide array of tools in the market for e-learning programs where every kind of help is easily available in this regard. What is happening to the society and social networks by the ever-progressive movement of technology is aptly put by Peters (2007),

Technological advancements that allow fast communications and information processing are supporting new social patterns. As a result, communities are no longer only based on geographical proximity, and new 'tribes' (Rheingold, 2002) are developing and disbanding according to interest, work patterns, and opportunity. (p. 1)

Mobile learning (m-learning) is a field which combines mobile computing and e-learning. But does m-learning play an essential role like what the Web did? It is not clear as of yet, but we must attempt to find an answer to the question, by trying to imagine how mobile devices can improve e-learning or hinge it. With the inevitable integration of mobile technology into our lives, we can claim that it has already become a familiar part of the everyday lives of the majority of teachers and learners in Iran. But not surprisingly, its use as an educational tool has not been very apparent compared to its non-educational uses. Mobile phone as a learning tool can be one of the manifold innovative and exciting ways of grappling with learners' needs.

A quotable, challenging statement indicating the necessity of integrating m-learning with pedagogical attempts would be that of Akenaga (2005), who remarks that "today's students are more technology savvy than the university staff and officials, and they expect their needs to be met anywhere, anytime and with any device" (p. 12). In the current study the researchers strive to look into the effectiveness of one of the uses of mobile phones as educational tools to be utilized both by Iranian EFL learners to improve and support their learning, and by their teachers to enhance and enrich their

teaching. Of the many possible educational uses of mobile phones, the researchers focus on the students' use of text messages made available for them. Finally, they probe into the learners' attitudes toward this MALL application.

Perhaps it can be claimed that mobile-assisted language learning, as Godwin-Jones (2011, p. 2) states, "is in itself not new, but new devices with enhanced capabilities have dramatically increased the interest level, including among language educators." Nonetheless, literature on the value of MALL is drastically meager and, as of yet, in the Iranian context only few scholars have attempted to carry out in-depth probes into varied aspects of its usefulness. In an attempt to fill this gap in the literature, the researchers aimed to analyze Iranian EFL learners' attitudes toward the effectiveness of MALL through the use of text messages, whereby they tried to show some of the workable ways of implementing and integrating mobile phones in(to) the teaching-learning process. Thus, in an attempt to come up with satisfactory expositions for the study postulations, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Does the use of MALL and particularly mobile-based text messages have any effect on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary enhancement?

2. What are the Iranian EFL learners' attitudes toward MALL?

2a. In what ways, if any, do Iranian EFL learners perceive MALL use in their learning activities?

2b. How do they view the effect of mobile-based text messages on their vocabulary acquisition?

2c. How do their beliefs affect their context and patterns of use of the technology?

2d. What are the factors, if any, Iranian EFL learners perceive to be impeding MALL practice?

2e. What are their suggestions on actions to be taken to make MALL practice more effective?

Language Learning and Technology

To adopt Hafner and Miller's (2011, p. 70) words, "in order to develop an approach to technology capable of fostering learner autonomy we must recognize that pedagogy and technology are inter-related." Indeed, two of the principal souvenirs of technology for human beings in the recent decades have been PCs/laptops and cell phones, which have now made their way to and through the pedagogical arenas in most schools, institutes, and colleges throughout the globe. In the section that follows, a brief account is provided of the two resultant trends of this prevalent technological growth, referred to as CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) and MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning).

Recent Empirical Research on CALL & MALL

As Tanner and Landon (2009, p. 51) point out "Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is of interest to language teachers and learners because it can provide individualized instruction and immediate feedback on the correctness of a learner's response to computerized tasks." Though research on CALL has taken different orientations in the recent years, two dominant perspectives CALL-oriented probes seem to have targeted are attitudes toward the implementation of CALL and different skill-related gains resulting from the utilization of CALL programs.

Amongst the vast body of research on different educational stakeholders' attitudes toward the use of technology in education reference can be made to Eswaran's (2008) work, where the researcher was interested in probing both learners and teachers' attitudes toward the exploitation of computers as tools facilitating teaching/learning processes. In this small-scale study, the researcher tapped six English teachers and thirty two students' views regarding the classroom use of CALL through the administration of two sets of questionnaires, and found that the majority of participants were avid concerning the application of computers as beneficial language learning aids and thought its use can act as a potential motivator for furthering learning.

In like manner, Bordbar (2010) sought to pinpoint the main incentives underlying the instructors' use of computers for language teaching. Benefiting from the participation of 83 high school EFL teachers, the researcher ran a survey on teachers' perspectives regarding the use of CALL in learning environments, and concluded that prior experience with the application of CALL can function as a determining factor in fostering its later use, whereas some impediments such as inadequacy of time and resources are liable to bring about a demise in classroom use of CALL. Overall, the findings of Bordbar's research were indicative of teachers' highly positive outlook toward the implementation of computers as an influential means for language learning.

Within the recent literature on the use of CALL for the enhancement of diverse aspects of learning, one comes across several instances reporting the efficacy of CALL programs for various learning outcomes. As a case in point, Sauro (2009) was interested in gauging the potential impact of computer-mediated corrective feedback on the enrichment of learners' grammar knowledge. Through the utilization of two types of computer-mediated corrective feedback (by providing feedback in the form of recasts or metalinguistic information) with some 23 English learners, then, the researcher concluded that there was "no significant advantage for either feedback type on immediate or sustained gains in target form knowledge, although the metalinguistic group showed significant immediate gains relative to the control condition." (p. 96).

In a similar vein, Vinagre and Muñoz (2011) investigated the possible effect of peer computer-mediated corrective feedback on the augmentation of learners' accuracy. To perform the study, 17 Spanish and German learners were asked to get involved with the task of e-mail exchange for a period of three months. At the culmination of the study, they found that "despite frequent use of error correction, the use of remediation led to a higher percentage of errors recycled and was more conducive to error recycling in later language production" (p. 72).

Tanner and Landon (2009), on the other hand, embarked on an exploration dealing with the role of computers in bringing about more intelligible pronunciation production by learners, particularly with regard to suprasegmentals. A total of 75 ESL students were used as the participants of this study, and in order to apply the desired treatment, use was made of 'Cued Pronunciation Readings' with the aim of fostering self-directed pronunciation practice in learners. The findings of these researchers' study were indicative of significant gains among the experimental group participants in terms of production and perception of suprasegmental features especially as it regards pausing and word stress.

Subsequent to the succinct account provided concerning recent CALL-oriented research, the researchers are now going to turn to a brief review of some of the recent probes in the realm of mobile assisted language learning. M-learning research which was once plagued with myriad "limitations inherent in the devices, in particular small, low-resolution screens (problematic for image/video display or even good text reading), poor audio quality (both in phoning and audio playback), awkward text entry, limited storage/memory and slow Internet connectivity" (Godwin-Jones, 2011, p. 2), has now entered a revolutionary stage in the recent years with the advent of novel systems and technologies. As Stockwell (2010) maintains, "mobile technologies have started to make their presence felt in the field of education, as can be seen by the increasing number of publications that have appeared in recent years" (p. 95).

According to Kukulska-Hulme and Shield (2008) "MALL differs from computer-assisted language learning in its use of personal, portable devices that enable new ways of learning, emphasizing continuity or spontaneity of access and interaction across different contexts of use." Generally speaking, the use of mobile phones, MP3/MP4 players, PDAs and palmtop computers is expected to be part of MALL. Since MALL is in its embryonic stage, the studies are sketched based on different criteria by different people, for example one can categorize them as those done to find a theoretical justification for m-learning versus those aimed at implementing some of the practices already followed in computer-assisted language learning and other forms of learning-enhancing technologies like CD-ROMs, MP3/MP4 players, television, radio and the like. Another categorization might be that employed by Kukulska-Hulme and Shield (2008) who classified the literature on MALL as those studies which approach MALL placing the locus of focus on the content to be delivered versus those emphasizing the design-related issues.

Though studies on mobile-assisted language learning have taken diverse directions in the recent years, due to the researchers' concern with vocabulary learning in the light of MALL in the current study, an attempt is made hereby to go over some recent relevant work that address the use of cell phones for furthering learners' vocabulary repertoire. Stockwell (2010), for instance, launched an M-learning research project with 175 pre-intermediate English learners, in a stab aimed at exploring the effectiveness of utilizing cell phones for getting engaged with the vocabulary activities. Indeed, the use of mobile phones as vocabulary learning aids was investigated in this study and its upsides were discussed in comparison to the use of computers.

Other instances of recent probes regarding the use of mobiles for assisting vocabulary learning include Thornton and Houser's (2005) work which discusses the utilities of using mobiles for both learning and evaluating the knowledge of English idioms, Browne and Culligan's (2008) study, which reports on the practicality of using vocabulary learning flash cards on the cell phones, Chen, Hsieh, and Kinshuk's (2008) probe which addresses the use of varied mobile-assisted vocabulary learning strategies for learners with different learning preferences, and Kennedy and Levy's (2008) research which touches the positive effects of vocabulary reinforcement through contextualized mobile-assisted practice outside the classroom via sending short messages (cited in Stockwell, 2010)

II. METHOD

To meet the objectives of the present study, a mixed method research strategy was adopted and to perform the study, ILI (Iran Language Institute), Mohabad branch, was chosen as the major venue. The methodology of research included using a questionnaire, ILI classroom vocabulary test, as well as semi-structured interviews with Elementary learners. Fieldwork was carried out for data collection from June 2011 till September 2011. Twenty out of the total population of forty students were selected at random, and were interviewed about their professional development and different aspects of using SMS on their cell phones. Interviews were recorded and conducted in Mohabad. All research participants gave their verbal consent to the recording of their interviews, as well as having them used for research purposes.

Participants
The participants of the study were a group of female students studying at Mohabad ILI (Iran Language institute), Iran. They were studying English Elementary course for two sessions a week at the ILI, with each session lasting for one hour and forty five minutes. The total number of participants amounted to 40.

Instrumentation
To gather data the researchers made use of a questionnaire, interviews, and a multiple-choice vocabulary test, a brief explanation of which is provided in the ensuing section.

MALL Questionnaire
When the researchers finished writing up the first draft of the MALL questionnaire, to go about the validation process following Alderson and Banerjee (2001, as cited in Milanovic, 2007), they gave a copy to seven ELT experts to review, have comments and write their expectations of what a MALL questionnaire should contain. Heeding their comments, the researchers made some modifications to the original version.

The questionnaire, which was administered on the first and last days of the course, gathered general information on experimental group participants' use of and attitudes toward mobile phone in general and MALL-related applications/facilities in particular, that is, their attitudes toward the use of SMS. The questionnaire also investigated the amount of MALL training and experience, and degree of skillfulness in MALL utilization as perceived by the participants. It finally contained items on personal specifications of each participant, such as their gender, number of years spent studying English, etc.

Based on the statistical analysis, as well as feedback by student respondents and teachers with regard to the readability of items, the refined version of SMS questionnaire consisting of nine items, was piloted prior to the main study (N=20). Although the Cronbach's Alpha (CA) values of 8 questions were identified marginal (0.73, 0.83 and 0.71) and 3 questions were inadequate (0.66, 0.62 and 0.61), the overall internal reliability was measured at 0.87. In addition, deleting any of the questionnaire items did not increase the reliability of SMS. This indicated that all the items contributed to the reliability of SMS questionnaire. It can thus be claimed that the items in SMS questionnaire have high internal consistency and none of them should be dropped from the overall measure of students' attitude toward SMS application.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Consisting of nine questions each related to one or more of the items on the MALL questionnaire, the interviews were constructed to triangulate the information gathered through the MALL questionnaire. Taking 15 minutes each, the interviews were conducted after the preliminary analysis of data collected through the MALL questionnaire. While carrying out the interviews, which were written on some papers and audio-taped so that they could be attached and analyzed later on in the data analysis phase of the study, the researchers spent about two or three minutes on each question. The same procedure was followed after the second administration of the questionnaire toward the end of the course.

Vocabulary Test

Searching the vocabulary section of many samples of the ILI examination questions available on the market and sampling the items to be covered in the course, the researchers managed to adapt a vocabulary test, containing 60 items, which was found to have a reliability index of .83, using the split-half method.

Design of the Study

Since investigating ideas and attitudes most often involves a qualitative type of study whereas analyzing the effectiveness of the experimentation demands a quantitative one (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, pp. 96-97), the researchers employed a mixed design for the study. For the qualitative part of the study, a questionnaire was developed based on the researchers' experience on and intuition about what might be of relevance to the application of MALL in the Iranian context. As a questionnaire alone is not enough to tap the participants' attitudes, after the administration of the questionnaire those participants who were at the extreme end of the cline, as far as their agreement/disagreement with MALL is concerned, were interviewed to make sure that their views are appropriately reflected in the study. For the second section of the study a pretest-posttest control group design was employed. The pretest was administered on the second session of the course, and at the end of the term the same test was re-administered to both groups as the posttest. With the help of SPSS version 19, running an ANCOVA test and independent samples T-test, the researchers compared the gained scores of the two groups on pre-test and post-test on the vocabulary exam to pinpoint the possible significant difference between their levels of accomplishment.

Data Collection Procedure

As for the first research question, which followed a quasi-experimental design, the learners were pretested on the vocabulary test adapted and validated by the researchers. Then, the participants who were already randomly assigned into two groups were presented with the course content for 18 consecutive sessions of one hour and forty five minutes each. At the end of the term period, both groups were given the same test to see how much they had achieved compared to one another.

Thus, subsequent to administration of the study questionnaire and running the interview with the learners in the experimental group, participants in both groups were given the multiple-choice test of vocabulary, which was adapted by the researchers from ILI collection of tests. To observe the ethicality concerns, at the outset of the study, all the participants were asked for their consent to take part in the study.

Successive to the administration of pretest, in the sessions that followed, the learners in the experimental group started to be sent message files containing some of the vocabulary items relevant to their course, whereas the control group learners didn't receive any treatment through vocabulary test messaging and continued their regular course of study with the ILI coursebooks.

The experimental group participants were also allowed to consult their mobile dictionaries to look up and resolve their problems or disambiguate any points of equivocalness. The researchers needed to help the learners with how to use the resources available to them. It is also worth mentioning that the ILI textbooks, on which the current work was based, are a multi-skill eclectic series mainly centering around grammar, and hence a considerable amount of time in both groups was allotted to the explication of grammatical points.

At the end of the term, the very 9-item questionnaire was given to the experimental group learners to see how much their attitudes had changed and how helpful they found MALL to be. After coding the data gathered through the

questionnaire, analyzing the interview for content schemes and doing the numerical calculations, the data collected from the two administrations were visually represented and compared to show the degree and direction of change of attitudes (if any).

Data Analysis

The first part of the study, being guided by the first research question, dealt with the effects on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition of their use of Text Messages. To be able to pinpoint the possible gains within the experimental group, ANCOVA and independent samples T-test were run, the reason behind using the former being the prior administration of questionnaire and interview to the experimental group participants. The second part, being guided by the second overarching research question, concerned the Iranian EFL learners' attitudes toward the effectiveness of the implementation of cell phones as now-ubiquitous technological tools. To that end, a questionnaire and follow-up interviews were employed. The correspondence of the items of the questionnaire and interview themes constituted the basis of answering the second general research question.

III. RESULTS

Quantitative finding

In keeping with the manner in which the research questions of the study were organized, the researchers would rather first deal with the primary hypothesis of the research which was after finding the effect of SMS-operated vocabulary treatment on the enhancement of vocabulary learning. In this experimental and quantitative phase of the study, the data were analyzed using two alternative statistical procedures (ANCOVA as well as independent samples t-test) to ensure the verity and reliability of the gained results. Indeed, the reason behind running ANCOVA for the initial postulation of the study was to control for the viable effect of the prior questionnaire and interview sessions on the performance of experimental group. Table 1 through 4 below illustrate the statistical data gained through running ANCOVA, and Figure 1 shows the scatter of Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances.

TABLE 1
TESTS OF BETWEEN-SUBJECTS EFFECT
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: POST

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	769.692[a]	3	256.564	300.545	.000	.962
Intercept	127.655	1	127.655	149.538	.000	.806
group	70.997	1	70.997	83.167	.000	.698
pre	45.881	1	45.881	53.746	.000	.599
group * pre	13.439	1	13.439	15.742	.249	.304
Error	30.732	36	.854			
Total	9480.813	40				
Corrected Total	800.423	39				

a. R Squared = .962 (Adjusted R Squared = .958)

TABLE 2
LEVENE'S TEST OF EQUALITY OF ERROR VARIANCES[a]
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: POST

F	df1	df2	Sig.
3.940	1	38	.054

TABLE 3
TESTS OF BETWEEN-SUBJECTS EFFECT
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: POST

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	756.253[a]	2	378.126	316.743	.000	.945
Intercept	136.190	1	136.190	114.081	.000	.755
pre	40.114	1	40.114	33.602	.000	.476
group	604.834	1	604.834	506.648	.000	.932
Error	44.170	37	1.194			
Total	9480.813	40				
Corrected Total	800.423	39				

a. R Squared = .945 (Adjusted R Squared = .942)

TABLE 4
GROUP STATISTICS

group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Exper.	18.846[a]	.212	18.416	19.275
Control	10.893[a]	.213	10.461	11.325
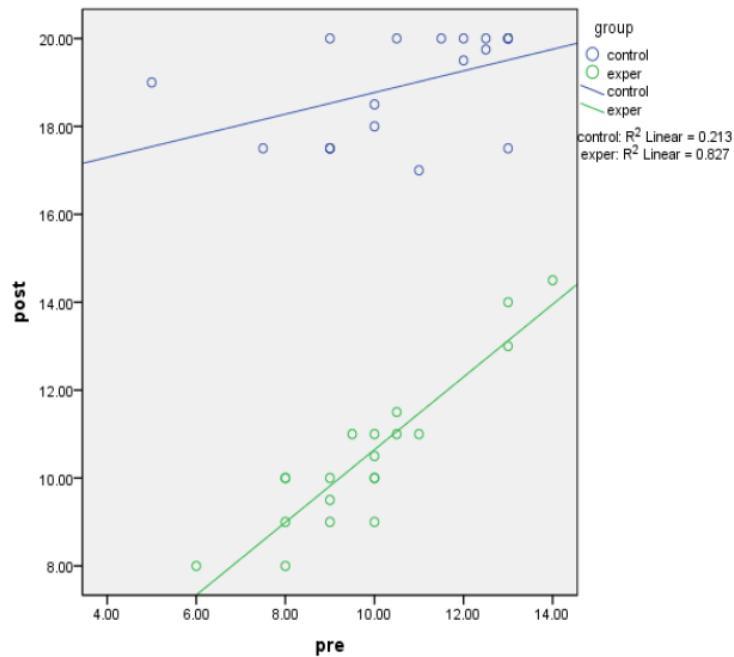
Figure 1 Scatter of 10 Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

Comparing the scores obtained on pretest and posttest, a significant difference was witnessed between the test takers ($p = .000$) in two groups, and since the average of scores of experimental group participants (18.84), in which they were treated through the application of SMS for improving vocabulary, was found to be higher than the one for control group (10.89), it was concluded that the research hypothesis concerning the effect of SMS application on Learning Vocabulary was to be confirmed. As stated earlier, an alternative method of data analysis used in the current study with regard to the first research question was independent samples t-test, the findings of which are illustrated in Tables 5 and 6 below.

TABLE 5
GROUP STATISTICS

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
score	experimental	20	8.6000	1.63514	.36563
	control	20	.7500	.91047	.20359

TABLE 6
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
score	18.758	38	.000

Considering the level of significance reported in the above table (0.000), once more it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the experimental and control group participants. This conclusion is clearly shown in the following bar figure.
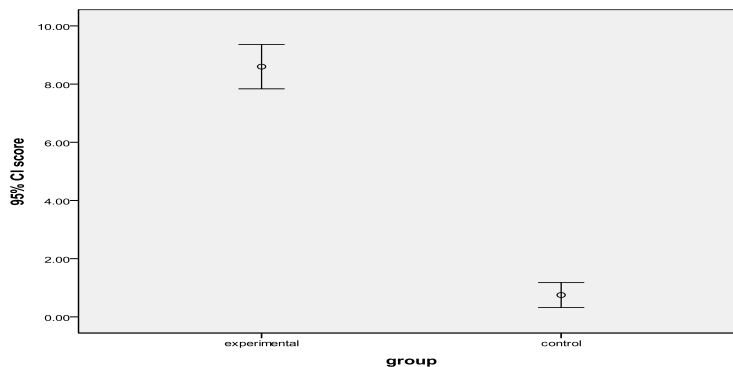
Figure 2 T-test Bar Diagram

Qualitative findings

This section reports on the findings obtained through the analysis of the nine questions on the questionnaire administered to the learners to gauge their general perceptions toward the application of cell phones. Thus, in what follows the questions are going to be discussed based on the sequence in which they appeared on the questionnaire.

Q1. *Do you own a mobile phone?*

Since all the students had cell phone and their answers were all positive, there is no table for this question.

Q2. *What do you normally use your mobile phone for?*

TABLE 7
THE FREQUENCY TABLE FOR THE USE OF MOBILE PHONES

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	phone talk and SMS	20	100.0	100.0	100.0

There were three options (phone call, SMS, and phone call and SMS) in this question; the results depicted in the above table, reveal that 100 percent of test takers had marked the third option, phone call and SMS. In other words, all of the participants were found to use cell phones for both talking and sending SMS. This piece of finding has also been shown in the bar diagram below.
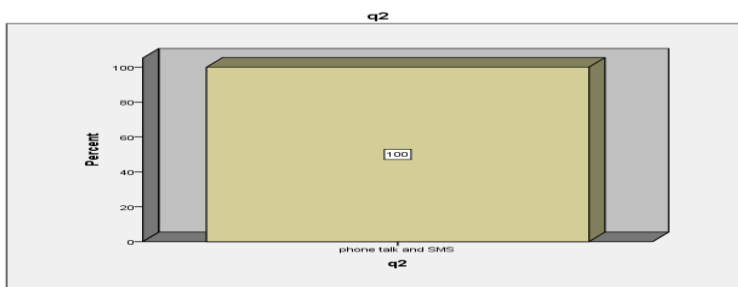
Figure 3 Bar Diagram Relevant to the Use of Mobile Phones

Q3. *What is your average monthly SMS utilization?*

TABLE 8
THE FREQUENCY TABLE FOR AVERAGE MONTHLY SMS UTILIZATION

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-99	17	85.0	85.0	85.0
	100-199	2	10.0	10.0	95.0
	200-299	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

The upshots gained as to the third question, based on Table 8, demonstrate that 85% of the testees claimed that they send 0-99 messages, 10% of them sent 100-199 and the remaining 5% sent 200-299 SMSs per month. The relevant bar diagram is shown below.
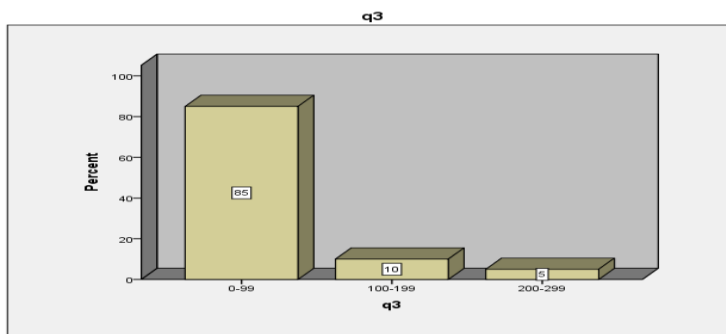
Figure 4 Bar Diagram Relevant to Average Monthly SMS Utilization

Q4. *Are you currently pursuing any studies as either a full- or part-time student?*

The respondents were required to only answer *Yes* or *No* to this question, and since they were all students of English at the ILI which can be regarded as a kind of part-time study, their replies were all *Yes*. So 100% of the testers were following part time English studies. This upshot is illustrated in Table 9 as well as in Figure 5.

TABLE 9
THE FREQUENCY TABLE FOR PURSUING STUDIES AS A FULL- OR PART-TIME STUDENT

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	20	100.0	100.0	100.0
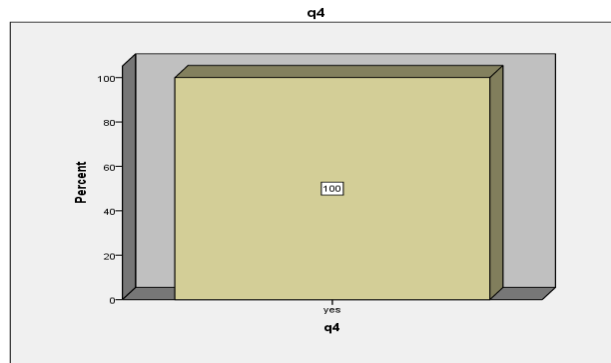
Figure 5 Bar Diagram Relevant to Pursuing Studies as a Full- or Part-Time Student

Q5. *How frequently would you do your English studies through SMS?*

To answer this question, five options (every day, once a week or more, once a month or more, during exam period and not applicable) were included. The students' replies were actually based on how frequently they would receive information about the words to be learned on their cell phone, and exchange the necessary information in order to understand the applications of the words and their meanings. All the participants had marked once a week or more due to their involvement in the current project in which they were sent SMSs on a regular weekly basis. The detailed data in this regard are shown in Table 10 and Figure 6.

TABLE 10
THE FREQUENCY TABLE FOR THE FREQUENCY OF ENGLISH STUDIES THROUGH SMS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	once a week or more	20	100.0	100.0	100.0
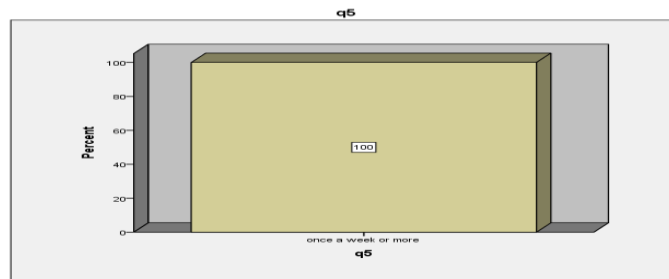
Figure 6 Bar Diagram Relevant to the Frequency of English Studies through SMS

Q6. *Do you think your existing SMS utilization method is good?*

TABLE 11
THE FREQUENCY TABLE FOR SMS UTILIZATION METHOD

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	16	80.0	80.0	80.0
	no	2	10.0	10.0	90.0
	maybe	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	
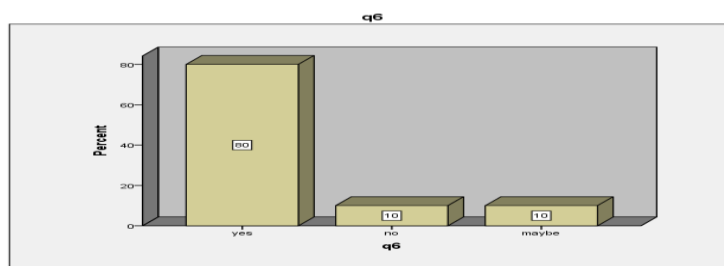
Figure 7 Bar Diagram Relevant to SMS Utilization Method

In responding question 6 which had three possible options (*Yes*, *No* and *Maybe*), 80% had marked *Yes* because they really liked this new way of learning based on the gathered data, whereas 10% had marked *No* since, based on the interview results, they thought it took time for them to cope with such a new trend of learning. Yet, the remaining 10% marked *Maybe* owing to their uncertainty as to the best alternative suiting them (For getting a better grasp of the outcomes for this research question refer to Table 11 and Figure 7).

Q7. *Do you think SMS is useful in education?*

TABLE 12
THE FREQUENCY TABLE FOR SMS UTILITY IN VOCABULARY LEARNING

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	17	85.0	85.0	85.0
	maybe	3	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

85% of the students (17 out of 20) had marked *Yes* since they believed they could learn vocabularies much better through the MALL-operated approach utilized in the current study. Furthermore, while none of the respondents marked *No*, 15 percent (3 out of the whole population of 20 in the experimental group) marked *Maybe* due to the fact that working with cell phone needed the skill of quick typing and reading in their opinions.
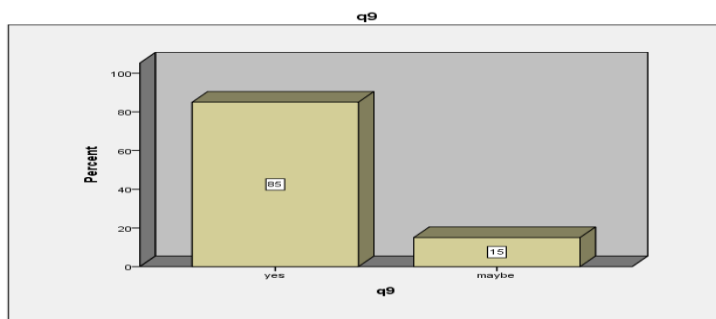
Figure 8 Bar Diagram Relevant to SMS Utility in Vocabulary Learning

Q8. *If SMS application is implemented in education sector, which of the following services would you be interested in participating in?* (Five options were included: *Strongly Interested*, *Interested*, *Neutral*, *Useless*, and *Definitely Not*)

TABLE 13
THE FREQUENCY TABLE FOR SMS ALERT

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly interested	16	80.0	80.0	80.0
	interested	2	10.0	10.0	90.0
	being neutral	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

8a. SMS Alert:

In this question the majority of the testees, i.e. 80% was found to be *strongly interested* in SMS alert since they were highly motivated to use SMS as a vital device in their current life, 10% were just *interested*, and the remaining 10% were *neutral*. Indeed, none of the participants had marked *Useless* and *Definitely Not* interested as their choices (see Table 13 and Figure 9 below.
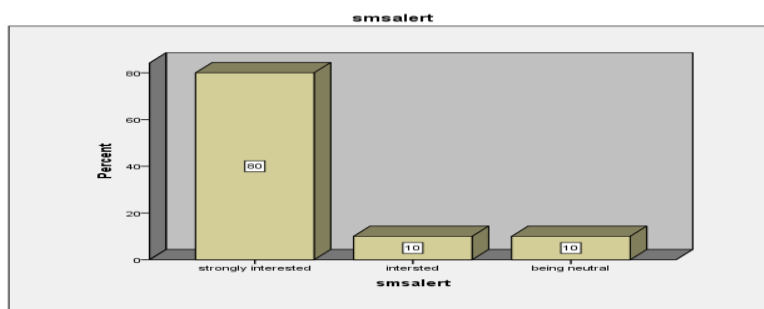
Figure 9 Bar Diagram Relevant to SMS Alert

8b. SMS Chat:

TABLE 14
THE FREQUENCY TABLE FOR SMS CHAT

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly interested	18	90.0	90.0	90.0
	interested	1	5.0	5.0	95.0
	being definitely not interested	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

With regard to question 8b almost all the testees, i.e. 90% were *strongly interested* in SMS chat (as they revealed in interview session, they were highly motivated to use SMS for chatting in current life). Moreover, 5% of the participants were simply *interested* in it, and the rest had opted for *definitely not* interested in SMS chat, because as they later remarked in their interviews they believed that they could do more important things by mobiles than chatting with others. None of the subjects, yet, had marked option 3 (*neutral*) or option 4 (*useless*) (see Table 14 and Figure 10).
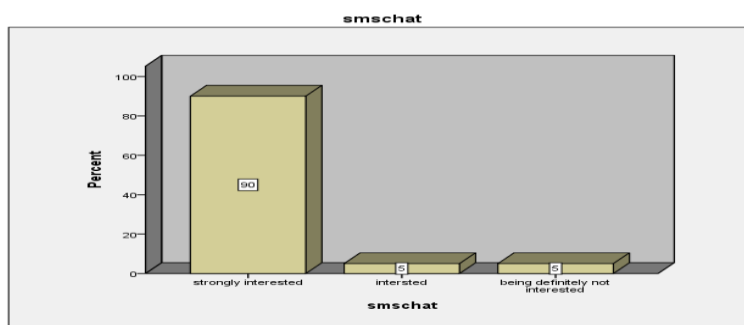
Figure 10 Bar Diagram Relevant to SMS Chat

8c. SMS Game:

TABLE 15
THE FREQUENCY TABLE FOR SMS INFORMATION EXCHANGE GAME

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly interested	8	40.0	40.0	40.0
	interested	8	40.0	40.0	80.0
	being neutral	1	5.0	5.0	85.0
	no interesting	1	5.0	5.0	90.0
	being definitely not interested	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

40% of the learners were *strongly interested* in getting new information out of the newly played games, 40% were merely *interested* but not highly motivated to do so, 5% were *neutral* toward it, 5% were *not interested* in SMS game, and the rest (10 percent) were *definitely not* interested in doing that (see Table 15 and Figure 11).
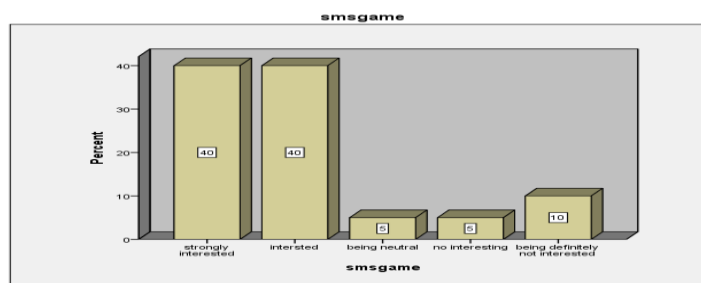
Figure 11 Bar Diagram Relevant to SMS Information Exchange Game

8d. SMS Information:

As Table 16 and Figure 12 reveal, 65% of the learners were *strongly interested* in getting new information and sending it through SMS exchanging, 20% were *interested* but not highly motivated to do so, 5% were *neutral* toward it., and the remaining 10% were *definitely not* interested in doing that.

TABLE 16
THE FREQUENCY TABLE FOR INFORMATION EXCHANGE THROUGH SMS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly interested	13	65.0	65.0	65.0
	interested	4	20.0	20.0	85.0
	being neutral	1	5.0	5.0	90.0
	being definitely not interested	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	
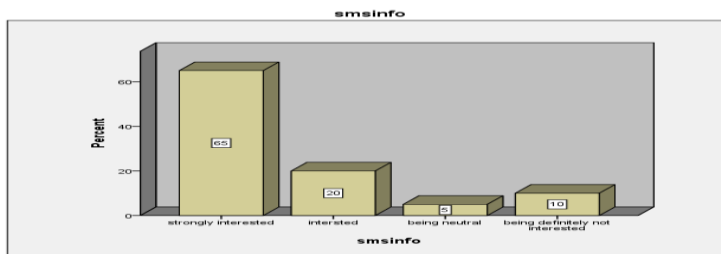
Figure 12 Bar Diagram Relevant to Information Exchange through SMS

8e. SMS Tutoring:

TABLE 17
THE FREQUENCY TABLE FOR SMS TUTORSHIP

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly interested	12	60.0	60.0	60.0
	interested	5	25.0	25.0	85.0
	being neutral	2	10.0	10.0	95.0
	being definitely not interested	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

In response to this item, which was partially relevant to the principal hypothesis of the current research, 60% of the students were found to be *strongly interested*, 25% *interested*, 10% *neutral*, and 5% were *definitely not* interested (for more details refer to Table 17 and Figure 13).
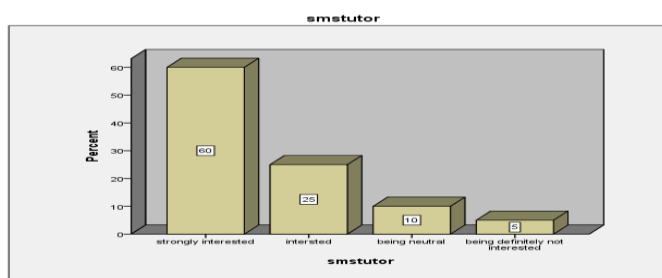
Figure 13 Bar Diagram Relevant to SMS Tutorship

Q9. *On a scale of 1 (most important) to 5 (least important), please rate the following factors in order of importance that you would consider in using the SMS application*:
9a. Convenience:

TABLE 18
THE FREQUENCY TABLE FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF SMS APPLICATION

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	most important	14	70.0	70.0	70.0
	very important	6	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Actually, question 9a was after determining the students' opinions about MALL and SMS application. Based on the gained results, 70% of learners thought it was *the most important* device to apply for learning and convenient to use, 30% thought it could be *very important*. Yet, the other three options (*important*, *less important*, *least important*), were not selected by any of the individuals (see Table 18 and Figure 14)
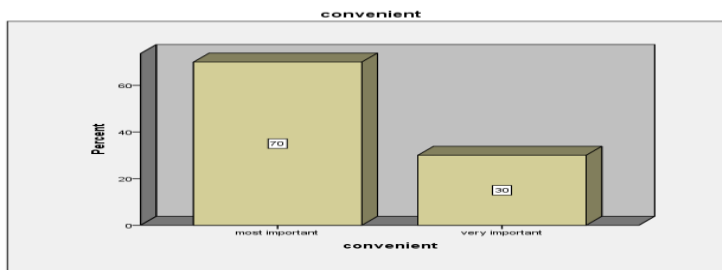
Figure 14 Bar Diagram Relevant to the Convenience of SMS Application

9b. Flexibility:

TABLE 19
THE FREQUENCY TABLE FOR FLEXIBILITY OF MOBILE AND SMS CAPACITY

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	most important	17	85.0	85.0	85.0
	very important	1	5.0	5.0	90.0
	important	1	5.0	5.0	95.0
	least important	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

As to question 9b, 85% thought it was the *most important*, 5% thought it could be *very important*, 5% marked *important*, and 5% believed that it was less flexible (see Table 19 and Figure 15).
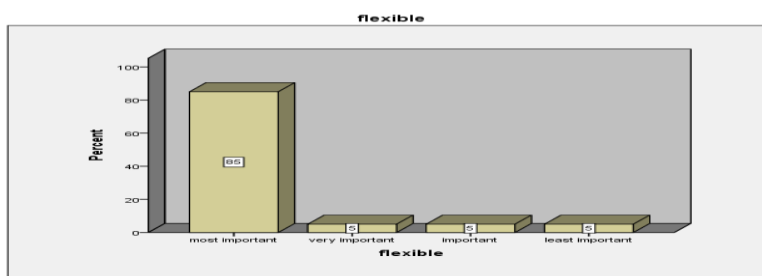
Figure 15 Bar Diagram Relevant to Flexibility of Mobile and SMS Capacity

9c: Saving time

This question was asked in order to find how much time the learners typically spent on SMS application and exchanging. 80% of the respondents thought it was *the most important* device to save time to learn, 10% thought it could be *very important*, and the other 10% stated that saving time for SMS application was *important*. Since they considered it as an important factor they hadn't marked options 4 and 5 (see Table 20 and Figure 16).

TABLE 20
THE FREQUENCY TABLE FOR THE USE OF SMS AS A MEANS OF SAVING TIME

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	most important	16	80.0	80.0	80.0
	very important	2	10.0	10.0	90.0
	important	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	
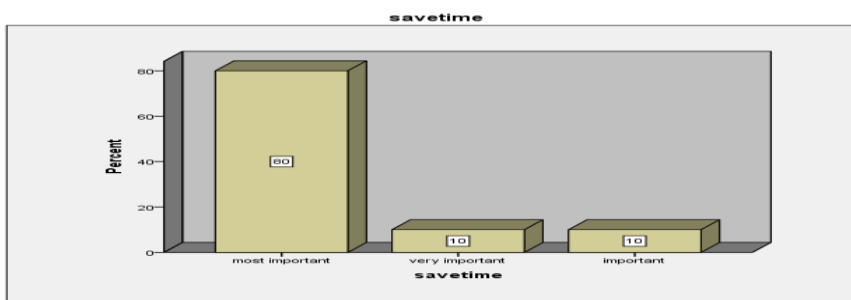
Figure 16 Bar Diagram Relevant to the Use of SMS as a Means of Saving Time

9d: Effectiveness

TABLE 21
THE FREQUENCY TABLE FOR EFFECTIVENESS OF SMS APPLICATION

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	most important	10	50.0	50.0	50.0
	very important	7	35.0	35.0	85.0
	important	3	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Question 9d was asked in order to find how effective the SMS application was. Based on the findings, 50% of participants thought it was *the most important* device for learning, 35% thought it could be *very important*, and 15% stated that effectiveness of SMS application was *important*. Since they considered it as an important factor they hadn't marked option 4 and 5 (see Table 21 and Figure 17).
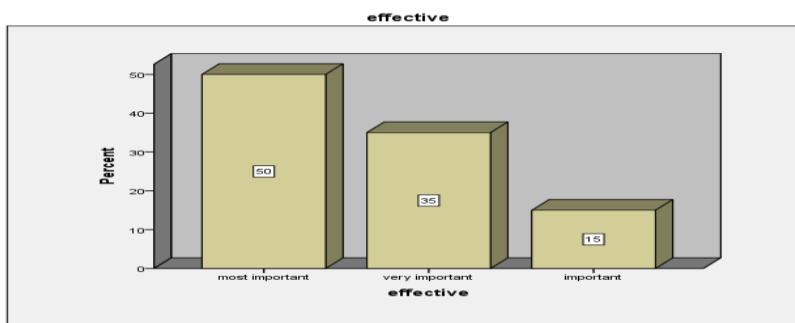
Figure 17 Bar Diagram Relevant to Effectiveness of SMS Application

9e: Being Fun

TABLE 22
THE FREQUENCY TABLE FOR SMS APPLICATION AS A FUN PURSUIT

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid most important	13	65.0	65.0	65.0
very important	4	20.0	20.0	85.0
important	2	10.0	10.0	95.0
less important	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

In reply to question 9e, 65% marked *the most important*, 20% thought it could be *very important*, 10% opted for *important*, and merely 5% believed that it was *less important* to be busy with SMS application (see Table 22 and Figure 18).
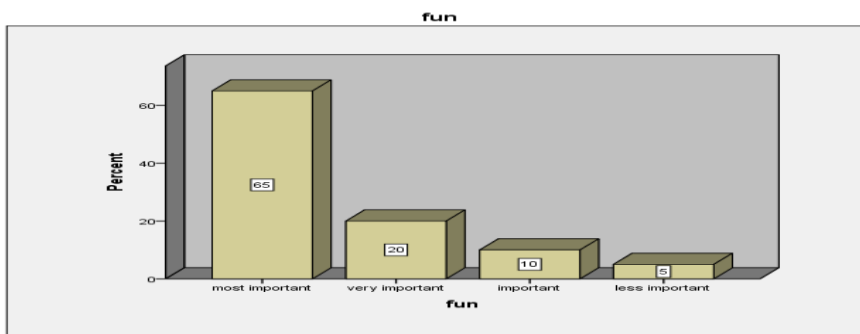
Figure 18 Bar Diagram Relevant to SMS application as a Fun Pursuit

Interview

Students in the current study were interviewed using some pre-designed questions, and each learner was given 5 minutes to answer them orally. Two sample interview items are presented below:

1. What are the factors, if any, Iranian EFL learners perceive to be impeding MALL practice?
2. What are your suggestions on actions to be taken to make MALL practice more effective?

Altogether, as the interview results revealed, the learners were all positive toward the effectiveness of MALL in the context of learning AND believed they couldn't do away with cell phones nowadays. However, some of them complained about their parents' lack of concern with regard to how and for what purposes they used mobiles. The other

problem pointed out by interviewees was that they weren't permitted to have mobiles at schools. Finally, they recommended the use of cell phones for a variety of other purposes in language classes, including talking to one another in English and doing different exercises such as fill-in-the-blank, cloze tests, etc. using their mobiles.

IV. DISCUSSION

The findings of the current study are in partial going with the results gained in Levy and Kennedy's (2005) research. To sum up what was gained in the present study, it should be reiterated that the analyses of data relevant to the first research question, pointed to the effectiveness of treatment in enhancing learners' vocabulary learning. In effect, the gained results indicated that the use of vocabulary learning program through the use of mobile phone (SMS) improved the students' vocabulary learning and their attitudes towards the use of mobile phones (SMS) for English vocabulary learning. It was also represented that using vocabulary learning programs on mobile phones would prove to be much more effective to improve students' vocabulary learning than using traditional paper-based resources. Finally, the findings showed that participants found learning English vocabulary on mobile phones effective and entertaining.

Qualitative data were found to strongly buttress this positive piece of finding, as well; indeed, participants referred to several positive aspects of the researchers' devised treatment during the interviews. All of the participants interviewed provided positive feedback about the mobile learning (SMS) application used in this study. The students stated that they enjoyed the instructional materials sent to their mobile phones during the experiment. All of the students stated that it would be better if their English language education were supported with instructional materials anchored to the use of mobile phones (SMS) like the one they used during the experiment.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the present study, it can be concluded that even in circumstances where full access to digital resources is not possible, students can be encouraged to make active use of technology through their handheld, nifty devices, i.e. their cellular phones. Students are motivated enough to purchase and use these devices primarily because of their convenience. Thus, the teachers' pivotal role in the classroom might be that of tailoring active use of such useful devices to class context and familiarizing the learners with the proper utilization of such resources for educational purposes.

Text-messaging tools, as one of the focal utilities of cell phones, provide an effective means of teaching students important 21st-century skills. Further, tools like cell phones can help foster the development of communities of practice and learning words among students and teachers. Cell phones and other text messaging tools can also help motivate and encourage students to do more writing and to express themselves through their writing. Additionally, SMS tool is thought to support and reinforce other instances of learning such as social learning, in that it can trigger more interactions between and among students. After all, in today's rapidly changing world students will need to understand and master the use of 21st-century technological tools to effectively communicate and collaborate together.

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Teacher Written Feedback on L2 Student Writings

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Abstract—In the past few decades, a great number of researches have been conducted on the teacher written feedback and its influence on L2 student writings. The researches are mainly concerned with the major types, and the characteristics of the feedback as well as student reactions to the feedback, or the impact of teacher written feedback and that of peer feedback, indicating that feedback is still a fundamental element of a process approach to writing. This paper has taken a further consideration on the appropriate, effective and efficient teacher written feedback on L2 student writings by engaging students' mind with minimal marking and by ensuring students' positive feelings with demonstrated improvement, which enables students to expand their language and ideas, the ultimate goal of their learning in writing. Thus, the paper presents the four principles of producing effective teacher written feedback.

Index Terms—teacher written feedback, L2 students, English writings

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing, as an important communicative activity, has been paid much more attention to recently. Researches home and abroad into feedback on L2 student writings have covered the teacher written feedback (Cumming, 1985; Guo & Qin, 2006; Hyland, 1998; Jacobs, 1998; Kepner, 1991; Li, 2011; Master, 1995; Wang, 2006; Wang, 2007; Zamel, 1985), and L2 student response to teacher written feedback (Chen, 1998; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Ferris et al, 1997; Leki, 1991; Radecki & Swales, 1988; Straub, 1997; Yu, 2000). The necessity and specific techniques of teacher written feedback on student writing in English have always been a heated and challenging topic of improving student writing proficiency. Up to now, the research findings are different, inconclusive, even contradictory, and in L2 writing, sparse (Leki, 1990). Even though the research results lead to some questions about the usefulness and effectiveness of teacher written feedback, we can't deny the fact that students want feedback and teachers feel obliged to provide it. So this paper discusses what kind of teacher written feedback is appropriate, effective and efficient, and how to enable students to really benefit from it for the sake of achieving writing proficiency.

II. PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE TEACHER WRITTEN FEEDBACK ON STUDENT ENGLISH WRITINGS

Feedback is a fundamental element of a process approach to writing. It may have a definition of input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision, usually in the form of comments, questions, and suggestions (Keh, 1990). Through feedback, the writer may learn the reader's confusion caused by the writer's insufficient information, illogical organization, poor development of ideas, or even inaccurate usage and choice of words and tense. Students are motivated to continue a series of revisions especially through positive feedback. Hence, it is feedback that drives the writer polishing their drafts again and again to bring expression closer and closer to intention in successive drafts and eventually accomplish the final end-product. Just as the saying goes, learning writing is through writing. Major types of feedback in a writing process approach are: peer feedback (Dheram, 1995; Keh, 1990; Mei & Yuan, 2010), conference and comment (sometimes, evaluation, and error correction are included).

Among them, teacher written feedback is the most important feedback that L2 students expect to receive. It is indispensable in the students' whole writing process. Usually we can easily find the interpretation gap between the teacher and the students, especially in written feedback. That is, a misfit between teacher written feedback on compositions and the learner interest—between what a teacher gives and what students would like to get (Lee, 2008). And this mismatch between the concerns of the students and those of the teacher is sure to affect the practical effectiveness of the written feedback. As a result, the students always feel at a loss how to handle the feedback in their revising work. Such unsatisfactory occurrence is rooted in lack of interaction between reader and writer either in spoken or in written language. As we know, a common feedback situation is one in which the teacher takes students drafts away and provides a written comment on them. After that, there is no opportunity for both to contribute to the discussion. On the one hand, the writer's ideas are represented only by the draft and they are not always so skillful in expressing their intentions. Thus, the teacher relying on the writer's inadequate performance is likely to give misguided comments. On the other hand, the writers, faced with the puzzled remarks, will not obtain the full evidence for revision. Misunderstanding is expanding. Under these circumstances, it may be necessary for several cycles of students' drafting and teacher comment to take place before an acceptable version can be produced. Therefore, teachers and students need

to work more at establishing agreement on their interpretation of feedback and at improving the students' writing strategies by gaining maximal benefit from the feedback they receive.

Teachers can provide their effective written feedback appropriately by adhering to four principles.

A. Focusing on the Process rather than the Product

1. The Product Approach

The product-focused approach to EFL writing mainly refers to controlled or guided composition as mentioned. It focuses the students' attention on specific features of the written language. It focuses primarily on formal accuracy and correctness, prefers mastery of previously learned linguistic form of language to the production of original ideas, organization and style. The methodology involves the imitation and manipulation (substitution, transformation, expansion, completion, etc.) of model passages carefully constructed and graded for vocabulary and sentence pattern. "The writer is simply a manipulator of previously learned language structures; the reader is the ESL teacher in the role of editor or proofreader, not especially interested in the quality of ideas or expressions but primarily concerned with formal linguistic features" (Silva, 1990). To conclude, the product-focused approach views writing as a matter of arrangement, of fitting sentences into the prescribed pattern. Students learn to write by imitation of the given pattern, but they will not add anything of their own to it. What they have organized together is considered the end-product.

2. The Process Approach

In the late 1960s and in the 1970s, concentration in the teaching of writing was shifted from the written product to the process of writing. The process approach infuses "greater respect for individual writers and for the writing itself" (Hyland, 2003). Teachers begin to put increasing emphasis on how the learners write well rather than what they have written (Su & Yang, 2001). Current theory and practice in writing pedagogy acknowledges that the nature of the writing process is fundamentally social. "Writing is seen not as a de-contextualized solo-performance but as an interactive, social process of construction of meaning between writer and reader" (Arndt, 1993).

The process approach (the Tapestry approach, called by Scarcella, 1992, p.122-5) is defined as a multiple-draft process which consists of prewriting input (to generate ideas), drafting (to emphasize content, author's ideas), revising more than once (to polish the communication of those ideas). As far as the rhetoric composition is concerned, successful writing technique learning still requires the process approach. The main concern of rhetoric in writing is the rhetorical, structural, logical construction and arrangement of discourse forms. It stresses the elements of the paragraph (topic sentences, supporting sentences, concluding sentences, and transitions), and various ways to the development of the paragraph (illustration, exemplification, comparison, contrast, classification, definition, and so on). Attention is also given to the essay development: elements of an essay (introduction, body, and conclusion), and organizational patterns (narrative, descriptive, explanation, and argumentation). It is likely that students will not be so skillful in performing such complicated writing techniques until after they have practiced several drafts.

The process approach is writer-centered, and it takes student writing as the central course material and requires no strict, predetermined syllabus; rather, problems are treated as they emerge. In the students' whole writing process, the teacher only shows what should be corrected instead of correcting the compositions completely. With the relative freedom in students writing, teacher's immediate feedback through the whole writing process appears more and more important for students to revise their drafts.

In the particular teaching context—college English teaching to non-English majors, because of large class size and very limited classroom instruction, the process approach has been viewed as impractical as too time-consuming. So, a teacher who uses a process approach need to draw some techniques from other approaches as the students need them, such as the paragraph-pattern approach (rhetoric). We seldom find a writing classroom where a teacher only adopts one approach which excluding all others. It may be practical and beneficial to be eclectic in teaching writing, that is to say, to combine the merits of the approaches rather than stick to a single approach. Some elements of different approaches can be successfully combined. Therefore, the process approach connected with rhetoric, in the long run, will be effective to develop learners writing ability for its agreement with the nature of writing and its practicing of the specific writing techniques.

B. Engaging Students' Mind

As for the various ways of providing feedback on the form of the students writing, the indirect marking which engages students' minds in interpreting has proved to be effective. Many earlier studies (Ferris, 2003; Frantzen, 1995; Lalande, 1982) have found indirect error feedback can benefit students more than direct feedback in their writing in the long run. Research generally indicates that overt error correction by the teacher is ineffective and may actually hinder students' progress and fail to help students learn on their own (Wang & Wu, 2012). It is very tedious and time-consuming for the teacher, and disheartening for the students if they get back their compositions almost covered with too much ink. Simply writing out a correct response is unlikely to offer much of a stimulus to future improvement. Therefore, our approach must give the students clear awareness of their errors without reducing the benefit of conscientious marking. The widely-used means of accomplishing correction are to use a shorthand of correcting codes located above the errors or in the margins without showing where the errors are in the line; and to make crosses in the margins alongside the lines in which errors occur, either indicating how many errors there are or not. Whatever correcting symbols teachers use, they must make students understand what they mean before or during this correction.

The obvious advantage of marking the students' errors with symbols is that teachers can save much time by freeing themselves from such correcting burden. What's more important, however, is that the students have to engage their minds in resolving their own problems. It leaves them with enough room for having the opportunity to identify their errors and correct them before returning the paper for reassessment. Correcting codes may generate pair and group discussion as students collaborate in the activity. With clues hinted by such minimal marking technique(Haswell, 1983; Hyland, 1990; Zheng, 1999), students are motivated to consider correction actively, which is more effective than the mere passive reading of teacher corrections. As a result, they can learn from their mistakes and the process of self-correction as well. Some studies suggest that students can improve their writing by being made responsible for correcting their own grammatical errors, and suggest that students are able to reduce the number of errors in their subsequent writing when the teacher has marked all errors using the correcting codes (Shrum & Glisan, 2009, p.167-188). Regarding the specific techniques of marking, the proficiency level of the learners should be noted. When the students are unable to identify their own errors, the teacher assists them—by marking the major errors with correcting symbols that help the learners identify their errors and fix them. Later, when the students have gained more competence as editors, the teachers indicate where the major errors have occurred by placing x's in the margins of the students' written papers.

Apart from the minimal marking that involves in students minds to self-correct, a student self-monitoring technique (Charles, 1990) in responding to problems in written English is also indispensable of the students' cognitive performance. That is, students annotate their drafts with comments or present their problems before handing them in. The teacher then gives corresponding opinions on the points raised by the students. Writers and readers' minds participate in one writing process. Regardless of the students' actions before or after the teacher written feedback, the teacher should make great efforts to activate the students' thinking about their writing problems on their own initiative all the time.

C. Ensuring Students' Positive Feelings

Providing appropriate written feedback requires the teacher to think it over seriously not only in cognitive way (e.g. on form), but also in affective way.

Krashen's (1982, p.31) affective filter hypothesis "captures the relationship between affective variables and the process of L2 acquisition". As we know, human beings are emotional creatures. Their emotional states and affective factors filter what they take in. That is to say, affective filter controls the entry of input. A strong filter allows less input to be processed whereas a weak filter allows more input to be processed. Hence, the writers' personality, such as self-confidence, self-esteem, must be taken into consideration for the teacher to provide marking or comment feedback. Behavioral scientists have done countless experiments to prove that any human being tends to repeat an act which has been immediately followed by a pleasant result. If kids know they are working for a reward and can focus on relatively challenging task, they show the most creativity. As Graham (2012) put it, "Instead of drowning students' compositions in critical red ink, the teacher will get far more constructive results by finding one or two things which have been done better than last time, and commenting favorably on them. I believe that a student knows when he has handed in something above his usual standard, and that he waits hungrily for a belief comment in the margin to show him that the teacher is aware of it, too." Demonstrated improvement can be a useful tool for increasing self-confidence and providing some hope. Therefore, positive comments are to be offered as much as possible to arouse and strengthen the writers' positive feelings in the process of their writing improvement. In most cases, positive words result in positive effects.

However, only praise or criticism feedback is not working as expected all the time to all the students. The students need the loving force-praising comment, from which all creation flows; and yet the approval alone is incomplete, even misleading, finally, destructive. It needs the balance of the force of these cautions, such as "Wrong. Correct. Review. Improve." The two conflicting evaluations are often working complementarily. Between the two poles of affirmation and doubt, both in the name of love and help, the students try to follow their true course with the guidance of the teacher to arrive at their destination. The results of behaviorists' experiments have demonstrated the importance of praise and criticism, and the necessity of feedback. Those who were praised improved dramatically. Those who were criticized improved also, but not so much. And the scores of the children who were ignored hardly improved at all. Interestingly, the brightest children were helped just as much by criticisms by praise, but the less able children reacted badly to criticism, needed praise the most. As can be seen, the majority of the students are so eager to accept the teacher's approving feedback on their previous performance that we should be ready to ensure their positive feeling by providing effective feedback appropriately.

D. Expanding Students' Language and Ideas

Even though engaging the students' minds and ensuring the students' positive feelings need to be taken into account in providing the effective teacher written feedback, the teachers will never leave expanding the students' language and ideas out of account. Expanding the students' language and deepening their ideas are not only the signals of their improvement in writing but also the ultimate goal of their learning in writing.

Writing is a way of discovering meaning since it refines thought and empowers students by enabling them to affect their readers. Writing is a complex, creative and thinking process. Meaning of a composition is central and form

develops from meaning (Scarcella, 1992, p. 176-7). Form serves content. They are united as one. While the language in writing is expanded, the idea is opened up and thinking is deepened. Such expansion of language is far beyond the correction of form alone, which cannot solve all the language problems. It includes both correcting form and enlarging the meaning of one specific word. Not surprisingly, we often find that many students' compositions are lacking in content in spite of the correct usage of words in grammar. So, to increase the quality of a composition, is dependent on helping the students to widen the meaning of their words or sentences without straying away from the main idea. For instance, as we have noticed, the details which make a paper interesting and effective are specific details. To increase students' awareness of what "specific" really means, the teacher ought to transform vague, general words and phrases into sharp and vivid ones, for example:

(1) doing a hard job—digging for coal in a mine a mile below the surface;

(2) walking in the street—strolling down the avenue;

(3) an ugly nose—a small flat nose;

(4) an untidy room—my brother's room, with sweaters, underwear, books, and toys scattered everywhere;

(5) a moving car—the speeding Ford shooting along the highway.

Apart from the operation of the writing techniques, teacher written comments on content have been criticized for being too general, or for being too specific. Comments such as "Good" or "Good point" "Why?" are problematic, confusing students about what it compliments and leaving them no way of providing an appropriate answer. On the other extreme, if the advice is too detailed, it will hinder the students' creativity and they cannot use it on subsequent writing. Keh (1990) recommends the ways of writing effective and efficient comments: the teacher should

(1) respond as a concerned reader to a writer rather than a grammarian or grade-giver;

(2) note improvements: "good", plus reasons why;

(3) refer to a specific problem, plus strategy for revision;

(4) write questions with enough information for students to answer;

(5) write summative comment of strengths and weaknesses;

(6) ask "honest" questions as a reader to a writer rather than statements which assume too much about the writer's intentional meaning.

Teacher written feedback aims at providing a tool for students to reassess and redraft their work. To ensure that all the teacher's hints are absorbed and carried out by the students, we must persuade students to reflect on and to act on the feedback we provide, even press them to do so if necessary because researches show that most of the students do not really act on the feedback except for making a mental note of the grade, the correction and the comment. Therefore, it is urgent to reinforce the students' consciousness of revising work. The students' redrafting functions as a key to converting the teacher's instruction into the students' own achievement in writing. So, as soon as the teacher has offered the thoughtful feedback on both the form and content of the students' compositions before the next lesson, he ought to be responsible for the monitoring and checking the students' subsequent revising assignments. If the students are reluctant to edit their work, an added incentive is that no grade is recorded for the assignment until self-correction has been attempted. In consequence, with the co-operative engagement of both the teacher and the student, the student's following article tends to be better either in the accuracy and vividness of language or in the profundity and substantiality of content.

III. CONCLUSION

So far we have discussed how to provide written feedback on students' compositions in an appropriate way. Before giving our responses, we need to be aware that any comments are shaped by the students' individual needs and strengths. Meanwhile, we also have to admit that each teacher has his own preference to evaluation. No matter what methods the teacher adopts in written responding, we ought to bear in mind that the teacher written feedback should aim at enabling the students to monitor their own performance and to correct themselves. The ultimate pedagogic goal is simply to lead the students to become independent of the teacher's instructions.

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Cross-linguistic Transfer (from L1 to L2, L2 to L1, and L2 to L3) of Reading Strategies in a Multicompetent Mind

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Abstract—Taking a process and product view of reading, this paper attempts to explore the relationship between languages in one mind from Cook's multi-competence perspective. According to multi-competence view, L1 and L2 (or L2s) which are in one mind form a linguistic super-system (Cook, 2004) and not systems which are completely separate. In studies of language transfer, the general idea is that languages have effects on each other. To the purpose of this paper, three studies conducted by the author on the effects of L1 on L2, L2 on L1, and L2 on L3 will be provided. The common finding in all these studies is improvements in the process of reading in any given language will result in improvements in the process of reading in other languages. However, the same transferability power that can be conceived for the process of reading cannot be conceived for the product of reading as factors such as directionality of transfer and language proficiency interfere with this. It is recommended that since the process aspect of reading in different languages in one mind is transferable, native or foreign language teachers take this aspect of the relationship between languages as seriously as possible so that its effects can be witnessed both in the language of instruction and other languages that exist in the mind of the reader, be it L1, L2 or any further language. An advantage of this is that an increase in the process or reading will also result in an increase in the product of reading both in the language of instruction and any other language in mind if other conditions are met.

Index Terms—cross-linguistic transfer, L1, L2, L3, multi-competence, reading strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the significant aims of language classes is to improve effective reading in all students. Among the four main skills, reading plays a pivotal role in learning a foreign language. Therefore, the matter of strategic reading has been considered as a bridge to success by many reading researchers and teachers in recent years. Since in the current world of communication it is a commonplace to learn at least a foreign language, it is a necessity for language instructors and/or language learners to know about the nature of the relationship of languages in one mind and to know in what ways languages in one mind influence each other. What follows touches upon language transfer studies, strategic reading, multi-competence view, and a report of three experimental studies on the relationship of languages in language learners' mind. Finally, conclusions and recommendations are presented.

II. LANGUAGE TRANSFER

In the 50s and 60s, under the influence of behaviorism and structuralism, language transfer studies became common practice in second/foreign language studies. Odlin (1989) states linguistic transfer is "the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired" (p. 27). L1 influence on L2 is known as 'substratum transfer' (Odlin, 1989, p. 169). Different aspects of language including the phonetic, phonological, semantic, syntactic, and morphological aspects can be under this influence. On the other hand, 'borrowing transfer' (ibid, 1989, p. 169) or 'reverse transfer' (Cook, 2003) happens when the direction of linguistic transfer is the reverse.

Transfer was assumed to be either positive or negative. It was believed that negative transfer, which is also known as language interference, was the main source of problems for learners. This idea formed the basis of the so-called Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (Odlin, 1989) whose main tenet was that structural differences between languages equal difficulty and it is this difficulty that leads to interference errors in L2. However, research showed that even similarities can be problematic and dissimilarities seem to facilitate SLA (Catford, 1964). Transfer was not considered as the main source of problem in SLA any more when based on the Chomskian Universal Grammar theory (see Chomsky, 1969) L1 and L2 acquisition were considered equivalent developmental processes. According to this theory, second language acquisition came to be regarded as a creative construction process rather than the transfer of old habits from L1 to L2 (Dulay and Burt, 1975). Therefore, developmental errors were believed to occur as a result of learners' strategies to make learning easier (Taylor, 1975). This view was also criticized because it considered a very small role for transfer in the process of L2 acquisition (Sharwood Smith, 1996). This led to the argument that both transfer and creative construction are influential factors in learning a second and/or foreign language (Danesi, 1995). Among the

five processes critical to the learning of a target language, language transfer is regarded as one important process. The remaining four processes are overgeneralization, transfer-of-training, L2 learning strategies, and L2 communication strategies (Selinker, 1972). If we regard linguistic transfer as an influential variable in L2 learning, then we should shift our focus from the behaviorist principle of transfer to the transfer of processing strategies (see Sridhar, 1980). This is especially helpful if we teach for transfer between skills within a language, or between languages within a skill.

III. Strategic Reading

Reading in L1, L2 or any further language is active skill in which readers construct meaning based on the print (Koda, 2007). In literature, there is distinction between the product and process of reading (Bossers, 1991, Sarig 1987, Taillefer and Pugh 1998). By process it is meant various strategies that readers use. Reading strategies questionnaire, interviews or think-aloud techniques are mostly used for measuring the process of reading. Product of reading or the reading score is measured by reading comprehension tests. The trend in EFL reading instruction shifted from teaching texts to teaching readers (Hamp-Lyons, 1985). Therefore, one of the goals of reading research is to probe into learners' reading strategies. "Reading strategies are of interest not only for what they reveal about the ways readers manage their interactions with written text, but also for how the use of strategies is related to effective reading comprehension" (Carrell, 1998, p. 2). Reading strategies are regarded by Urquhart and Weir (1998, p. 95) as "ways of getting around difficulties encountered while reading." Effective readers monitor the process of reading, are conscious of their own linguistic and cognitive resources, and look for contextual clues. We call these readers as strategic readers and their behavior in reading as 'strategic reading. (Koda, 2005, p. 204)

IV. Multicompetence View

It is a commonplace in language transfer studies to say that the first language would have a positive or negative effect on the second language. A good example is the speech of L2 learners in which there is a trace of L1 accent. However, Cohen (1995) found that bilingual or multilingual people shift between languages in their mind. Pavlenko and Travis (2002, p. 191) referred to 'bidirectional transfer' which is the interaction between the two languages in different perspectives. The concept of the effects of L2 on L1 comes from the notion of 'multi-competence' (Cook, 2003). Before the introduction of the idea of multi-competence, L1 and 'interlanguage' (Selinker, 1972) were believed to be two separate systems in one mind and there was no umbrella term connoting the knowledge of both. Therefore, 'multi-competence' was put forward to refer to the knowledge of languages in the same mind. (Cook, 1991)

Multi-competence regards the languages in mind as a whole rather than as separate L1 and interlanguage components. Cook (2004) states "since the first language and the other language or languages are in the same mind, they must form a language super-system at some level rather than completely separate systems." Cook (2003) explains about three possible models for the relationship of languages in mind: 1) *The Separation Model*. As the name speaks for itself, it regards the languages to be "in watertight compartments" in mind (p. 6). Since, the second language user does not connect the languages in their mind, discussions about the effects of L2 on L1 in this model is of no justification. 2) *The Integration Model* which takes quite the opposite view. It considers one system for different languages in mind. It considers a balance between components of this single system and there is no discussion about the influence of languages on each other. We cannot count languages in mind as first, second, or third languages because they form a unitary system. However, this model is on no firm grounds since L2 users can separate languages in mind (Francis, 1999; Cook 2002). 3) *The interconnection model*. This model falls in between these two extreme models. In itself, it is subcategorized into two models. First is the 'linked-languages model', viewed a variant of the *separation model*. According to this model, the separate components of languages are in interaction with one another. Therefore, studies of language transfer are discussed in this model. Second is the 'partial integration model', driven from the concept of the total integration model. It holds that the two linguistic systems have partially overlapping areas in one mind. "It does not distinguish between languages in the same area of overlap, but sees how the single conjoined system differs from monolingual versions of either language. There may be shared overlapping vocabulary, syntax, or other aspects of language knowledge" (Cook 2003, p. 8).

However, with regard to the ideas and models of the relationship of languages in mind mentioned above, the interesting question is which model can be conceived for the relationship of reading in L1 (Persian language), L2 (English language) and L3 (Arabic language) in the mind of learners when they come to read in any given language. To answer this question, three studies were conducted by the author in each of which two languages are studied simultaneously. What follows is an overview of them.

A. *Study one: Strategic reading in L1 (Persian) and L2 (English): one system or two systems?*

Many instructors hold that since students fail to read effectively in L1, they fail to read effectively in L2 (Alderson, 1984). This study aimed to determine if L1 (Persian) strategic reading differs from L2 (English) strategic reading. Therefore, the following questions were raised: 1) Does the instruction of reading strategies in Persian influence the reading strategies awareness and use in Persian, as well as in English?, and 2) Does the instruction of reading strategies in L1 have any effects on increasing reading comprehension in L1 (Persian) and L2 (English)? The subjects, who were Iranian EFL learners at intermediate and advanced proficiency levels as determined by Nelson test of proficiency, were

put into two groups of control and experimental. 30 students participated in each group. Then, two test batteries of reading, one in Persian and another in English were administered as pre-tests to them. Immediately after these reading tests, a third pre-test, a checklist of reading strategies was distributed to determining what strategies were employed in Persian and English reading tasks. This checklist was adopted from Taillefer and Pugh (1998). It was translated into Persian for learners to feel more comfortable with it. After all the pretests were distributed, the experimental group received instruction of reading strategies in L1 with L1 texts. To this end, the components suggested by Winograde and Hare (1988, cited in Carrell, 1998.p.5) were used. They include *What the strategy is; Why, how, when, and where a strategy should be used; and, how to evaluate use of strategy.* The nature of the texts used in treatment was similar to that of texts used in Persian reading tests in terms of genre of the text, length of the text, and general content of the text. The treatment lasted for eight sessions of 35/40-minutes and, both experimental group and control group were distributed the posttests after the treatment. Analysis of data showed improvements in reading strategies awareness and use in L1 and L2 at both proficiency levels. However, improvements in L1 reading performance were not observed in L2 reading performance after reading strategies instruction in L1. It showed the transferability of strategies awareness and use from L1 to L2, but the effective use of strategies in L2 so that it results in improved L2 reading performance requires more practice in L2 reading strategies instruction with L2 texts.

B. Study two: The relationship between reading in L2 (English) as the first foreign language and L3 (Arabic) as the second foreign language: which model: total separation, total integration, or interconnection?

Learning of a third (or a second foreign) language for a person who has already learnt a foreign language is not a new experience. The intriguing question is if L3 learning draws upon L2 learning experience. This study investigated if reading strategies awareness as well as reading performance in the first and second (English and Arabic, respectively) foreign languages would improve significantly through instruction of reading strategies in L2. 120 Iranian students at pre-university level composed the participants in this study. Simultaneously, they had English and Arabic courses. They were all male and their age ranged from 18 to 19 years. First, the Proficiency test (Nelson, Series 300B) was administered to 210 students to identify students of intermediate and advanced language proficiency levels. They composed the participants of the control and experimental groups. For determining the current abilities of students in L2 and L3 reading tasks, the reading tests in L2 and L3 were administered as pretests to students. These tests were immediately followed by the reading strategies checklist, measuring the strategies awareness and use of students for in L2 and L3. The questionnaire was adopted from the Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001) as an immediate retrospective measure of reading behavior. Following the pretest, the treatment of was given in English, along with normal classroom materials, but the control group just underwent their regular classroom instructions. The measure suggested by Winograde and Hare (for more explanation refer to study one, above) was used to teach students how to read strategically. In addition, the teacher think-aloud technique was used as a common technique of teaching reading strategies to model strategic reading. That is, each single strategy was explained to the students. The students were shown how to use it while reading and they were instructed how to orchestrate use of all the strategies in different reading tasks given to them. The treatment was in ten sessions, each lasting one hour. After the treatment, posttests were given to students. This study showed that reading strategies instruction in the first foreign language improves reading strategies awareness and use, as well as reading ability both in the first and second foreign languages, evidence of the influence of the first foreign language on the second foreign language.

C. Study three: Reading in L2 (English) and L1 (Persian): An Investigation into Reveres Transfer of Reading Strategies from L2 to L1

The same way that one conceives impacts of L1 on L2, L2 effects on L1 are also conceivable. As Cook (2003, p.1) states "the first language of people who know other languages differs from their monolingual peers in diverse ways" from vocabulary to pragmatics. This paper investigate if reading strategies awareness and use as well as the reading score, both in the foreign language (English) and the native tongue (L1) would improve through reading strategies instruction in L2 (English). To this end, two groups of Iranian EFL learners, from two English proficiency levels (intermediate and advanced as determined by proficiency test Nelson) were selected and put into control and experimental groups. Each group was composed of 30 students. To assess the actual reading performance of the participants in L2 and L1 reading, two series of tests of reading, one in English and another in Persian, were administered to the students as pretests. The strategic approach in L2 and L1 was measured using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire of cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies, ranging from Never to Always true of me. The instrument was translated into Persian so that students would understand it clearly. Following the pretest, the experimental group underwent the treatment in L2, but the control group just received their regular classroom materials. Scaffolding is a technique for teaching reading. In this study for, two main steps of scaffolded reading from Graves and Graves (1994) namely, the planning and the implementation step, were used. For the planning phase, the teacher considers learners variables (such as their needs, interests, strong and weak points, and background knowledge), text variables (such as its topic, theme, genre, readability and comprehensibility), and the reading purpose(s). For the implementation step, before reading, while reading, and after reading activities were conducted. People (teacher and peers) scaffolding (in McEwan, 2004) was also used and implemented using the model of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) by Klingner and Vaughn (1998). CSR consists of four comprehension strategies, including, (a) preview

(before reading); (b) click and clunk (while reading); (c) get the gist (after reading); and, (d) wrap-up (after reading), to be used in small cooperative groups. The participants received post-tests after the treatment to the experimental group. The study shoed reading strategies instruction in L2 results in improvements in reading strategies awareness and use as well as reading ability not only in L2 (in English) but also in L1 (in Persian).

V. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

From the perspective of language transfer studies, it is all agreed upon to say while reading in a given language, readers have access to other languages exiting in their mind. Therefore, an improvement in any language can somehow result in improvements in other languages. A clear manifestation of such improvements can be clearly found in the process aspect of reading. As shown above, reading strategies awareness and use transfers cross-linguistically from L1 to L2, L2 to L3, and L2 to L1. It seems there is no restraint on this kind of transfer (that is, transfer of strategies or the process of language learning). The idea of transfer falls in the linked languages model of the relationship between languages introduced by Cook. When strategic students come to experience reading in a new language, they are not blank in mind about their task. They are aware of the how of reading in their new reading experience.

Strategies oriented instruction is a learning-based approach whose goal is to create autonomy in learning and increases proficiency. As Tseng, et. al (2006, 78) mention the majority of work in learning strategies instruction have tried "to explore ways of empowering language learners to become more self-directed and effective in their learning." In fact, instruction of learning strategies helps students to get more conscious of strategies, to learn how to orchestrate them efficiently, and to learn when, and how to transfer strategies to new contexts. (Brown, 2001) However, this is not always the case for the product of reading. Although strategic reading is a necessary condition for the improvement of the product of reading and reading comprehension, the mere awareness and use of the strategies does not make a reader an effective reader. Then, two factors are important here. One is how effectively these strategies are used. It is the effective use, and not the mere use of the strategies that makes a reader an accomplished strategic reader. Another factor is language dominance. If L1 (dominant language) reading strategies transfer to L2 (less dominant), there is the possibility for these strategies to be short circuited due to low proficiency level in L2. This will make language competence interfere with reading performance. (Clarke, 1980) However, if L2 reading strategies which were effectively used in L2 transfer to L1, improvements in L1, both in process and in product can be observed. This is because the direction of this transfer is from a less dominant to a more dominant language. In this case there is no talk of short circuiting or L1 proficiency problem. However, regardless of the direction of transfer and proficiency level of students, improvements in the process and product of reading in L2 resulted in the same improvements in L3.

The results of these three studies are similar to the findings as reported in the following investigations. Hardin (2001) found that bilingual learners transferred learning strategies from one language to another irrespective of their level of proficiency. Hua (1997, in Koda, 2005) made a comparison of use of reading strategies among Chinese ESL students in Chinese and English and found that readers used same comprehension strategies in the two languages. This suggests that reading strategies are transferable cross-linguistically, irrespective of linguistic distance. Jimenez et al. (1995) took a unitary view toward reading. They found that bilingual readers regard many commonalities between reading in L1 (Spanish) and L2 (English). Therefore, it can be concluded that languages have some areas of difference, as in sounds, letters, grammatical surface structure, culture, etc., and some areas of overlap. Reading strategies fall in the area of overlap between languages as claimed in the linked-languages model, making a link between languages in one mind. People with two or more languages in their minds have a single, not multiple knowledge base of strategies for all languages. Pedagogically, it can be implied that it does not matter from where, (L1, L2, or any further language) we begin teaching our language learners how to read. The effects will be seen in other languages while doing the reading tasks. Therefore, based on the multi-competence view, an L1 teacher, as an example, eases the job of teachers of other languages by teaching the language-related areas which fall in the area of overlap as claimed in the linked languages model. This will also change the attitudes of language learners towards learning a further language or making up for problems in a previously learnt language.

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Seize the Day: An Existentialist Look

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Abstract—Saul Bellow literarily expounds in *Seize the Day* the existentialist propositions of Sartre, such as forlornness, freedom, individual choice, anguish and death. He exposes in the novel the living condition and the psyche of modern man through the exploration of the Protagonist's inner world. He echoes with Sartre's existentialist spirit—to be, which is of positive significance for man to live in an absurd world.

Index Terms—Bellow, Sartre, forlornness, death, self and choice

I. INTRODUCTION

Seize the Day was written by Saul Bellow in 1956. Coincidentally this year also witnessed the publication of *Being and Nothingness*, an influential yet abstruse book, written by Jean-Paul Sartre, the greatest existentialist philosopher, novelist and playwright. This event partially demonstrated the popularity of existentialism in America in 1950s. Centering its stage in Germany and France, existentialism had its earlier but insignificant transmit in America in 1930s, but mostly confining to philosophical research. After the World War II, the psychological trauma, material difficulty in reconstruction, and political intension caused by Mycoses produced a congenial land for flowering of existentialism in America. The philosophers in Germany and France were delighted in securing a place as professors or scholars in American universities or research institutes and seeing their books dealing with such occult and yet pivotal themes in existentialism as death, anxiety, and despair published edition by edition. The obvious acceptance of existentialism is present in Saul Bellow's characterization of his protagonists in *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953), *Dangling Man* (1944), *The Victims, Herzog* (1964), and *Seize the Day* (1956), nevertheless it will elicit objection from other commentators and even Saul Bellow himself to simply label him as an existentialist writer by ignoring the profundity and plurality of Saul Bellow. As a Jew who writes in English, but an American writer—a western writer who happens to be Jewish, Saul Bellow is widely believed to have achieved profundity while fixing upon a few basic ideas. The memorable thing about his novels is "not the action they detail but the thought they generate" (Shechner, 2003, p. 4). His speculative ideas conveyed in all the novels inevitably take on the print of currently popular existentialism. *Seize the Day* possibly best represents his understanding of life, human nature, and individuality from the perspective of existentialism. Similarly, if we say that *Seize the Day* is the literary interpretation of existentialism, we will depreciate the immensity and complexity of existentialism, but in it we can find many congruities and hear the identical voices of two great thinkers, Saul Bellow and Jean-Paul Sartre.

Seize the Day is a simple-plot story of a middle-aged man, Wilhelm. With the narrative technique of stream of consciousness, Bellow recounts how Wilhelm spends his devastating day from the early morning to afternoon and explores the working of his inner world at the moment when encountering unfair and cold treatment from his father, Dr. Adler and the fraud of surrogate father, Tamkin. The efforts of this paper are concentrated on Bellow's literary interpretation of man's absurd existence and its correspondent emotional response—desperation, anguish, forlornness, regret—such negative aspects of human experiences as metaphysically defined by Sartre. At the same time, some endeavor is allotted on Saul Bellow's approach to self and free individual choice during Wilhelm's life trail, spanning from the youth to his forties. At last, this paper deals with how Saul Bellow symbolically treats death to illuminate and echo with the core of Sartre's philosophy—to exist.

II. FORLORNNESS

Alienation has formed the spirit of modern literature which depicts the world as a wasteland, replete with coldness, haze, darkness, sterility, despair, loneliness, and deprived of hope, sunshine, friendship, warmth and comfort. As a modernist writer, Bellow unavoidably explores the alienation of human beings in his works. Wilhelm, in *Seize the Day*, is so alienated from his wife, Margaret, his two children, his surrogate father, Tamkin, and his own father, Dr. Adler that he has nowhere to live but to share the same roof with his father in a hotel, Gloriana, where he finds himself out of place. Dr. Adler, a successful retired internal doctor, believes that "I'm still alive, not dead. I am still here. Life isn't over yet. I am much alive as you or anyone. And I want nobody on my back" (Bellow, 1956, p. 55). He is stingy not only with money, which can help his son out of his financial collapse, but with a sympathetic word, which can meet his yearning for being "any part" of him. Tamkin, namely implying the kin of Tom, on whom Wilhelm pins great hope and doubt as well, disappears at the time of the sharp slump of lard and rye in the commodity market where they are equal partners, but Tamkin only contributes 300 dollars and Wilhelm, 700 dollars. The only connection between Margaret and Wilhelm is money, which is also the reason why Margaret refuses to give a legal divorce to Wilhelm so that he can

marry Olive. In Wilhelm's eyes, Margaret is doing nothing but try to put an end to him. When he moves out the home with nothing, she denies his plea to have the companionship of his pet dog; when he owns no penny to himself and pleads her to be kind to him to extend the check, to go out working and not to be on his back, she hangs up the telephone with her firmly relentlessness. This gesture of hanging up the telephone symbolically severs Wilhelm completely from the world, where "every other man spoke a language entirely his own, which he had figured out by private thinking…You were lucky even then to make yourself understood. And this happened over and over and over with everyone you met. You had to translate, explain and explain, back and forth, and it was the punishment of hell itself not to understand or be understood, not to know the crazy from the sane, the wise from the fools, the young from the old or the sick from the well. The fathers were no fathers and the sons no sons. You had to talk with yourself in the daytime and reason with yourself at night". (Bellow, 1956, p. 83) This is a world of the Tower of Babel, totally incommunicable, bristling with the "otherness", so solitude is the only refuge Wilhelm can find.

Forlornness, the synonym of alienation in existentialism, is the consequence of that "God does not exist and that we have to face all the consequences of this" (Sartre, 1996, p. 668). The precursor of existentialist, Dostoevsky, says if God didn't exist, everything would be possible. That is the very starting point of existentialism. "Indeed, everything is permissible if God does not exist, and as a result man is forlorn, because neither within him nor without does he find anything to cling to and all possibility of finding values in a heaven of ideas disappears along with Him" (Sartre, 1996, p. 669). Wilhelm is forlorn, because he has turned against his God, and God has become a convenient instrument to adjust his momentary feelings: he paid a man to say a prayer for his mother at the cemetery; He didn't go the synagogue but he would occasionally perform certain devotions, according to his feelings (Bellow, 1956, p.86).

For a Jew, the faith in God and the belief in Judaism are of tremendous significance for his orientation in life and the sense of belonging in a society. Judaism has welded together homeless Jews all over the world, has provided courage and comfort for Jews to undergo numerous traumatic afflictions in thousands of years. A Jew without God in his heart is destined to drift like rootless duckweed in the river of life. Wilhelm does not choose God as his companion but money to give him direction. "They adore money, Holy money! Beautiful money! ... While if you don't have it you were a dummy, a dummy! You have to excuse yourself from the face of the earth," (Bellow, 1956, p.30) ponders Wilhelm during the breakfast conversation with his father and Mr. Pearls. This speculation reveals his indignation for average people's attitude towards money worship, but he himself consciously accepts it as a criterion to assess his self-worth, too. When the tissue of his life is dissected, the lust for the possession of money, the desire for the success of American Dream is found to be replete, wane and finally dwindle away. At the age of twenty, he changed his name from Wilky Adler to Tommy Wilhelm, a name signifying the person he dreams of becoming. He thereby recalls James Gatsby—who by calling himself Jay Gatsby thinks he can conjure up the man that Daisy Buchanan will find irresistible. Wilhelm feels that everyone is supposed to have money, and the conversations with Dr. Tamkin strengthen his belief that with just a modest amount of will and talent, he could rid himself of financial worry and distinguish himself. With the belief that he will one day become the person his name represents, he clings to the hope that easy money awaits him and imagines that his father will accept him if he has more money. Of course, this money is not in his pocket, nor in his own father who is too miserly and too self-concerned to dispense a little to him. It exists only in his long-cherished hope and in his fancied though capricious tomorrow. That's why when the hope of gaining some money is shattered with the falling of lard price in the commodity market, he is drained empty and becomes directionless, powerless and helpless. Tears of anguish and frustration give him good resort to release his pent-up desperation. This last scene of *Seize the Day* resembles much what happens in "the Egg", a short story by Sherwood Anderson. The father driven by American dream also cries out like a baby in the mother's arms after he fails to entertain the young customer and worsely splashes the egg on his body.

III. SELF AND FREE CHOICE

WILHELM IS A TYPICAL MAN DESCRIBED BY SARTRE "WHO HURLS HIMSELF TOWARD A FUTURE and who is aware of imagining himself as being in the future" (1996, p.666). His wife, Margaret, whom Wilhelm desperately wants to divorce and wants least to see, is ironically aware of this characteristic of him. She, in an unbending voice, disclosed her finding to him—"You still think like a youngster. But you can't do that any more. Every other day you want to make a new start". (Bellow, 1956, p.78) It's true that Wilhelm fancies that he is another person of tomorrow. His failure lies in the fact that he doesn't recognize there is distance between "he" and "himself" as well as "he" and "the others". What he endeavored to construct in his life is not his "real soul" but "a pretender soul" according to Tamkin's soul theory. Then what is his real soul or real *en-soi*[1] ? The teaching of Socrates about two thousand years ago—to know thyself —is still a great issue for him.

It seems that we are falling into one of the common themes of American canons—the loss, search and reconstruction of self. But Saul Bellow reveals a self complying with Sartre's definition and uses Sartre's idea of existence to secure a place for Wilhelm's self. Sartre says "existence precedes essence" and "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself" (1996, p. 667). It consists of two dimensions of man: the past and the future of man. As for the future it means man will be what he will have planed to be. When studying the plans Wilhelm made for himself in his life, we will find

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[1] en-soi and pour-soi are French words used by Sartre to signify two aspects of self.

that these fancy plans bring him nothing but the defeat in practice. Dreaming to be an actor in Hollywood at 22, he met a false broker and had an obscure experience; hoping to earn a little sum of money in the commodity market in his forties, he lost all he had. If these events compose of his plans for future at some relevant periods, they also signify his past if viewed at on this fatal day. Sartre says: "my past is my essence" (1996, p. 667). On the way toward death, man bit by bit throws after his back the past. As long as life continues, man will repeatedly be his past, the totality of his past (Du, 2002, p. 55). This is why Tommy sees himself as a hippopotamus, the carrier of a load which was his own self…In any moment of quiet, when sheer fatigue prevented him from struggling, he was apt to feel this mysterious weight, this growth or collection of nameless things which it was the business of his life to carry about. That must be what a man was for (Bellow, 1956, p.39). The burden weighing down on him is nothing but his own ego, the accumulation of his past.

His past is nothing else than "the ensemble of his acts" and choices in the acts because "an individual chooses and makes himself" (Sartre, 1996, p.673). Choice and freedom is one of important proposition of existentialism. "Freedom is the only base of value", says Sartre, "man is free in anywhere and at anytime." (1996, p.673) A free act is inevitably an act to choose a concrete thing. (Wale, 1989, p.90) Wilhelm is a man who embraces this belief and defines his self with this belief from the moment when he quarreled with his parents and sister that he would drop the university and wanted to be an actor in Hollywood twenty five years ago. He chose not to follow his father's suit to be an internal doctor; He chose to make a living as a frivolous actor in Hollywood for seven years though Venice, the broker of Hollywood hinted at the test of screen showing that he was not fit for stardom; He chose to be Tommy Wilhelm because "he can't change his lungs, or nerves, or constitution or temperament. They are not under his control. When he's young and strong and impulsive and dissatisfied with the way things are. He wants to rearrange them to assert his freedom." (Bellow, 1956, 24) Thus to be Tommy is to be the freedom of the person, escaping the deposited. Nevertheless at the age of his forties with two sons bearing his name, he feels troubled, humiliated, and regretful at this kind of freed choice. He believes that he must pay the price for it. This is the very source of his despair or bitterness as expressed by Sartre—despair is the attitude when man faces their freedom (Xu, 1988, p. 437). Now he recognizes that "Ten such decisions made up the history of his life. He had made up his mind not to marry his wife, but ran off and got married. He has resolved not to invest money with Tamkin, and then had given him a check." This self-recognition reveals that his individual freedom from the very beginning of his youth is formless and directionless.

Though emphasizing the significance of free individual choice in man's existence, which is enumerated in Sartre's assertion—I am creating a certain image of man of my own choosing, existentialists know that the choices in one's life are not easily made, but man has to make decisions. Sartre says "This is the situation and the fate of man, but one thing is necessary, that is to make a decision. The decision is fulfilled in anguish and anxiety". (Sartre, 1996, p.672) Wilhelm's conscientious yet muddle-headed choices in his life fully exemplify existentialist description of choice, especially when he is facing Tamkin.

Wilhelm regrets his past and thinks that "maybe the making of mistakes express the very purpose of his life and the essence of his being there". (Bellow, 1956, p. 57) Without his past to lie on, a person has to grasp something to sustain his life otherwise he will become a dangling man with dead past and somber tomorrow. "I admit I made many mistakes. Like I thought I shouldn't do things you had done already. Study chemistry. You had done it already. It was in the family….It's true the movies was a false step" (Bellow, 1956, p. 51), he confesses to his old Daddy but it doesn't move him. The last straw to attain father-like counsel or child-like assurance and financial assistance as well falls on Tamkin, the surrogate father. He looks on Tamkin as the person who can blaze a path for him in the jungle of life. Though having hope on Tamkin, Wilhelm still suffers between belief and disbelief when being with him. The common sense requires him to suspect Tamkin, especially his made-up life stories, but he self-deceptively and eagerly tells himself to make a decision to trust him unconditionally. The more anxiously he wants to jump out of the structure of not knowing what it is and what it is not by self-deceit, the more likely he plunges into great trouble when the beginning of the world reveals itself. This is a process full of anguish, self-torture, and self-negation. Kierkegaard, the precursor of existentialism, calls it the anguish of Abraham, i.e., the anguish of choice. You know the story: an angel has ordered Abraham to sacrifice his son; if it really were an angel who has come and said, "You are Abraham, you shall sacrifice your son," everything would be all right. But everyone might first wonder, "Is it really an angel, and am I really Abraham? What proof do I have?" In Wilhelm's case, is Tamkin really what he himself claims to be? Can he really rely on him to earn money? Especially can he really be his psychological father? At the moment, Tamkin tries to disperse Wilhelm's worries about lard price with evasive confidence and deliberate inquiry why he appears angry,

Abraham's anguish effects on him:

This was the moment to take a new look at Tamkin, and he viewed him closely but gained nothing by the new effort. It was conceivable that Tamkin was everything that he claimed to be and all the gossip false. But was he a scientific man, or not? If he was not, this might be a case for the district attorney's office to investigate. Was he a liar? That was a delicate question. Even a liar might be trustworthy in some ways. Could he trust Tamkin? Could he? He feverishly, fruitlessly sought an answer.

But the time for this question was past, and he has to trust him now. After a long struggle to come to a decision, he had given him the money. Practical judgment was in abeyance. He had worn himself out, and the decision was no decision. How had this happened? But how had this Hollywood career begun? It was not because of Maurice Venice,

who turned out to be a pimp. It was because Wilhelm himself was ripe for the mistake. His marriage, too, had been like that. Through such decisions somehow his life had taken form. (Bellow, 1956, p. 63)

In fact such anguish and anxiety of choice accompany his whole life in which a number of possibilities are terminated as he makes the decision. But can the chosen possibility really justify the value of itself when it is regarded as valuable? Tamkin surely and finally disappoints him in the same way as other numerous choices which constitute his self and existence. They bring him nothing but anguish and frustration.

IV. ANGUISH AND DEATH

Sartre flagrantly proclaims that man is anguish. Saul Bellow in *Seize the Day* also wants to depict a man of bitterness in this one-day story. The text itself is sodden with misery, which permeates between lines. Wilhelm's anguish goes along with his forlornness, stems from his past, and claims it self in his free choice, comforts a lost self and culminates in the futility of seeking a father. In the novella, there are many subtle and minute descriptions of how Wilhelm bathes himself in misery. Wilhelm, like many existentialist heroes in modern literature, has "sensitive feelings, a soft heart, a brooding nature, a tendency to be confused under pressure" (Bellow, 1956, p. 25), which he himself is aware of and so is his father, therefore he responds to his bitterness in a more drastic and intensive way. He is apt to lose control of himself in conversation with his father, and a trifle thing will elicit vehement emotions and sentiments. The breakfast with his father in the dining hall in Gloriana reveals it. His father's observance on Tamkin's incredibility makes him profoundly bitter that his father should speak to him with such detachment about his welfare. His father's detachment is a great grief and too much to bear for him. His father's advise "You make too much of your problem. They ought not to be turned into a career" takes him great efforts to restrain himself from being in gloom and anger. Rehearsing what Margaret has done to him before his father reinforces his misery and he chokes himself until nearly losing his breath as if he is going to die. His father's reprimand of his tolerance to Margaret's unreasonable treatment makes tears approach his eyes but he doesn't let them out. His father's firm and callous refusal to give him any money throws him into the abyss of despair and humiliation—"He could not get out of the sharply brilliant dining room fast enough. He was horribly worked up; his neck and shoulders, his entire chest ached as though they had been tightly tied with ropes. He smelled the salt odor of tears in his nose". (Bellow, 1956, p.80) His consciousness of the purpose of life—"to carry his peculiar burden, to feel shame and impotence, to taste these quelled tears"—echoes with Sartre's proclamation—man is anguish. He has married to suffering as Tamkin puts it. Tamkin's therapy of here-and-now doesn't work on him. He only hears the poem Margaret read for him many years ago:

Come then, sorrow!
Sweet sorrow?
Like an own babe I nurse thee on my breast!
Come, the Sorrow!

I thought to leave thee,
And deceive thee,
But now of all the world I love thee best. (Bellow, 1956, p. 89)

When his father knows Wilhelm lost all the money, he demands Wilhelm to go away and calls him a slob. At that moment Wilhelm even has no energy and courage to lose his temper with his old father but to surrender helplessly to infinite misery.

Camus believes that suicide is the natural response to absurdity and he even asserts in *Sisyphus* that suicide is the only issue in philosophical thinking. If built-up misery of one person can't get vent to release itself, he will reach the pinnacle of bitterness, i.e., death. The agony enshrouds Wilhelm bit by bit; simultaneously the idea of death brews, merges, grows, and finally takes shape. When his father suggests that Margaret is the beneficiary of his children's insurance policy, Wilhelm unconsciously mentions the death "Let her be. I'd sooner die myself before I collected a cent of such money" (Bellow, 1956, p. 46). He repeatedly says that Margaret wants to strangle him; actually he is hinting subliminally at himself that he shall die. His father's words give him the impression that he should leave the world first. He dislikes Mr. Rappaport, because, on one hand Mr. Rappaport is an old rich miserly man, on the other, his chicken business reminds him of death of numerous slaughtered chickens. He often visits the cemetery where his mother is buried. The bad maintenance of the grave makes him think of having himself being cremated. He finds a strange uneasiness tore at his body while Tamkin compares the commodity market to killing, as if he is being killed. Eventually all these miseries drive Wilhelm to drown himself in tears at a stranger's funeral. The scene is like what he imagined when passing the pool in Gloriana: The flowers and lights fused ecstatically in Wilhelm's blind, wet eyes; the heavy sea-like music came up to his ears. It poured into him where he had hidden himself in the center of a crowd by the great and happy oblivion of tears. He heard it and sank deeper that sorrow, through torn sobs and cries toward the consummation of his heart's ultimate need. (Bellow, 1956, p.118)

In the congress library address, Bellow deplores the fact that in his recent fictions the self is asked to prepare itself for sacrifice…. (Clayton, 1979, p.115) Therefore the stranger's funeral can be symbolically taken as Wilhelm's. The corpse lies in the coffin is his past, or his self, the presentation soul, the impostor soul, the pretender soul as being put by Tamkin that "in the human bosom there isn't just one soul. There are a lot of souls. But there are two main ones, the

real soul and a pretender soul…. The true soul loves the truth. And, when the true soul feels like this, it wants to kill the pretender. The love has turned into hate. Then you become dangerous. A killer. You have to kill the deceiver". (Bellow, 1956, p. 70-71) Tamkin's soul theory in the essence is a parody of Sartre's self concept. Sartre divides self into two parts, one, "pour-soi" and the other, "en-soi". Existence is "en-soi", which fills up the self, or in other words existence doesn't have any correlation with self because it is self. (Xu, 1988, p. 34) In this battle, pretender soul is killed and survives surely the real soul. Only after burying the impostor self can real soul regain strength to face the terror of pure being and the terror of his own being, and only thus can Wilhelm find the place for his real soul to perch. This place is existence. Only at this moment Wilhelm is himself, because he is there. Saul Bellow symbolically adopts death as a means for Wilhelm to find out the truth of existence—to live in here-and-now, which is implied in the title *Seize the Day* and which is didactically and hypnotically instilled by Tamkin. In this sense, Tamkin, like a charlatan guru, conveys what Saul Bellow wants to say to Wilhelm. Though his message is not complete and sometimes false, his hypnotic preaching and exotic thoughts are effective in some degree to lead Wilhelm to dissect his self, to go out of his own small circle, and to plunge into pure existence. He is like a catalytic that causes and accelerates Wilhelm's death and rebirth. The end of story resembles a lot *Nausea* by Sartre. In *Nausea* Roquentin gives up the illusion of a fixed ego and submits instead to existence, an existence as free and superfluous as that of a tree. But "this freedom,' says Roquentin, "is rather like death" (Clayton, 1979, p.209). And he plans to "outlive himself" (Clayton, 1979, p.204) — simply to exist (Clayton, 1979, p. 115). Of course, the last scene in the novella also can be interpreted as that Wilhelm outlives in tears, humiliation, misery, regret, despair, and return to the reality after his hope and expectation of two fathers are shattered. The event of loss of all his money in the commodity market prompts him to understand that reality alone is what counts, and that dreams, expectations, and hopes warrant no more than to define a man as a disappointed dream, as miscarried hopes, as vain expectations. The reality is life and existence. This interpretation still can find the path to the essential of Sartre's philosophy and the pith of whole existentialism.

V. CONCLUSION

In *Seize the Day*, Saul Bellow sketches an alienated person, Wilhelm, and exposes to us how a tortured soul grapples with his humiliating past itching in a youth belief in individual freedom, how a crippled son oscillates between two fathers, a real one and a substitute one, how an illusioned American Jew wrestles with money, yet at the brim of destruction simply survives when all his sobs, regrets, despair, and anguish melt in tears. Problems remain there, no matter whether soluble or insoluble, because life is like that—being bristling with problems at any time and any place. There is no easy and permanent resolution to life's problems which are intrinsically complicated and illogical, and further compounded by the absurdity and chaos of the modern world. *Seize the Day* fully illustrates the recurrent practice of Saul Bellow in his literary creation—he does not avoid conditions of alienation and despair; but he insists that through them the power of the imagination should reveal the greatness of man and that we are not gods, not beasts, but savages of somewhat damaged but not extinguished nobility (Clayton, 1979, p.132). It is a belief of optimism in pessimism. After that doom day, Wilhelm will continue making free choices and defining himself by his series of acts. It is hinted that he will move out of New York to live in Roxbury, like Herzog's choice to live in the countryside, and will make up with Olive in the future. This kind of optimism in pessimism is true with Sartre. *Being and Nothingness* is devoted to explicating this point—man is not an entity, but an awareness, so he is destined to go outward, destined to make free choices of their action, thus existence is meaningful (Du, 2002, p.2). *Seize the Day* metaphorically and rhetorically paraphrases what Sartre presents in esoteric philosophy about such propositions as anguish, despair, freedom, individual choice, self, and existence. Sartre says that existentialism has an optimistic toughness and it isn't trying to plunge man into despair at all, whereas it is a philosophy that makes life possible. Sartre and Saul Bellow both have defended man's dignity and found a way for people to endure and prevail in a special historical period. Their contribution for human beings' understanding of life and self has gained the recognition and the world by the Nobel Prize.

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