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Taiwanese Graduate Students' Voices on Language Anxiety over Writing Academic Papers

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Abstract—This study examined Taiwanese graduate students' language anxiety over writing academic papers utilizing an adapted version of the FLCAS and in-depth individual interviews. The results suggested that the majority of these ten Taiwanese graduate students have experienced high anxiety over writing academic papers. The anxiety they experience over writing stems primarily from grammatical errors, using Chinese English, lacking adequate vocabulary or misuse of English vocabulary, lack of personal opinions, and not understanding the instructions for assignments.

Index Terms—Chinese English, grammatical errors, language anxiety, instructions for assignment, personal opinion, Taiwanese student, vocabulary, writing anxiety

I. INTRODUCTION

International students studying abroad are expected to turn in academic papers in the majority of their classes. Writing becomes an important part of a foreign student's life, and his/her voices on this issue should be recorded in order to understand his/her anxiety related to writing academic papers while studying in a foreign country. Very few studies in the past captured students' voices on anxiety over writing academic papers (e.g. Kurt & Atay, 2007) using qualitative methods, especially in relation to international students studying abroad in pursuit of graduate degrees.

Scholars in the field of L1 and L2 writing anxiety/apprehension examined the relationship between writing anxiety/apprehension and many factors were found to have been associated with writing anxiety (e.g., essay type, self-confidence in writing, self-perception, writing competency, language intensity, writer's block, writing process, teachers' mixed comments, teachers focusing too much on grammar, fear of being evaluated or judged, peer feedback, free reading, leisure writing, academic procrastination from fear of failure and task aversiveness, gender, GPA, etc.) (e.g. Cheng, 2004; Daly & Miller, 1975; Daly, 1978; Faigley, Daly, & Witte, 1981; Kurt & Atay, 2007; Lee & Krashen, 2002; Lee, 2005; Leki, 1999; Martinez, Kock, & Cass, 2011; Onwuegbuzie, 1999; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2001; Tsai & Cheng, 2009), and have found that writing anxiety to be related to writing performance (e.g., Faigley, Daly, & Witte, 1981; Lee, 2005; Tsai & Cheng, 2009) or grades in composition classes (Lee & Krashen, 2002). However, the results are not consistent, and the participants in the previous studies were native speakers of English, ESL, a mix of these two categories, or EFL students, and the studies were set at different educational levels such as college, master's level, or K-12.

Based on previous studies (e.g., Daly, 1978; Faigley, Daly, & Witte, 1981), students' writing-related skills, language intensity, sentence structures, paper length, essay types, or writing performance were found to be associated negatively with writing anxiety. Also, teachers' unclear feedback was also found to be associated with writing anxiety (Leki, 1999). In more recent studies, scholars pointed out that undergraduate students' free reading (Lee, 2005) or leisure writing and self-confidence in literacy (Martinez, Kock, & Cass, 2011) were found to be associated with writing anxiety.

Based on Faigley, Daly, and Witte's article (1981) published in the *Journal of Educational Research*, Reeves (1997) defined the term, writing apprehension, as "the tendency to experience a high degree of anxiety when asked to write, resulting in an approach-avoidance conflictive state which manifests itself in one's behaviors, attitudes, and written products" (p. 38). Lee (2005) wrote that according to Daly and Miller (1975), writing apprehension is most likely developed through "negative past experience, especially from teachers' low expectations, evaluations, and excessive error correction" (p. 335).

Onwuegbuzie (1999) summarized a series of studies, and pointed out the use of divergent terminology. Onwuegbuzie (1999) stated that what Daly (1978) termed writing apprehension is referred to as writing anxiety by Thompson (1983), as composition anxiety by Onwuegbuzie (1997), or as writer's block by Rose (1984). However, according to Rose (1984), writer's block and writing apprehension are different. In Rose's definition, writer's block is "broader and subsumes writing apprehension as a possible cause or reaction to blocking" (Rose, 1984, p. 4).

L1 or L2 students' self-perceived ability in writing or in scholastic ability or creativity were found to be associated with writing anxiety but do not suggest a causal relationship but instead a bidirectional or multidimensional construct. Pappamihiel (2002) utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods—Pappamihiel's (2002) English Language Anxiety Scale and focus groups—in order to examine language anxiety in both ESL and mainstream classes. In this study, Pappamihiel (2002) applied both Pekrun's (1992) Expectancy-Value Theory of Anxiety (EVTA) and Bandura's (1991) theory of self-efficacy as models to construct the English Language Anxiety Scale (ELAS). The participants in

this study included 178 Mexican-born middle school students, grades 6-8, enrolled in an ESL program in Texas. The results of her study suggested that the ELL students' self-perceived skills in reading and writing in English had much to do with the students' anxiety. Those participants who believed that they had high ability in English reading and writing in the mainstream classes had lower levels of language anxiety than those who believed that their reading and writing skills were poor (Pappamihiel, 2002).

Onwuegbuzie (1999) suggested that graduate students' perceived scholastic competence and perceived creativity are interrelated with writing apprehension. Students who perceived of themselves as exhibiting low levels of scholastic competence and creativity tended to experience higher anxiety about writing. Onwuegbuzie (1999) concluded that students' self-perceived scholastic ability and self-perceived creativity and writing apprehension are associated bidirectionally, self-perception and writing apprehension affect each other, and the findings do not suggest "casual patterns among the variables" (p. 1038).

Martinez, Kock, and Cass (2011) conducted a quantitative study on undergraduate students' gender, GPA, attitudes toward leisure writing, writing anxiety, and writing self-efficacy. The results of Martinez et al.'s (2011) study suggested that participants who experience lower writing anxiety are male, have higher GPAs and writing self-efficacy than those with higher writing anxiety (p. 356). Attitudes toward leisure writing are positively related to writing self-efficacy (p. 357); however, it is unclear whether higher levels of self-efficacy reduce levels of writing anxiety or the other way around (p. 357). These authors viewed writing anxiety as a "multidimensional construct" (p. 358).

Daly and Miller (1975) associated WA with writing performance (language intensity). Daly and Miller's study on the relationship between writing apprehension and language intensity, based on a theory developed by Burgoon, Jones, and Stewart as cited in Daly and Miller (1975), found that higher writing apprehensive students utilize less intense language than lower ones. Their subjects were undergraduate English native-language students.

Daly (1978) conducted a quantitative study on undergraduate students in a required basic composition course utilizing two instruments: one, a writing apprehension questionnaire, and the other, a writing competency (skill) test which represented three general areas: "mechanics, grammar, and larger elements involved in composition" (p. 11). The results suggested that students who experienced low levels of writing apprehension performed better than those who experienced high levels of writing apprehension on the writing competency test.

As noted, based on previous literature, WA is related to writing-related skills, and moreover, to writing performance. Faigley, Daly, and Witte (1981) conducted research on the relationships between undergraduate students' writing apprehension and writing competency, and moreover, the students' writing apprehension and writing performance. The results suggested that students who have experienced high apprehension in writing will not score well on writing competency (writing-related skills) tests; these students tend to write fewer subordinate clauses, fewer final non-restrictive modifiers and shorter sentences in narrative/descriptive essays. Also, Faigley et al. (1981) emphasized that there is no casual relationship assumed, and writing apprehension's relationship to performance and competence is mostly likely bidirectional. In other words, they indicated that both competency and performance reinforce apprehension or the other way around.

Lee (2005) conducted a quantitative study on Taiwanese undergraduate students' writing in English and its relationships to various factors (i.e., free reading, free writing, writer's block, writing apprehension, and attitudes toward reading and writing instruction). She offered a number of conclusions: that neither WA nor WB is related to students' writing performance; that free voluntary reading is negatively associated with WA and WB and positively related to writing performance; that self-perceived WA is related to aspects of the composing process (e.g., "frequency of blocking, premature editing, poor planning and interpretive strategies") (p. 344) and to negative attitudes toward writing, based on being negatively evaluated or judged by others—negative past experiences in writing; and that attitudes toward reading and writing instruction failed to significantly predict WA, WB and writing performance. Surprisingly, Lee (2005) found that frequency of writing does not have a significant relationship with WA, WB, or writing performance. She found that free reading leads to more free writing and better quality of writing (performance), but that more writing does not indicate better quality of writing (performance).

Leki (1999) noted that poorly skilled writers might experience FL or L2 writing anxiety; however, highly-skilled writers might also experience this writing anxiety (p. 66). Leki (1999) emphasized that the previous literature on writing anxiety showed that writing anxiety has a negative relation to writing performance, and the fear of being "evaluated or judged on basis of their writing ability" (p. 66), teachers' mixed messages, poor writing skills, and teachers focusing too much on grammar are major sources of writing anxiety. As for educational experiences or teachers' feedback, Leki (1999) emphasized that returning papers marked with red pen tends to makes students anxious about writing, and teachers should balance evaluating on content versus form to reduce students' writing anxiety (p. 67).

Scholars (Price, 1991, p. 106; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002, p. 568; Hilleson, 1996) have determined that perfectionism is a possible source of language anxiety. Language anxiety, including writing anxiety, is related to students' belief of insistence upon perfectionism. Foreign/second language students may experience high anxiety in class because they are too concerned about performing without flaws in spite of the fact that this is a natural part of the learning process.

Horwitz (1988) reported that at least forty percent of each group of her subjects, Spanish, French, and German learners, emphasize the goal of speaking the target language with "an excellent accent" (p. 290). She declared that if the

language learners believe that errors in writing or pronunciation have to be corrected by their instructors, and that they should develop native-like pronunciation in the target language, this may lead to the development of language anxiety. The main source of language anxiety could be the students' beliefs toward the necessity of target language accuracy (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Horwitz, 1988).

To sum up, based on the previous studies, students' self-perceived efficacy in literacy, leisure reading, writing competency, past experiences in writing, instructors' teaching pedagogies, composing process, attitudes toward writing, and perfectionism are all factors associated with writing anxiety. However, the majority of the previous literature concluded these results utilizing quantitative methods. There is a need for research utilizing qualitative methods to obtain foreign students' individual experiences with language anxiety in relation to writing academic papers in order to reduce it.

II. THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study is best characterized as a qualitative multi-case study. Stake (1995) stated “[t]he real business of case study is particularization, not generalization. We take a particular case and come to know it well, not primarily as to how it is different from others but what it is, what it does” (p. 8). Therefore, qualitative case study is very much personal study. Stake (1995) later emphasized that “[t]he way the case and the researcher interact is presumed unique and not necessary reproducible for other cases and researchers” (p. 135).

A. *Setting*

The study took place at a mid-sized Midwestern university in the United States. According to the university's Office of International Affairs, in recent years, there has been a stable population of over 600 international students registered, which included just over 100 Taiwanese students, and according to the Taiwanese Student Association, about less than a third of whom are graduate students. The university is located in a small town setting which features a relatively homogeneous local population.

B. *Participants*

The participants in the study were Taiwanese graduate students who are studying at the American university, who learned English as a foreign language in Taiwan, and who have at least completed high school while still living in Taiwan.

A total of twenty Taiwanese graduate students whose contact information was provided by the president of Taiwanese Student Association were invited to participate in the study. A total of eighteen students (7 male, 11 female) volunteered to fill out the language anxiety questionnaire. Of these, except for the 4 respondents with the lowest scores, fourteen participants (4 male, 10 female), whose scores and open-ended questionnaire statements indicated their having experienced some level of language anxiety (from high anxiety to low anxiety), were invited to take part in the interview phase of the study. Of these, eleven (2 male, 9 female) accepted the invitation to participate in the interview phase of the study, one (female, slightly anxious) withdrew which left ten (2 male, 8 female) to complete the study all the way through. The primary source of data collection for this study was three in-depth individual interviews: the questionnaire was only used for preliminary selection of participants.

C. *Method*

1. Questionnaire

The adapted version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) was administered to facilitate the preliminary selection of participants. The FLCAS was adapted to reflect the setting of the study including adding two open-ended statements on students' perspectives of using or writing in English. When the questionnaire and the two open-ended statements indicated that they had experienced some level of anxiety, they were invited to participate in in-depth individual interviews.

2. Demographic Information Sheet

The participants were given the demographic information sheet to fill out and were scheduled for interviews.

3. Three In-depth Individual Interviews

Due to the participants' home culture, it could be difficult for them to express negative experiences in the U.S due to fear of losing face. As a result, in accordance with Swagler and Ellis's (2003) neutralization, it was especially important to inform the participants that negative experiences are also welcome. Personal comments were not provided during the interviews based on Patton's (1990) notion of empathic neutrality. The interview questions are structured, semi-structured, and open-ended. Each interview took approximately ninety minutes.

4. Cross-case Analysis

This study utilizes cross-case analysis. Merriam (1988) emphasized that “[e]ach case in a cross-case analysis is first treated as a comprehensive case in and of itself” (p. 154). However, the analysis for a single case study and a multi-case study is “identical” (p. 155). The difference is how the researcher manages the data, and a researcher must find a way to handle all the data without feeling overwhelmed (Merriam, 1988). A researcher doing cross-case analysis “increases the potential for generalizing beyond the particular case” (p. 154). A researcher can “advance to higher levels of analysis”

(p. 155). At a higher level, “patterns can be developed to explain the interrelationship of variables” (Merriam, 1988, p. 155). In this study, patterns were found and coded based on the interview transcripts.

III. QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The scores were calculated by first reverse-scoring the items which need to be reverse-scored and then dividing the total by the total number of items in the questionnaire (33). Among the eighteen participants, only one participant’s score was near 4 (likely to be fairly anxious); six participants’ scores were around 3.5 (anxious); five participants’ scores were around 3 and below 3.5 (slightly anxious); and six participants’ scores were below 3 indicating low anxiety.

A. Open-ended Questionnaire Results

Here are responses to the open-ended questionnaire items which were added to the questionnaire. All responses in this section were written in English by the participants.

34. *The most difficult thing about using English is _____*

There were various responses to this item. (7/18) Seven of the participants cited academic activities or linguistic forms: “writing a class paper,” “writing a dissertation,” “idioms,” “academic vocabulary using,” or “preposition.”

35. *When I write a paper in English, I usually feel _____*

(7/18) Seven of the participants responded with terms implying a troubled state: “panic,” “stressed,” “not confident and nervous,” “difficult,” “stressful and suffering especially in academic paper,” or “cautious and careful.” In contrast, (7/18) seven of the participants reported they feel “comfortable,” “that’s not a big deal,” “at ease,” or “easy” when they write a paper in English.

B. Overview of Interview Participants

Table 1 gives an overview of the demographic information for the ten interview participants, including their academic majors. Their levels of anxiety from high to low, taken from the questionnaire results, are listed here.

TABLE 1.
INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS’ DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

| Participant | Anxiety | Age | Major | Occupation in Taiwan |
|-------------|--------------------|-----|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Ms. A | strongly anxious | 34 | English | college-level English Instructor |
| Mr. B | slightly high | 43 | English | college-level English Instructor |
| Ms. C | moderately anxious | 25 | Business | assistant |
| Ms. D | moderately anxious | 30 | Sports Management | none |
| Ms. E | moderately anxious | 24 | Business | none |
| Ms. F | moderately anxious | 35 | English | English teacher |
| Ms. G | slightly anxious | 25 | English | none |
| Mr. H | slightly anxious | 32 | Business | none |
| Ms. I | slightly anxious | 35 | English | college-level English Instructor |
| Ms. J | not very anxious | 26 | English | none |

Table 2 shows the academic study program of the students, years studying English, their self-rated English proficiency, and their length of residence in the U.S.

TABLE 2.
ACADEMIC STUDY PROGRAM, SELF- RATED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY, AND LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN THE U.S.

| Participant | Program | English | Self-rated English proficiency | Residence |
|-------------|---------|------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Ms. A | Ph.D. | 18.5 years | intermediate | 10 months |
| Mr. B | Ph.D. | 30 years | very good | 4 years |
| Ms. C | MA | 6 years | poor | 1 year & 6 months |
| Ms. D | MA | 5-6 years | intermediate | 11 months |
| Ms. E | MA | 12 years | fair | 1 year |
| Ms. F | Ph.D. | 10 years | very good | 10 years |
| Ms. G | Ph.D. | 12 years | very good | 3 years |
| Mr. H | MA | 6 years | fair | 8 months |
| Ms. I | Ph.D. | 12 years | very good | 2 years & 6 months |
| Ms. J | Ph.D. | 10 years | intermediate | 4 years |

IV. INTERVIEW RESULTS

The interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese. The symbol (E) after a word signifies that the participant spoke an English word instead of Chinese. The following are the common themes analyzed from these three in-depth individual interview transcripts:

1. Chinese English, 2. vocabulary, 3. grammar, 4. lack of personal opinion, 5. organization, 6. not understanding the instructions for assignments, and 7. native vs. non-native English issues in writing.

A. Chinese English

(4/10) Four of the participants claimed that one of the problems they have experienced when writing papers is their unconscious use of Chinese English. For example, for Ms. I, writing is a “real struggle” because of the perceived effect of Chinese translation:

The main problem is writing (E). I feel that writing (E) is a real struggle! This is a huge problem because when I was in Taiwan, my writing was probably Chinese English, which is when I think in Chinese and then translate it into English. ... In the beginning, my [American] professors could not understand what I wrote. I didn't know how to write...

Likewise, Mr. B claimed that he is trying to pursue “natural” and “standard” English that can be understood, not Chinese English; he hopes to reach his own standard when writing in English:

I think that, probably, my writing will never reach American standards. I still feel that I lack ability in writing. My real ability in writing is lower than I thought. Some of what we write is still Chinese English. I still need to overcome this and write in standard American English, more naturally. Ideally, the paper will not look like it was written by a foreigner. I hope that, at least, my writing will be natural and not Chinese English. Otherwise, people will not be able to understand what I write.

These four participants are worried about their Chinese English and hope to be able to write in standard English.

B. Vocabulary

(4/10) Four of the participants claimed that lack or misuse of vocabulary is another major problem they experience when writing in English. They find that their problems with vocabulary in writing are very difficult to overcome. Mr. B, Mr. H, and Ms. F all claimed that they still experience these problems in their writing. Mr. B claimed “I still need to work hard” on vocabulary. Mr. H experiences “the same” problems in writing as he did in the past, and he feels that writing is “difficult.” Besides his problems in writing which stem from Chinese language transfer to English, Mr. B claimed that the misuse of vocabulary is a problem in his writing as well:

I have Americans revise the words. I did not have a correct understanding of how to use the words: I misuse some words, or the words [I use] should not be used here in the paper. Americans don't use the words that way; only we, foreigners, will do so. I need to work hard on this.

Misuse of vocabulary is problem which worries these participants.

Likewise, the misuse of vocabulary and limited vocabulary are the primary problems Mr. H faces when writing in English, though he also worries about the lack of stylistic variety in his writing: “My feelings towards writing English papers are that writing is difficult. Word usage or vocabulary is difficult because I always write the same kinds of sentences—the only kind I know how to write.” He elaborated further on these problems: “From the past to the present, I have always had the same problems in writing” because “my problems in writing are that my vocabulary is not enough and my usage of the vocabulary is wrong.” Even though Mr. H admitted that his writing has improved, he also claimed that “I don't think that my writing will improve much, just being here ten months.”

Even Ms. F, who received her bachelor's degree in the U.S. and has resided in the U.S. the longest of all the participants, still claimed that “because English is not our [my] native language, we [I] basically have some problems with vocabulary.” The lack or misuse of vocabulary is the major problem of these four participants.

C. Grammar

(8/10) Noting that eight of the participants claimed to consult Writing Center tutors often for grammatical corrections, it is safe to conclude that they are most anxious about grammatical errors in English academic writing, although only a few revealed grammatical problems as a major problem in writing. Three of the participants claimed that grammar is another of the primary problems they experienced when writing academic papers in English. For example, for Ms. D, grammar is a “tremendous problem.” It makes her feel “insecure” and “very nervous” if she does not go to the Writing Center to have her grammar checked. Mr. H did cite grammar problems specifically. Ms. D experienced especially strong anxiety about writing. She said she was “very nervous” about writing because “first, I had never written an English paper before, and second, my grammar is a tremendous problem.” Moreover, she confided that “I feel insecure if I don't go to the writing center! Probably, my grammar is really a problem. I need to practice grammar more. I just don't feel secure. ... Probably, my personal standards are higher than others'!”

Again, even after residing in the U.S. for over ten years, Ms. F claimed that “after I finish writing my paper, I will ask my [American] friend to check because there probably are some grammatical mistakes.” Though she spoke succinctly, her facial expression while saying this seemed to express considerable anxiety and loss of face.

D. Lack of Personal Opinions

(3/10) Three of the participants felt that a lack of opinions of their own is one of the major problems they face when writing in English; on a closely related note, they expressed worry over the need to think critically or offer original ideas in their writing. Mr. B claimed that “I think that my writing still has a long way to go. I know that it is unrealistic to compare mine to a native speaker because I can never reach that.” He claimed that he uses too many quotes, and he seldom develops his own opinion in his paper. As a result, in his paper, he merely manages other authors' ideas:

My problem is that I usually use more quotes than my own ideas. When I manage their quotes, I will have different opinions. However, I hardly ever express my own personal ideas in my writing. I usually [just] manage others' articles in my academic writing.

Like Mr. B, Ms. I claimed that she was unable to express her thoughts in writing especially the first time she studied in a Master's program in the U.S.: "I was unable to express my thoughts. ... It took me a long time to clearly articulate my ideas." Now working on her Ph.D., she felt that this problem has improved but added the modifier, "a little bit."

On the same note, Ms. C described writing paper as "difficult" because "I hardly [ever] have my own ideas." She elaborated further: "I usually can only write what I learn in class or what I studied before. My professors usually want to read something creative. ... However, I usually don't form my own opinions. My ideas all come from what my teachers tell me." Originality or creativity seems to be a relevant issue among these students.

Addressing the need for original or critical ideas, Ms. G noted that "writing was a struggle for me because I didn't know what direction I should write because we all copied the content from the internet in Taiwan. ... But here the teachers required you to use critical thinking, to write directly to the point, etc." Furthermore, she stressed that "Taiwanese education [English classes] focuses on grammar ... or we were asked to write summaries. Because I was not required to write my ideas, argumentation, or thesis statements, I didn't know how to write when I first came here to study." It seems that the Taiwanese system of English education requires more grammar than originality, and moreover Chinese rhetorical conventions, such as a lack of thesis statements and citations of academic sources, might be a source that affects these participants' English academic writing.

E. Organization

(2/10) On a related theme, two of the participants revealed that they have both experienced strong levels of anxiety associated with the organization of their writing. They claimed to still not be able to overcome this problem. The idioms they use to describe this problem, such as "the most painful" "the most difficult," and "struggle" (Ms. A) and "very annoyed," and "very difficult" (Ms. G).

After taking two semesters of doctoral courses in America, Ms. A still feels "pained" writing in English: "Now, writing is difficult, very difficult." Ms. A's difficulties in English academic writing feature quite intense concerns about content and organization:

After reading the related articles, the difficulties are how to cite them in an organized manner and how to integrate information from the articles into my own writing. ... It usually takes me a long time to find a topic for my paper, and then I check out the related articles. After finishing reading them, the most difficult and painful part is how to write them down, how to include them in the paper, and how to organize them. It is a struggle. My writing process is like my brain is turning and turning to squeeze the brain fluid out. It takes a long time to write. I write slowly, a little bit at a time. Writing is a very bad experience for me.

Ms. G has experienced the same problem in academic writing as Ms. A. She described her experience in writing:

Every time, when I talk about writing, I feel very annoyed because the problem I have now in my writing is the inability to organize the ideas! Because I don't just write, I also have to do research to find information. However, when I have a topic to write about, I usually have a ton of literature which needs to be cleaned up. Organizing the ideas in writing is very difficult for me. The thoughts do not flow, which means the ideas are not organized. For example, there might be a lot of literature, but the problem is, "how should I write about this first, that next, and then connect them and tie them together?"

Both Ms. A and Ms. G revealed the struggle they experienced organizing ideas from previous literature. They both have problems tying and connecting the literature together. It has something to do with comprehending and analyzing the relevance of the literature and then organizing the ideas in a logical sequence.

F. Not Understanding the Instructions for Assignments

(4/10) Four of the participants revealed that they have experienced anxiety associated with not understanding the instructions for their assignments. They used such expressions as feeling "pained" (Ms. F) and "the pain of studying here" (Ms. A).

Ms. E asked "why do I spend so much time writing a paper because I am not sure what the professor wants me to write ... ?" Also, Ms. F claimed that she spends a great deal of time writing a paper, and "I feel pained if I am not sure what the professor wants me to write." Not understanding the assignment is another source of the anxiety these students are experiencing.

Ms. G claimed to have experienced similar uncertainty, citing times when she "didn't know what my [her] teacher's requirement was." Ms. A spoke of the pain she experienced studying in her doctoral program: trying to meet the requirement of handing in a good paper. But she seemed to agree, claiming that her professors do not teach her how to write. Her phrasing is remarkably close to that of Ms. G: "The pain of studying here is that there is no one teaching you [me] how to write, but in each class, the professors require you [me] to hand in a good product." Ms. E, Ms. F, and Ms. G all claimed that their anxiety is associated with not understanding the assignment and their professors' requirements. Ms. G also mentioned that no one teaches her how to write, but at the doctoral level, students are expected to be familiar with the standard form of academic writing.

G. Native vs. Non-Native English Issues in Writing

(2/10) Two of the participants have experienced a high level of anxiety associated with their perceived professors' attitudes toward non-native speakers of English. They complained about their professors' inconsistent attitudes towards what they describe as "World English." One described this as "the most difficult issue" (Ms. A), and another complained of professors "forcing us to be native-like" (Ms. G).

Ms. A expressed frustration and resentment about some of her experiences studying in the U.S. She referred to one particular comment from a professor who cautioned her against "ESL issues in [her] writing." He/she wrote, "you should pay attention to ESL issues." She had a strong reaction to this comment; in fact, she seemed to feel that this kind of feedback was automatically doled out to non-native speakers regardless of the quality of their writing:

I should not be stuck in this problem. I have never received a paper on which the professors' comments are "excellent." My papers are all checked by a native speaker. You never receive an excellent comment because he/she knows that you are not American. This is the only thing he/she obviously knows. I don't really think that what I write is Chinese English, but you can see that what I write is not written by an American. This makes me feel hurt.

She elaborated further on this experience:

The issue of native vs. non-native is what frustrated me the most about studying here! To have to express oneself in a native-like manner is the most difficult. They [American professors] should accept us the way we are.

She hopes that her American professors can accept her as the way she is—as a non-native speaker.

This unpleasant experience made her self-conscious and therefore very anxious about her English writing, transferring from her native language, Chinese. But, later, she claimed that she should be confident in "Chinese English": "I pursue standard English, but I feel I should not look down on Chinese English." In any case, she felt that her professors were inconsistent, in claiming, on the one hand, to accept "World Englishes" while in the meantime expecting native-level performance from international students:

They preach that people should not be impatient when dealing with non-native speakers. They teach concepts of world English. ... In practice, however, they do distinguish between native and non-native speakers. Some professors teach you that we should not distinguish between them, but they actually do.

Ms. G has experienced the same source of anxiety. She claimed that

They [American professors] keep preaching to me that I don't need to be native-like [to possess native-level ability] and that it will be impossible for me to be native-like. But, they force us to be native-like. Why do they have to force us to be native-like?

In her frustration, she asked, "So does that mean—that the theories they teach us are not true? They do not act the same way as what they teach us. They do not practice what they preach." These two participants claimed that their professors did not practice what they preached when it came to World Englishes and that they feel because they will never be able to write at native-level fluency, they will not be taken seriously.

In summary, writing obviously arouse high emotional reactions to some of these participants. Most of these ten Taiwanese graduate students claimed to have experienced high level of language anxiety over writing academic papers, and they claimed to be very "worried" about grammatical mistakes, using Chinese English, lacking adequate vocabulary or misuse of vocabulary, lack of personal opinions, and not understanding the instructions for assignments. Especially, eight out of ten claimed to have experienced strong writing anxiety over not being sure whether or not their academic papers have grammatical mistakes. This caused them to experience much discomfort, including sleeplessness or writers' block; one mentioned drinking alcohol with friends to calm her nerves over these problems.

Their language anxiety stemming from writing academic papers conveys strong emotional involvement, as they refer to "the pain of studying here," or claim that "grammar is a tremendous problem," or "writing is a very bad experience," or profess themselves to be "insecure" or "very nervous."

Conflicts between Taiwanese and American classroom practices include lack of personal opinions in academic writing which three of the participants claimed has affected their academic English writing. Also, they claimed that, in Taiwan's educational system, grammar is the only focus in writing classes, and they were never before required to write reflections, personal opinions, or critical ideas in their English papers.

Two of the participants, Ms. A and Ms. G, both reported that, based on theories of World Englishes, some of their American professors preached to not overly emphasize native-like proficiency for non-native speakers. Yet at the same time, the participants felt the pressure to write native-like because they perceived that their professors indeed distinguish between native vs. non-native English writing proficiency, and they felt the professors look down on or cannot accept them as second-language speakers. They feel "hurt" or "frustrated" by their perceived American professors' attitudes. This causes them to be very anxious over their English writing proficiency. Their level of writing anxiety is very high due to perceived expectations of their American professors: native-like English proficiency.

V. DISCUSSION

The majority of the participants are worried about grammatical errors in the academic writing. Some are worried about Chinese English or not written to the native-level proficiency. This anxiety over making mistakes has been identified in the literature. For instance, Price's (1991), Gregersen and Horwitz's (2002), and Hilleson's (1996) studies all show that language learners' high anxiety can be related to over-concern for performing perfectly without flaws.

This also brings to mind Horwitz et al.'s (1986) and Horwitz's (1988) studies, which concluded that the primary source of language anxiety is students' belief in the necessity of high levels of target language accuracy. Also, the current study also found that professors' expectations or requirements of native-like ability in English academic writing have intensified their language anxiety over writing.

As for these participants' anxiety over not understanding the instructions for assignments, instructors can discuss assignments with students one-on-one during class sessions or arrange students to discuss assignments in small groups in order to clarify assignments.

Lack of personal opinions was found to be an important causal factor. This factor is related to Chinese rhetorical conventions and the Taiwanese educational system, respectively. Instructors need to explicitly teach foreign students, especially Chinese students, English rhetorical patterns such as argumentative or research papers in order to help familiarize them with the genre conventions and assign students in groups to discuss or evaluate strengths and limitations from the academic readings to implement foreign students' critical thinking skills.

Two participants claimed that their professors' negative comments/written feedback on their English academic papers—the respondents' perceptions that their professors look down on or cannot accept them as non-native speakers—have enormously influenced their anxiety in their writing. This finding recalls MacIntyre and Gardner's (1991) claim that teachers should encourage language learners more and enhance their self-confidence in the target language in order to reduce their language anxiety.

One participant specifically cited one of her American professor's comment on her academic paper regarding "ESL issues" which he/she wrote on her returned paper with no other feedback. Although the professor may have written this remark casually, thinking the writer would simply take it in stride, the comment ultimately made her very upset and worried about native vs. non-native speaker issues. Her professor's comment caused her to be very conscious of her status as a non-native speaker or writer. Again, this finding can be related to Leki's (1999) finding that writing anxiety is associated with learner's educational experiences, in particular to the fear of "[being] judged or evaluated" on their writing ability.

As for these participants' anxiety over organization of academic papers, instructors can request students to attach outlines when turning in the final versions or bring outlines to class and assign students to discuss their outlines together to help better organize their ideas for the assignment.

VI. IMPLICATIONS

The majority of these Taiwanese graduate students have experienced a high level of anxiety over grammatical errors which are associated with the anxiety over American professors' expectation of native proficiency, their Chinese English, or their misuse of vocabulary. They are facing the difficulties of reaching the standard or expectations in the academic discourse community where their American professors are the audience of their academic papers and where the dominant variety/ inner-circle variety is the norm. However, international students' use of English forms which are influenced by their mother tongues is inevitable, leading Acar (2007) to state

It is argued that while the inner-circle, native-speaker standard English should still serve as the pedagogical model in this circle, there must be allowance for pragmatic and discourse variations in these English users' speech since these levels of language are strongly shaped by the cultural contexts of these speakers. (p. 51)

This concept might lead instructors to reconsider their evaluation strategies for foreign students' English academic papers.

When assessing foreign students' writing, instructors could apply Kasper and Petrello's (1998) "nonjudgmental instructional approach" (p. 184) which emphasized "the fluent and clear expression of ideas over correctness of form" (p. 181). Canagarajah (2006) wrote that instructors "should perceive 'errors' as the learner's active negotiation and exploration of choices and possibilities" (p. 593). Hornberger (2004) stated that when evaluating foreign or second language learners' work, educators should always take into account "an ungrammatical expression of accurate content, or a grammatically correct expression of inaccurate content, may be just as much a sign of learning as a grammatically correct expression of accurate content" (p. 166). Instructors teaching at universities in the inner circle countries (i.e., USA, Canada, UK, or Australia) may consider focusing on foreign students' content and take into account the influence of their native languages in their academic writing.

For these participants studying at an American university who are very anxious about grammatical errors, Chinese English, or native-like proficiency, their professors are the main audience. Canagarajah (2006) emphasized that instructors must teach students to "negotiate grammar for their rhetorical purposes" (p. 610) such as purpose, context, and audience.

On the same note, some of the participants reported feeling anxious about not understanding assignment instructions. Horner (1994) stated that "[i]n reinforcing the students' sense of being in a position to negotiate, we enable them to see writing as a negotiating process of bargaining as to what might count as what, to whom, for what purposes, under what circumstances" (pp. 46-47). Baker (2009) emphasized that "for learners of English as a lingua franca, the ability to negotiate, mediate, and adapt to emerging communicative practices is at least as important as systematic knowledge of languages and their specific relationships to other cultures" (p. 588). For participants who reported problems with rhetorical conventions, such as thesis statements and citations of academic sources, Matsuda and Matsuda (2010)

suggested teaching the dominant and non-dominant forms and functions to students and the boundary between what works and what does not in specific communicative contexts, and strategies of negotiating with readers by applying features such as quotation marks, endnotes, etc. to show credibility. Also, Canagarajah (2006) recommended that “we should teach communicative strategies—i.e., creative ways to negotiate the norms relevant in diverse contexts” (p. 593). Students, especially foreign students, need to be taught these strategies to negotiate in the academic community which essentially constitutes communicative competence.

In this study these ten Taiwanese graduate students are facing writing anxiety in the academic discourse community which the mainstream standard or inner-circle variety of English might be expected of them by their American professors who are the audience, the readers, and the context is the U.S. classroom or the academic community in general. Graduate students are expected to present their works at academic conferences and publish their academic papers in research journals where the mainstream or traditional dominant norm of English is the norm. Admittedly, it is difficult to preach World Englishes, while at the same time expecting the norm for the international graduate students to be the inner-circle variety.

Based on the findings of this current study, instructors need to be cautious when providing feedback on students’ academic papers because this might increase the level of writing anxiety. Also, foreign students should be encouraged to engage in dialogue with American professors using communicative strategies to negotiate with their instructors after receiving their graded returned papers by asking questions about the professors’ feedback in the papers. By negotiating the meanings of professors’ feedback, foreign students gain more opportunities to improve their writing and understanding of the academic language in the studies, and in doing so, their levels of anxiety over writing academic papers could be lowered. Also, during this process foreign students empower themselves as active learners and writers in dynamic academic discourses with their American professors.

VII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study lack generalization because the primary sources of data collection came from qualitative methods and the number of the participants is small. Also, each participant in the study was investigated as a unique individual, so the findings of the study lack generalization. Future studies of this nature will be needed before it can be known whether the findings of this study are similar to what emerges from studying the same or other populations in similar contexts.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

It is necessary to urge more qualitative studies on international students’ personal experiences of writing anxiety. Also, foreign students’ anxiety over writing which stems from rhetorical conventions should be investigated, so educators can understand this anxiety and are able to adjust their teaching pedagogies and provide students coping strategies.

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Children Learning a Non-native Vowel – The Effect of a Two-day Production Training

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Abstract—The aim of this study was to investigate, how young children learn to produce a non-native vowel embedded in a pseudo-word context after short and intensive listen-and-repeat training sessions. The trained vowel contrast was chosen so that it would generate maximal learning difficulties according to models of second language learning. The group consisted of 13 7–10 year old girls. The child subjects participated in the study twice, on two consecutive days. Both days consisted of two training and two recording sessions. The model stimuli were pseudo-words /ty:ti/ and /tʌ:ti/, synthesized using a semi-synthetic method. The primary target word was /tʌ:ti/, which contained the vowel phoneme phonologically irrelevant in Finnish. The two lowest formants and the fundamental frequency were analysed from the recorded vowels. The results revealed that children learned to produce the new vowel after only three training sessions and that the effect was also seen after the fourth session. These results suggest that children learn to produce a new vowel after a short period of phonetic training.

Index Terms—children, language learning, vowel production

I. INTRODUCTION

The language that an infant hears in his/hers environment alters the perception of sounds and, by the age of six months, the perceptual vowel space has already changed so that the native language vowel prototypes start to act as magnets hindering the discrimination near a native language prototype but not near a non-prototype. The perception of native vowels by infants is also strongly in accordance with the perception of adult speakers of the language. Thus, the sound categories for the mother tongue evolve during the child's first year of life (Kuhl, 1991).

The sounds of a non-native language (L2) are filtered through the native language system. The native sound prototypes function as prototype magnets (Kuhl, 1991), which leads to difficulties in perceiving non-native sounds that are acoustically near the native language phonemes. According to the Speech Learning Model (SLM, Flege, 1987), the sounds of a non-native language can be divided into three types according to their correspondence with the native categories: “new”, “similar” and “identical”. The sounds that are classified as similar are the ones that are the most difficult to learn, since they resemble the native categories of the mother tongue but, however, differ from them significantly, e.g. regarding the exact formant values or phonological status. Sounds that belong to the group “new” are most often difficult at first, as they are something totally novel, but they do not result in major learning difficulties, since they are not confused with existing categories. “Identical” sounds are identical in both languages and thus their acquisition presents no problems. Another model of non-native sound acquisition, namely the Perceptual Assimilation Model (PAM, Best and Strange, 1992, Best 1995), approaches these difficulties by perceptual assimilation patterns where target language sound pairs are compared with the native language sound system. According to this model, the most difficult contrast to perceive is a case where two target language sounds are categorized into one native language category either equally well or equally poorly. This situation is called *Single Category (SC) assimilation* in the model and it is difficult because the sounds are not discriminated in the mother tongue, but they are treated as two equally good allophones of one category. The trained sound pair /y/ and /ʌ/ is considered to be *Category-Goodness Difference (CG Type)*, which is considered to produce considerable learning difficulties. In the present study, children's ability to learn a non-native vowel category was investigated. In particular, we were interested in studying whether an intensive two-day listen-and-repeat training, which is widely used in Finnish schools, could change the production of a non-native vowel. The trained category, /ʌ/, is an allophone of the Finnish vowel categories /y/ and /u/. This is considered to produce learning difficulties in all models of second language phonetic learning.

Earlier research by Iverson and Evans (2009) on intensive training effects with adults has shown that auditory training can be useful in learning to perceive foreign language sound categories. In their study, the identification of English vowels by German and Spanish speakers was investigated. The results showed that the improvement in identification also depended on the amount of vowel categories that the languages have: when there are fewer categories in the native language than in the target language (Spanish), the improvement took a longer time than when the vowel space was more crowded in the native language (German). In our study, the target language has three vowel categories in the same acoustic space where the native language has only two. This phenomenon also known as under-differentiation (Weinreich, 1953/1963) can lead to learning difficulties, since one has to learn a distinction non-existent in the native language.

Bradlow et al. (1997) demonstrated that perceptual training of the /r/ -/l/ contrast in adult Japanese learners of English transfers also into motor skills by improving the productions of the liquids. The subjects belonging to the experimental group participated in a high-variability identification training and their identification skills as well as productions of the two consonants were measured both pretest and post-test. The identification skills improved significantly from the pretest to post-test. The more interesting finding was that the perceptual training facilitates also the production since native English listeners identified the sounds produced by Japanese subjects significantly more correct in the post-test than in the pretest. This improvement generalized also to novel items that the subjects had not heard in the high-variability training or the previous tests. Similar results were also found in a distinct study where children with phonological impairment were investigated (Rvachew, 1994). In that study it was found that the productions of /ʃ/ improved more in groups of children who, in addition to traditional speech therapy, had additional perception training of /ʃ/. Cheour et al. (2002) described the neural plasticity of young (3—6-year-old) Finnish children, who learned to discriminate preattentively a non-native vowel distinction in only two months after joining a French school or day care center. Also Peltola et al. (2005) reported similar learning effects in children, who had participated in an immersion program at least for two years. These results suggest that children are able to learn to discriminate a difficult sound contrast fast and the learning effect can be seen in production as well as in the preattentive perceptual tasks. A more recent study by Giannakopoulou et al. (2013) also gives strong evidence on children's motor plasticity compared to adults. In their study Greek participants trained on perceptual identification and discrimination of the English tense /t :/ and lax /t / using high-variability training. All subjects participated in pretest, training and post-test. Pretest and post-test consisted of Perceptual Identification and Auditory Discrimination. The high-variability training between the tests consisted of 10 sessions over a two week period. Both groups could benefit from the training but the 7—8 year old group improved their performance significantly more than adults and the authors propose that this supports the notion of enhanced plasticity for spoken language in children.

In the present investigation, monolingual Finnish children's ability to produce a vowel that is not phonologically relevant in their native language was studied. Vowels are composed of acoustic resonances, formants, and they are identified by their formant structure. The formant frequencies measured for the vowels depend on the size and shape of the supraglottal cavities (Fant, 1970; Gilbert et al., 1997). Several studies demonstrate that children have higher formant frequencies than adults and male speakers lower frequencies than female speakers, which can be explained with the size differences and with the influence of fundamental frequency on the formant frequencies (Hillenbrand et al., 1995; Huber et al., 1999; Lee et al., 1999; Peterson and Barney, 1952). In this study the child participants were all girls, since some studies have shown that even young children have different formant values depending on their gender (Huber et al., 1999).

Finland is a bilingual country with Finnish and Swedish as the official languages. In 2012 approximately five percent (5,4%) of the population had Swedish as their mother tongue. Although other languages have substantially as big representation, since 4,9 percent of the population have some other language than Finnish or Swedish as their mother tongue (Official Statistics of Finland (OSF): Population structure [e-publication]). According to *Statistics Finland*, there are 5,4% Swedish mother tongue speakers and 8,7% with some other language than Finnish or Swedish in Turku (StatFin database: Population according to age (1-year), sex, marital status and language by area 1990 - 2012 [Internet]). However, the Finnish speaking majority do not hear Swedish in abundance in everyday life, because most of the Swedish mother tongue speakers are in fact bilinguals and use Swedish mostly among the minority. It is though possible to choose only one language in official forms so there are no statistics of the amount of bilingual Finnish-Swedish speakers. Since Swedish is an official language it is quaranteed by law that e.g. Swedish education for the minority is offered and because of that the two language groups attend different schools, where only Finnish or Swedish is used. Consequently, the child subjects do not have any superior knowledge of Swedish so that it would impact the results.

The aim of our study was to find out the effect of four short training sessions on the production of a vowel category that is not phonologically relevant in the subject's native language, but which is close to two native language categories. Our hypothesis was that children would be able to alter their productions of the target vowel according to the given model because of high behavioural and neural plasticity, but that the productions of the native language vowel in the nontarget word would not change.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

A. Subjects

A total of 13 girls volunteered to participate in the study. The mean age was 9;1 years (range 7;1—10;9). None of the subjects reported of any hearing or language deficits. All of them had Finnish as their mother tongue and their families did not use any other languages at home. All of the subjects had lived their whole lives in Finland. Furthermore, they all had very limited exposure to other languages: eight of the subjects had some minimal passive exposure to another language (e.g. Italian, French). All subjects were enrolled in the Finnish elementary school system. Compulsory education in Finland starts in the year when the child turns seven years. Subjects reported various hobbies, e.g. listening to music and different sports. Altogether the group represented a sample of monolingual native Finnish-speaking children with no linguistic deficits. All subjects and their parents gave an informed written consent. The study was carried out with the permission of the Ethics Committee of the University of Turku.

B. Procedure

The subjects participated in the study twice, on two consecutive days and on both days there were recording and training blocks in turns. The subjects were told that they would hear Swedish words and they would have to repeat them after the model. They were also instructed that they could take breaks between the sessions, if they wanted to, or suspend the experiment upon their wish. The experiment was done in a sound attenuated room where only the experimenter and the subject were present. The stimuli were presented binaurally with Sanako Headset SLH-07 and registered with Sanako Lab 100 -software.

The first day began with a recording block (baseline) and after that there was a training session followed by a new recording block and training session. On the second day there were also four blocks starting with the training session and finishing with the last recording block. As a result, the experiment consisted of four recording and training sessions. Prior to the first session on both days, the subjects could set the volume to a comfortable level during a familiarization block, which consisted of six words so that both stimuli were repeated three times one after another. In the recording and training blocks the subjects repeated the target word and nontarget word stimuli in turns after the model. In the training block there were 30 repetitions of the target word /tʌ :ti/ and 30 of the nontarget word /ty:ti/, altogether 60 words. The recording block included 10 target words and 10 nontarget words, thus it contained 20 words altogether. In total, there were 320 words to be repeated by the subject. The whole experiment lasted for under half an hour per day per subject. Due to technical problems seven words produced by one subject and three by another had to be excluded from the analysis.

C. Stimuli

The rounded closed vowel space is divided into three categories in Swedish but only two in Finnish. The words used in this experiment were chosen so that they would result in maximal learning difficulties, as the vowel /ʌ/ is not phonological in Finnish but it is acoustically located near the categories /y/ and /u/. The distinction between the vowels is mostly made on the basis of the second formant values. The stimuli were semi-synthetic pseudowords /ty:ti/ and /tʌ :ti/. The stimuli of the study were created using the Semi-synthetic Speech Generation method (SSG), a method that models the production of natural speech with digital signal processing methodologies (Alku et al., 1999). Due to the use of the SSG method, it is worth noting that the generated two word stimuli are of equal acoustic and prosodic features (e.g. duration, fundamental frequency, intonation, voice quality) except during the long vowel in the middle of the words when the stimuli differ *only* in terms of their formant frequencies. This was achieved, importantly, without compromising the auditory quality of the stimuli: due to the use of a glottal excitation extracted from a natural utterance, both word stimuli were of naturalness equal to that of real speech.

SSG is based on the source filter theory of speech production according to which a voiced speech sound can be separated into two main parts: the excitation airflow generated by the fluctuating vocal folds, the glottal waveform, and the vocal tract (Fant, 1970). By using a natural voiced speech signal recorded by a microphone as input, SSG utilises an automatic adaptive two-stage procedure resulting in two outputs: the estimated glottal flow (in form of a digital time-domain signal) and the vocal tract filter (in form of a digital all-pole filter). The estimated glottal flow can then be used as an excitation to digital vocal tract models to synthesise speech stimuli. Since the excitation waveform is extracted from a natural utterance, the method is named *semi-synthetic*. Using glottal waveforms extracted from natural speech renders a realistic jitter in the synthesized stimuli, which is characteristic to natural utterances. SSG has been previously used successfully in several studies on speech perception (e.g. Ceponiene et al., 2003) but also recently as a vocoding technique in a statistical parametric speech synthesizer (Raitio et al., 2011).

In order to obtain raw material for the SSG synthesis, words produced by a natural talker were recorded in an anechoic chamber using a high-quality condenser microphone (Bruel&Kjaer 4188). The speaker was a bilingual (Finnish/Swedish) male student of the Aalto University, aged 24 years, with no history of any speech or hearing disorder. He pronounced the target word /tʌ :ti/ and the nontarget word /ty:ti/ by repeating the same word five times. All sounds were recorded with a sampling frequency of 22050 Hz and a resolution of 16 bits. From the recorded five repetitions, the middle one was chosen for further processing both for /tʌ :ti/ and /ty:ti/. The signal waveform of both words was cut into three parts corresponding to the beginning section (i.e. waveform corresponding to /t/ in both words), middle section (i.e. waveform corresponding to /ʌ :/ in /tʌ :ti/ and waveform corresponding to /y:/ in /ty:ti/) and end section (i.e. waveform corresponding to /i/ in both words). This segmentation was straightforward to conduct because

the long vowel in the middle of the both words was preceded and followed by the unvoiced plosive /t/. From the segmented utterances, SSG was first used in order to estimate the glottal waveform, denoted by $g(n)$, of the middle section cut from /tʌ :ti/. Second, the vocal tract filter was computed with SSG over the middle section of word /ty:ti/. By filtering $g(n)$ through the obtained vocal tract model, a semi-synthetic vowel /y:/ was created. Third, two signal waveforms were created as follows. The beginning, middle and end sections cut from /tʌ :ti/ were concatenated hence resulting in a waveform of stimulus /tʌ :ti/ (i.e. the procedure corresponded copying the waveform of the natural /tʌ :ti/ word). To obtain the stimulus waveform of /ty:ti/, the beginning section of /tʌ :ti/, the semi-synthetic /y:/ vowel, and the end section of /tʌ :ti/ were concatenated. The intensities of the generated two stimulus waveform were finally normalised by adjusting the square sums of the digital signals to the same value. The formant values of the target word /tʌ :ti/ were F1=338 Hz, F2=1258 Hz, F3=2177 Hz and for the nontarget word /ty:ti/ F1=269 Hz, F2=1866 Hz, F3=2518 Hz as measured from the midpoint of the vowel (190 ms after stimulus onset). The fundamental frequency was 126 Hz in the long vowels of both the target and nontarget words. The duration of the stimuli was 624 milliseconds and the inter-stimulus interval (ISI) was set to three seconds.

D. Analysis

Speech signals produced in the recording sessions by the test subjects were analysed by Praat software, version 5.3.01 (Boersma & Weenink, 2013). The following measurements were made for the first vowel in each recorded word: frequency of the first formant (F1), frequency of the second formant (F2) and the fundamental frequency (F0). The formants were measured from a steady-state phase of the vowel using the Linear Predictive Coding (LPC) Burg algorithm. In the statistical analysis we focused on the F1 and F2 because it is known that the two first formants are enough for distinguishing between vowel categories (Dew and Jensen, 1977). In addition, special attention was directed to the F2, since the main difference between /y/ and /ʌ / is on that acoustic cue. F0 values were measured and analysed in order to secure that there were no outliers that would distort the formant results. No considerable deviants were found.

The statistical analysis was performed using IBM SPSS software, version 19. The analysis consisted of the formant frequencies for the formants. In order to find out if the two words were produced differently and whether the productions change as a function of training, we analysed statistically the results of the F1 and F2 values using a Word (2) X Session (4) X Formant (2) Repeated Measures analysis of variance (ANOVA). Each formant was analysed separately using (Word (2) X Session (4) ANOVA) and the sessions were compared with paired samples t-tests. One-tailed p -values are reported of the t-tests because we were interested to see *decrease* in the formant values and the p -values are Bonferroni corrected due to multiple simultaneous comparisons. An alpha level of .05 was used in all tests and only the statistically significant results are reported here.

III. RESULTS

The omnibus ANOVA analysis of the formant values revealed the significant main effect of word ($F(1,12)=6.261$, $p=0.028$). There was also a significant interaction between Word and Formant ($F(1,12)=9.188$, $p=0.010$), signalling that the difference found in the two words was concentrated more on one of the measured formants. We also found an interaction between Session and Formant ($F(3,10)=6.332$, $p=0.011$), implying that one of the formants changed as a result of training, while the other remained unaffected. Further analysis of the relevant F2 value revealed the significant main effect of word ($F(1,12)=7.856$, $p=0.016$), indicating that the F2 values were different in the native and the target word. More importantly, the analysis on F2 revealed the main effect of the Session ($F(3,10)=4.440$, $p=0.031$), suggesting that the change was valid in the values of the F2 between sessions. Most importantly, the paired samples t-tests conducted to compare the sessions were statistically significant between first and third session ($t(12)=2.621$, $p=0.033$) and between first and fourth session ($t(12)=3.047$, $p=0.015$) on the target word. The analysis, thus, revealed that the F2 value of the target word changed by the third session and that the change prevailed also at the fourth session. These findings can also be observed in the formant values shown in Table 1 and Fig. 1. Altogether, the F2 value of the target word's first vowel increases by the third session and remains low in the fourth session.

TABLE 1.
FORMANT VALUES (HZ) AND THEIR STANDARD DEVIATION VALUES IN PARENTHESES FOR THE TWO FIRST FORMANTS FOR THE TARGET AND NONTARGET WORDS IN EACH SESSION.

| | F1 | | | | F2 | | | |
|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Session 1 | Session 2 | Session 3 | Session 4 | Session 1 | Session 2 | Session 3 | Session 4 |
| Target word | 513 (38) | 532 (61) | 539 (52) | 533 (50) | 2020 (178) | 1976 (222) | 1873 (336) | 1872 (307) |
| Nontarget word | 506 (39) | 508 (39) | 516 (47) | 511 (50) | 2144 (119) | 2109 (110) | 2103 (135) | 2109 (115) |

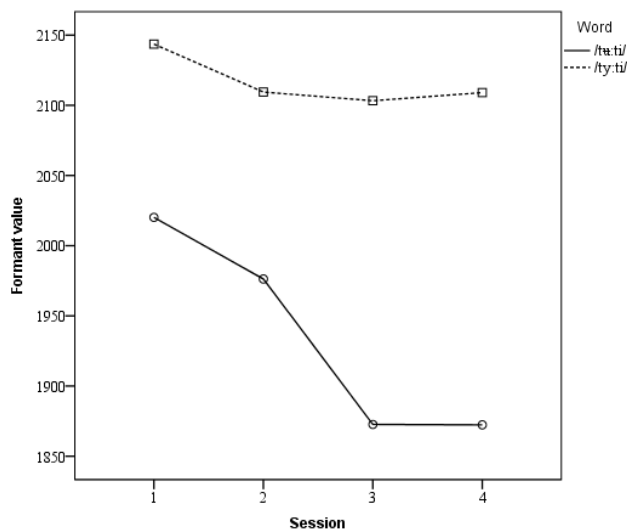


Figure 1. Second formant values by session in both words.

IV. DISCUSSION

In this study, typically developing children's ability to learn to produce a non-native vowel was investigated. The children were trained on the target vowel and the nontarget vowel by imitating a given model in four short sessions, and their productions were recorded in four recording sessions. The target vowel was considered to be difficult for Finnish speaking learners according to second language learning models (Best 1995; Flege 1987). The results showed that children can learn to produce the non-native target vowel in two days after only three short training sessions. The F2 values for the target word's first vowel in the first session were significantly higher than in the third and fourth session, which indicates that the vowel produced by the subjects had changed from resembling the vowel /y/ to resembling more the vowel /u/. Our results are in line with our hypothesis, as only the target vowel changed, and with previous studies indicating fast learning effects and motor plasticity in children. Earlier research has shown that perceptual training can facilitate the learning of a new sound category in children with difficulties in consonant productions (Rvachew, 1994). A similar effect has also been demonstrated in a distinct study with adults learning a sound category that does not belong to their native system, and that the effect is noticeable even three months after training (Bradlow et al., 1999). Furthermore, also in pre-attentive level in studies using MMN, it has been shown that new memory traces can evolve for second language sounds even in a couple of months in immersion programs or in French school for Finnish children (Cheour et al., 2002). Altogether, studies using different methods have shown that children are fast learners, and that the learning effect can be seen both pre-attentively and on attention-demanding tasks. Our results are consistent with these previous findings. The novelty element is that the teaching method often used in Finnish schools, namely the listen and repeat training, significantly alters the production and therefore facilitates learning.

The stimuli were produced using a male speaker's vocal tract model as a basis, resulting in formants that were low in nature. Even though this was a challenging linguistic situation for the child subjects, as the model they heard for the words differed from their own production, they still learned to produce the non-native vowel according to the given model. We suggest that this would be evidence of children's high motor plasticity, as children seem to update their production patterns when a new kind of a model is provided. In line with this is the clinical study by Bates et al. (2001) which offers strong evidence on children's behavioural and brain plasticity after early brain injury. In their study children with left hemisphere injury were in the normal range for their age in several different tasks and differed significantly from the control group only on a couple of measures. In contrast, adults with similar injuries scored significantly lower than normal adults. When these children were compared with adults using age-related Z-scores, children had a significant advantage. Similar results were shown in a behavioural study by Giannakapoulou et al. (2013) where children outperformed adults on perceptual identification and discrimination. These studies imply that children's brain and motor plasticity is good and significantly higher compared to adults.

In conclusion, we show that a listen-and-repeat training can facilitate the production of a non-native vowel in young children. There were only four training sessions for each subject and the change in the production of the non-native vowel /u/ was seen already after three sessions and the change remained after the fourth and last session, too. This illustrates that a training, which is also commonly used in schools, is an effective tool for training the production of non-native sounds. Altogether, these results indicate that children's motoric plasticity is high and new articulations are acquired rapidly.

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Inquiry-based Teaching in Second and Foreign Language Pedagogy

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Abstract—It is the consensus among language educators that the objectives of teaching a second/foreign language (L2) put stress on the enhancement of students' communication skills and advocate the importance of interaction in the classroom. In addition to theories and methods exclusively dedicated to language instruction, the domain-independent inquiry-based teaching, a cognitive approach, can be easily and effectively integrated into the L2 classroom which echoes the concerns and needs in L2 education. Inquiry teaching is characterized by its question-answer interactive information exchanges. Instead of learning passively, it stimulates students to actively engage in cognitive and discovery learning activities. It is assumed that this active, discovery, or Socratic teaching approach promotes the dynamics in class, draws and maintains students' attention, reinforces meaningful communication, deepens and expands intellectual capacity, and facilitates learning transfer. Most importantly, it supports the development of learner's cognitive and metacognitive strategies. This technique best fits within the theme-based text and can be conducted in an expanding spiral pattern. A questionnaire was administered in a Chinese as a second language class to assess students' feedback on the effectiveness and preference of this approach and favorable findings were revealed. Students expressed enthusiasm on inquiry-based teaching and indicated that this approach reinforced their learning and understanding of the course material. Qualitative data also shows that inquiry-based teaching enhanced students' classroom engagement and fostered an effective and meaningful learning experience.

Index Terms—inquiry-based teaching, second and foreign language, language pedagogy, questioning, classroom interaction

Inquiry involves questions. Inquiry-based teaching could easily be interpreted as merely “asking questions” or perceived as an analogy for communicative approach by foreign language instructors. Nevertheless, it is a pedagogical approach as well as a learning strategy. Through the use of questioning, the core value of inquiry-based pedagogy puts stress on discovery learning and the development of learners' cognitive skills and metacognitive strategies.

I. A GLANCE OVER FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Second or foreign language (L2) teaching is a profession filled with vigor and innovations. The development of language teaching methodology has undergone several stages over the last century. A variety of approaches has emerged either in response to new thoughts or as a reaction to the inadequacies or drawbacks of an earlier method. These scholastic debates reflect different viewpoints and perspectives revolving around theories of language acquisition, purposes of language learning as well as goals and the mechanics of language instruction. The swing of the pendulum continued until communicative language teaching (CLT) achieved its prominence and changed the face of L2 teaching (Canale & Swain, 1980; Littlewood, 1981; Savignon, 1991, 2001). It was advocated that, in addition to the linguistic competence (Paulston, 1974) or the study of grammar, acquiring communicative competence (Hymes, 1972; Brown, 1994) is vital to the success of L2 learning. Since then, consensus has been reached that the purpose of L2 learning and the mission of L2 teaching are to build up the ability to function and interact appropriately with people of the target language in a real social setting. The best way to acquire communicative competence is to communicate through meaningful interactive activities in which authentic language can be exercised while the negotiation of meaning takes place. Task-based instruction (TBI) (Skehan, 1998; Willis, 2004), or task-supported teaching, is thus evolved as a supplement to CLT and it is assumed that TBI stimulates natural acquisition processes (Prabhu, 1987). Due to the impact of CLT and TBI, the teaching practice thus weights more on the enhancement of students' active participation and the meaningful exchange of information in a simulated real-life context. Accordingly, the teacher's ability to construct a dynamic teaching scheme becomes crucial, and the question-answer interactive module is an indispensable component.

Though CLT has been applied and interpreted in a broad sense and has become the mainstream in present-day L2 education, it does not imply that other approaches are of no use or are incompatible. For instance, while the method of grammar translation is obsolete, research revealed that explicit teaching of grammar at some point in instruction is still necessary so as to improve the level of accuracy (Ellis, 2006) or to achieve a higher level of proficiency (Leaver & Atwell, 2002). In examining all approaches and methods, it comes as no surprise to note that similarities exist and that distinctive features complement one another. CLT has been described as an approach rather than a specific teaching method or strategy (Richards & Rodgers, 1986), as indicated in their conclusion on CLT that “... at the levels of design and procedure there is much greater room for individual interpretation and variations than most methods permit.” (p.

83). It is noteworthy to search for a balance between pure communicative teaching and the practice of form-focused instruction. A skillful teacher, taking the philosophy of CLT as the foothold, is capable of implementing an effectual pedagogical application from a variety of available resources which satisfies the CLT objectives and leads to optimal learning outcomes. While an abundance of teaching methodology has been devoted exclusively to the field of language education, the domain-independent theories and models of instructional design may equally contribute inspiring ideas and provide teachers with alternative options. Amongst them, the model of inquiry teaching, a cognitive approach, is a perfect match which echoes the concerns and demands of today's L2 teaching—that is, to foster an interactive and communicative teaching/learning environment while supporting discovery, reflective and creative learning.

II. INQUIRY-BASED SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

A. *What Is Inquiry-based?*

Learning is deeply rooted in profound thinking and thinking is inspired by questions. Inquiry teaching (Collins & Stevens, 1983; Collins, 1987) is a cognitive educational theory as well as a teaching practice. Unlike other theories, it was first developed inductively by studying transcripts and analyzing the strategies employed by a number of teachers in different domains. The studies disclosed that all those expert teachers made use of some sort of inquiry, discovery, or Socratic approach to teaching.

As the name suggests, inquiry teaching, versus expository teaching in which the teacher expounds all the information, involves the use of questioning as the major vehicle to present the material and deliver instruction. The questions being asked in class outline the focus and direction of the lesson content. Distinct from the routine question-answer information exchange, the inquiry-based teaching lays special emphasis on the core concepts of cognitive and discovery learning and its goal to develop higher-order thinking. In other words, teachers do not teach everything directly or explicitly. Instead, learners are expected and encouraged to discover the knowledge, to generate underlined rules based on a series of examples and counterexamples, and to be able to further apply these rules or knowledge to novel cases and deal with everyday life situations. The teacher thus becomes the facilitator to assist learners in exploring and constructing their conceptual system. It is evident that this type of teaching challenges students more when compared with the teacher-directed teaching mode. By turning lecturing into problem solving, this approach promotes deeper understanding and inspires learners' cognitive capability by the virtue of active engagement in the learning process.

B. *Why Inquiry-based?*

Although this instructional model has primarily been applied to the teaching in science and math, its concept and question-answer mechanism are equally well-suited to L2 classroom. Instructors employ the inquiry technique to enhance the acquisition of vocabulary, to explore the grammatical structures, to engage in the negotiation of meaning and to discover the embedded cultural essence. This practice helps ensure the L2 learning experience stays active and dynamic which in turn keeps students engaged and attentive.

The implementation of inquiry teaching benefits second language instruction in all aspects. It not only serves the purpose of increasing the opportunity of participation and maintaining students' attention, it is an instrument to initiate and sustain the instructional interaction. Through questioning, the teacher is able to probe into the pattern of errors made by students and their levels of comprehension as well as to make judgment and assessment on the learning outcomes. It is also anticipated that the inquiry-based teaching approach strengthens both students' linguistic and communicative competence. Following in the spirit of CLT and TBI, the ideal condition is to integrate various types of questions into a meaningful context in a natural sequence.

An effective inquiry technique is a valuable expertise language educators should possess. Good questions not just provide exciting and challenging learning experience, they allow discovery, reflection and creativity, and ignite cognitive and metacognitive skills as well which by all means facilitate self-regulated learning and future learning transfer. What should be kept in mind is that the mission of being a second language educator is not just to disseminate linguistic knowledge. It is of equal importance to assist students understand and control their learning, and to enlighten them on making good use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

C. *Types and Functions of Questions*

Virtually every language pedagogue undertakes inquiry teaching to a certain extent in some form, but what and how to ask is of concern. It is not uncommon that many teachers experience difficulties in motivating students to enthusiastically participate or in sustaining the duration of meaningful interaction. Needless to say, teachers feel frustrated as their teaching practice fails to elicit the desired output. This predicament may be attributed to inadequate preparation on students' part, mismatch between questions and learners' proficiency level, or the dullness of questions that are ineffective in eliciting prolific responses or critical thinking. Students may get bored when questions are not challenging, are beyond their capability, or are not personally associated. There is no doubt that the effectiveness of the inquiry skill and the appropriate choice of questions directly impact the quality of teaching and achievement of learning. On that account, the selection of questions along with the sequence and pattern of delivery are of great importance in the stages of planning and implementing.

In everyday activities, a common intent of asking questions is to either obtain information or garner attention from the listener. Whereas, questions with instructional purpose are somewhat distinct from those used in natural discourse in both type and function. Kearsley (1976) proposed a framework after examining the syntactic forms and semantic functions of questions in ordinary verbal discourse. This taxonomy consists of four groups of questions, namely echoic, epistemic, expressive and social control, based on the function a question serves. Obviously, from the pedagogical perspective, the first two categories account for most of the classroom catechism. In most cases, teachers ask direct questions which consist of open-end wh-questions and closed-end alternative or yes/no form.

Limited research has been done pertaining to the types of language teachers' questions and the relationship between the cognitive level of questions and students' performance. Following Kearsley's analytic work, Long and Sato (1983, 1984) investigated the questioning by ESL teachers and an elaborated and expanded taxonomy was established which better reflected teachers' inquiry tendency in a formal learning setting. The findings confirmed that echoic and epistemic questions are the two types most utilized by language teachers. Echoic questions usually serve the purpose of requesting repetition of an utterance, clarifying vagueness, or confirming the words and intention to be conveyed. In the category of epistemic questions, which are used to acquire or exchange information, the research evidence manifested the significant preference for display questions over referential questions during instruction. The former refers to those to which the questioner already knows the answer, the latter are questions to which the responses may vary and not be known or predicted by the questioner. Referential questions are those involving exchange and negotiation of meaning and are most often heard in real life communication.

Research (Brock, 1986) also pointed out that students improved their answers both in quality and quantity when they were asked referential questions. In other words, learners tend to produce longer and more syntactically complex sentences when responding to referential rather than display questions. Moreover, compared with closed referential questions to which either one or very limited answers are possible, open referential questions seemingly draw forth more fruitful responses.

It is no surprise to learn that language teachers ask significantly more display questions given that display questions are mostly text-based or relate to the material being covered. This type of question is postulated to enhance learners' comprehension of specific content as well as a means to verify if the material has been transmitted and absorbed by students. Nevertheless, if classroom interaction is carried out predominantly by asking display questions, little genuine communication or negotiation of meaning can be achieved. This inclination somewhat signified that, practically or as a conventional practice, teachers tend to focus on linguistic competence more despite the widespread belief in communicative teaching. Yet, teachers can be trained to advance their elicitation skills with the increase of the number of referential questions (Long & Sato, 1984; Jin, 2004).

Furthermore, display questions are assumed to be at the low cognitive levels according to Bloom (1956) and Gagné's (1985) classification of the cognitive domain, because they are mainly used to recall or memorize factual information. Referential questions, however, are likely to call for higher cognitive skills, such as the application of learned vocabulary and structures in new context, or the provision of opinions and comments after making judgment or evaluation. But this does not mean that display questions are of no use. A balance of a variety of questions should be attained.

The revised Bloom's taxonomy can be useful when adopted as the guidelines of questioning (see Table 1). The revision in 2001 (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) used action verbs to label skills or processes encountered in different levels of cognition, and a simplified three-level version was also proposed for a broader use (Walsh & Sattes, 2005). It is recommended that teachers be able to design and organize questions and activities insofar as these cognitive skills or abilities can be exercised. Different types of questions lead to different levels of performance. It is important to use as many question types as possible. Though upper-level types are more desirable, which require further efforts and deliberation of students, lower levels serve the foundation of moving upwards.

TABLE 1
BLOOM'S TAXONOMY AND TWO REVISED VERSIONS

| Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956) | Revised (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) | Revised (Walsh & Sattes, 2005) |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Knowledge | Remember | Recall |
| Comprehension | Understand | Use |
| Application | Apply | |
| Analysis | Analyze | |
| Synthesis | Evaluate | Create |
| Evaluation | Create | |

In addition to enhancing discovery learning and cognitive skills, questions can be utilized to provoke metacognitive skills. Metacognition is generally defined as "thinking about thinking." It involves preparing and setting learning goals, choosing and using appropriate and effective learning strategies in a given task, and monitoring and evaluating one's own learning (Anderson, 2002). A person who is aware of metacognition knows how to deal with his/her learning effectively. They have the knowledge and ability to manage their own thinking processes. Profound learning happens when students are involved in reflecting, thinking and reasoning. Learners learn and are aware of metacognitive skills

when questions stimulate higher-order thinking; and these skills support regulating, supervising and assessing their L2 learning.

III. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS OF INQUIRY-BASED TEACHING

A. *The Adaptability of Questions*

The appropriateness of questions and the pattern of presentation are closely related to the effectiveness of teaching and the development of students' linguistic capabilities. As discussed previously, referential questions function more productively than display questions in terms of communication. Though display questions are necessary and suitable for teaching low cognitive level factual knowledge, such as vocabulary and the recall or recognition of textual information, referential questions are able to trigger students' interest and allow them to express themselves which in turn brings on heated discussions. Questions should also deal with upper level cognition, such as asking students to derive grammatical rules inductively or to provide solutions in the target language to situations encountered. It is important to keep in mind that the higher the proficiency level of the class, the more referential questions are called for.

Questions should be in accordance with students' level of proficiency, that is, students have acquired sufficient lexical items and grammatical structures to render responses. Moreover, teachers need to be perceptive to students' reaction and be flexible in adjusting questions according to learners' performance so as to refrain them from languid or unresponsive replies, such as a simple yes/no or simply "I don't know." For pedagogical purposes, questions can be used as a device to control the production of desired outcomes. Teachers are supposed to be able to develop questions wittingly in such a way as to elicit or force the use of certain vocabulary and particular sentence structures during a given task.

B. *Delivery of Questions in a Meaningful Spiral Form*

Learning is a cognitive process involving the accumulation of knowledge. In learning theories, Ausubel (1968) deliberated that learning must be meaningful to be effective and long-lasting. Learning is meaningful only when the new material connects or anchors to one's existing cognitive framework or relevant previously-learned knowledge, or, the learning task is potentially relatable to learner's personal experience or regular activities. The association of new information with previously acquired entities and the comparison between similar elements are regarded as effective cognitive strategies to create mental linkages. Based on this assumption, teacher's questions should stem from a meaningful context and administer in a spiral form. Questions are deliberately organized to elicit responses expanding from vocabulary and phrases to complex sentences; from who, what, where and when to how and why. When the material is presented in an expanded spiral pattern, the increment of lexicon and syntactic structures is built up progressively in a meaningful manner. The spiral scheme brings old information into the working memory and associates with new content which reinforces the retention by refreshing memory and by adding linguistic components through circulating reiteration.

C. *Students Taking the Floor*

Learning doesn't happen when you simply sit in the classroom and listen. It is essential to make learners active partners in the learning process instead of passive recipients waiting for information to be given. More than often, we found that students are capable of offering answers other than initiating inquiry, which is partly due to the fact that the teacher is frequently the questioner in a conventional classroom. Teachers should act as facilitator or guide as advocated by many language educators. In the inquiry-based teaching, however, every student is encouraged and given equal opportunity to be the inquirer. This role shifting can be achieved by modeling or providing students with explicit guidelines.

The instructor demonstrates questioning before giving the floor to students for their attempt at inquiry, either in a whole class setting or in small groups. Questions can be those pertaining to the text or open-ended types relating to real-life or personal experience. Nevertheless, the success of such peer interaction counts on factors such as the quality of questions, willingness of participation, preparation for class, or the trust and dynamics among students. In this case, the teacher's role as a catalyst is evident in the entire process. It is essential for L2 learners to be able to make inquiries in the target language given that it is an unavoidable component in problem solving as well as in natural discourse.

D. *Accompaniment of Extra-linguistic Visual Support*

A wide range of variables has been identified to contribute and determine the success of L2 learning, such as cognitive, affective and socio-cultural factors (Brown, 1987). Among them, the learning style is a collection of cognitive parameters which refers to a person's consistent tendencies or preferences in learning, and sensory preference is one of the significant characteristics. Sensory preference is "the physical, perceptual learning channels with which the student is the most comfortable." (Oxford, 2001, p.360) Classroom language teaching usually involves visual and auditory stimulus. Auditory students are comfortable with lectures and oral activities. In contrast, visual students benefit tremendously from instruction with visual backup. Studies have shown that the provision of appropriate contextual visual aids significantly facilitated both listening and reading comprehension in students of lower proficiency levels (Omaggio, 1979; Mueller, 1980; Liu, 2004; Abraham, 2007).

Inquiry-based teaching assuredly can be enhanced by the support of carefully selected visuals or authentic material. Along with the advances of technology and the prevalence of smart classrooms, the integration of multimedia makes classroom presentation appealing and informative. Inquiry teaching accompanied by visuals or multimedia provides prompt or extra support to the content being discussed, makes learning more comprehensible and invigorates the interactive spirit.

IV. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INQUIRY TEACHING: SOME EXAMPLES

The inquiry teaching method works best on theme-based texts on the grounds that coherent instructional discourse can proceed on specific topics and brings out new expressions and patterns in a progressive manner. In lieu of teaching vocabulary explicitly, the teacher elicits new words of the text from students by asking display questions. Visuals can be presented to give cues or prompt for the desired output. Referential questions are employed to relate the content to personal experience which makes the learning more significant and at the same time further linguistic information may be introduced during the interaction. Students take the floor when they have received sufficient input to engage in paired or group tasks.

Example 1: A series of questions can be applied to the topic of shopping in a supermarket, from simple information-seeking to the solicitation of opinions and comments. (The following questions are delivered in the target language.)

Ask students to name items found in a supermarket, such as fruit, vegetables, meat, beverages, daily necessities, etc.

What do you have for breakfast?

What stuff will you prepare for a birthday party?

Where can these things be purchased?

What supermarkets do you have near your house?

How often do you go to the supermarket? And with whom?

Which market do you go to most often? Which one do you like or not like?

Why do you like this supermarket?

Example 2: One student acts as the instructor and asks his peer students questions based on the lesson content or by the use of visuals. The protocol of selecting this leading student can be volunteering, taking turns, or by lottery.

Learning is more effective if questions enable learners to access relevant prior-learned knowledge when new information is being acquired. The teacher invites students to participate in tasks involving higher cognitive skills of connection, association, contrast and inference. These skills are key strategies that support learners to internalize information. Activities such as exploring and distinguishing between words with phonological, orthographical, or semantic similarity are likely to clarify ambiguities and reinforce the appropriate usage of words.

Example 3: After learning the word for “breakfast” in Chinese, ask students to form compound words with similar structure by the retrieval of previously acquired information. This is an excellent way to expand the lexical capacity.

zao fan → zhong fan wan fan (in Chinese)

early meal middle meal late meal

(breakfast) (lunch) (dinner)

Example 4: Ask students to use learned vocabulary to give definition or explain new words or concept.

jiaoshou → daxue de laoshi (in Chinese)

(professor) (college teacher)

woshi → shuijiao de fangjian (in Chinese)

(bedroom) (sleep room)

The integration of inquiry-based discovery pedagogy into grammar learning leads students moving beyond rule memorization. New sentence structures are examined and acquired through observation and analysis. Teachers should encourage risk-taking and commend good guessing or successful attempts because risk-taking and guessing are vital characteristics of good second language learners (Brown, 1987). Although learning strategies are used by learners themselves, it is yet the teacher’s responsibility to stimulate and direct students to exploit and develop these strategies which benefit the overall learning process and promote self-monitoring.

Example 5: Ask students to examine the difference between Chinese (the target language) and English (their native language) on the passive voice structure.

Yu bei mao chi le. (in Chinese)

fish passive cat eat perfective aspect

marker marker

(The fish was eaten by the cat.)

Example 6: Ask students to explore the structure of locative phrases in Chinese and contrast with that in English.

Yinhang zai tushuguan de zuobian. (in Chinese)

bank locate library marker left

Tushuguan de houbian shi yinhang. (in Chinese)

Library marker back is bank

(The bank is on the left of the library.)

Example 7: Ask students to explain the process of forming wh-questions in Chinese. Does it involve substitution or movement?

Ta qu nar? (in Chinese)
 he go where (Where does he go?)
 Ni zai nar gongzuo? (in Chinese)
 you at where work (Where do you work?)
 Zhei shi shenme? (in Chinese)
 this is what (What is this?)
Shei shi nide laoshi? (in Chinese)
 who is your teacher (Who is your teacher?)

One of the main goals of learning a language is to be able to cope with situations or troubles encountered in the community of the target language. Thus, problem-solving involving the application of existing knowledge to possible circumstances should be treated as an integral component in L2 learning. It is beneficial to students if activities are designed to impose questioning on students.

Example 8: A destination on a map is pre-selected by the teacher. Students need to find out where this spot is by generating questions. For instance:

Wo yao zuozhuan haishi youzhuan? (Should I make a left turn or a right turn?)
 Zai zuobian haishi youbian? (Is it on the left side or right side?)
 Yao guo ji ge hongl u deng? (How many traffic lights are there to pass?)
 Zai nar xiache? (Where should I get off the bus?)

Example 9: The teacher announces that there is a great concert in town. Let students get more information about it by asking questions in the target language, such as:

When is the concert?
 What kind or whose concert is it?
 Where is it?
 How much is the admission?
 How can I get there?
 Who is interested in attending this event?

V. FEEDBACK ON INQUIRY-BASED TEACHING: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

A. Participants and the Instrument

After the implementation of the inquiry-based teaching method for one semester, a questionnaire (see Table 2) was administered to explore the effectiveness of and students' attitudes toward the inquiry-based teaching. A total of eleven students from a small-scale liberal arts college participated in this study. They enrolled in the second semester of the first year Chinese language class and were all continuing students from the first semester class. Seven of them were males and four were females ranging in age from 19 to 22 years old. There were six freshmen, two sophomores, two juniors and one senior. All of them were non-Chinese and non-native speakers of the Chinese language. The questionnaire was distributed to collect qualitative data anonymously at the end of the semester. It contained 16 statements in regard to aspects such as attentiveness, motivation, anxiety, class interaction, the use of visuals as well as general thoughts on this particular teaching approach. The score is on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (the lowest, disagree) to 5 (the highest, agree).

B. Research Questions

In addition to disclosing the general impression, the questionnaire was intended to confirm the following six assumptions on inquiry-based teaching:

- (1) fosters an effective and meaningful learning experience;
- (2) enhances learning motivation;
- (3) keeps learners attentive;
- (4) increases the amount of classroom interaction and participation;
- (5) is more effective when supported by the use of visual aids or multimedia; and
- (6) may raise the classroom anxiety level on some students.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On Learning Motivation (Question #2):

Eight out of eleven students fully agreed that inquiry teaching enhanced their motivation in learning the target language. Motivation has been a decisive factor for explaining the success or failure of virtually any given task. Motivation has long been proved in research to be positively correlated with learning achievement (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003), and highly motivated individuals are usually successful in learning.

On Classroom Attentiveness (Questions #5 and 6):

Gaining learners' attention is the initial task in Gagne's (1985) events of instruction, and it is a key to make the act of learning occur. In this survey, the majority of students acknowledged that they were more attentive when the teacher was engaging in inquiry teaching. It confirmed that the dynamics of question-answer process keeps students more concentrated and away from distractions.

On Interaction and Participation (Questions #8, 9, 10, and 11):

As predicted, almost all students concurred that the inquiry teaching strategy did provide students with greater interactive opportunities and encouraged them to actively join activities or discussions. In general, students' responses indicated it was quite effective in initiating and sustaining teacher-student interaction. The learning atmosphere becomes vigorous when students take the floor fervently.

On the Use of Visual Aids (Question #12):

It is not surprising to learn that our digital-native students unanimously assented to and were in favor of the adoption of visuals accompanying inquiry teaching. Visual aids include those delivered via new technology as well as flash cards, realia, or body gestures found in a traditional classroom. This result upholds the assumption that multimedia facilitates the language teaching and learning process and is very welcomed by students as it increases students' comprehensibility and allows classroom learning to be more relaxed and enjoyable.

TABLE 2
RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON INQUIRY-BASED TEACHING

| Questions | NO | | | | YES |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Disagree | | | | Agree |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1. I think the inquiry teaching method is an <i>effective</i> way to teach foreign languages. | | | | 5 (45.4%) | 6 (54.5%) |
| 2. Inquiry teaching enhances my <i>learning motivation</i> in language learning. | | | 1 (9%) | 2 (9%) | 8 (72.7%) |
| 3. Inquiry teaching <i>increases my anxiety</i> level in the language classroom. | 5 (45.5%) | 2 (18.2%) | 1 (9%) | 1 (9%) | 2 (18.2%) |
| 4. Inquiry teaching makes me <i>nervous</i> in the language classroom. | 7 (63.6%) | 2 (18.2%) | 1 (9%) | 1 (9%) | |
| 5. Inquiry teaching makes me more <i>alert</i> or <i>attentive</i> in the language classroom. | | | | 5 (45.5%) | 6 (54.6) |
| 6. Compared with other teaching techniques, the inquiry teaching method functions better in <i>drawing my attention</i> . | | | 2 (18.2%) | 2 (18.2%) | 7 (63.6) |
| 7. I think the inquiry teaching approach reinforces my <i>learning and understanding</i> . | | 1 (9%) | 1 (9%) | 3 (27.3%) | 6 (54.5%) |
| 8. Inquiry teaching increases the <i>interaction</i> in class. | | | | 2 (18.2%) | 9 (81.8%) |
| 9. Inquiry teaching encourages students' <i>participation</i> in class. | | | | 2 (18.2%) | 9 (81.8%) |
| 10. Inquiry teaching is a good method to <i>initiate interaction</i> in class. | | | | 2 (18.2%) | 9 (81.8%) |
| 11. Inquiry teaching is a good method to <i>maintain interaction</i> in class. | | | | 3 (27.3%) | 8 (72.7%) |
| 12. The use of <i>visual aids</i> (such as realia, pictures, PowerPoint) helps a lot in the inquiry teaching mode. | | | | | 1 (100%) |
| 13. <i>Previewing course material</i> is important when the inquiry teaching method is adopted. | | | 2 (18.2%) | 2 (18.2%) | 7 (63.6%) |
| 14. The inquiry teaching method makes foreign language teaching and learning more <i>meaningful</i> . | | | 1 (9%) | 2 (18.2%) | 8 (72.7%) |
| 15. I <i>like</i> the teacher using the inquiry teaching method in the language class (discovery learning) | | | 1 (9%) | 3 (27.3%) | 7 (63.6%) |
| 16. I <i>don't</i> like the inquiry teaching method. I don't think this works on me. I prefer the teacher to deliver instruction by giving lectures instead of by asking questions. | 9 (81.8%) | 1 (9%) | 1 (9%) | | |

On Classroom Anxiety (Questions #3 and #4):

Though three students (27% on question #3) reported that inquiry teaching was most likely to augment their level of anxiety, more than half of students did not experience negative impact. Anxiety has been identified as an important affective factor and has long been a focus in the L2 education and research (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Horwitz & Young, 1991; Zhao & Whitchurch, 2011). It is generally considered to be negative correlated with the performance of learning. Despite the fact that too much anxiety may be an obstacle and hinder one's learning, it may function as a facilitative force when it is at the optimal level. The appropriate level of tension is constructive and can drive the student to make efforts and to get the job done. Teachers should be aware of this effect by creating a less-stressed learning environment when the inquiry teaching is adopted.

On Preparation of the Lesson (Question #13):

One of the questions was intended to look at what students think about the importance of previewing the lesson. Previewing the course material before coming to class is a helpful learning practice which keeps up with the pace of instruction. The data shows most of the students agreed that acquainting themselves beforehand with the upcoming

lesson is important when the teacher conducts a form of discovery teaching. Students without preparation may lose opportunities of interaction and feel embarrassed or disoriented when he/she is called on. Whereas, students who come to class prepared are inclined to interact actively and receive more attention from the teacher. It is anticipated that inquiry teaching would urge students to form a good study habit.

On the Inquiry-Based Teaching Approach (Questions #1, 7, 14, 15 and 16):

Five questions were designed to collect opinions on this teaching style. It was found that, although one student expressed reservations, most students were in favor of this inquiry approach. They preferred inquiry teaching rather than expository lecturing, and considered this pedagogical method to be effective and meaningful.

VII. CONCLUSION

“Tell me and I forget, show me and I remember, involve me and I understand.” Inquiry-based teaching practice is an excellent paradigm of this old adage. An advanced version of CLT and an expansion of TBI per se, inquiry-based teaching sets out to inspire and develop students’ higher levels of learning by involving them linguistically and cognitively. Beyond memorization of facts, carefully structured questions enable learners to connect, apply, analyze and create.

Students were positive, by and large, on the inquiry-based instructional approach. Responses from the assessment manifest that this type of Socratic teaching is valid and efficacious as an approach in L2 instruction. The choice of appropriate types of questions and the scheme in presenting them play essential roles and account for the success of this method. Teachers need to integrate the vocabulary and grammatical structures intended to be taught into questions and deliver them in a recurrent pattern. A natural and meaningful information exchange is likely to take place when questions are organized in a logically sequenced format and are relevant to both contextual and personal experience so as to elicit students’ interest and participation. In addition to assessing the comprehension of instructional material, questions should be able to activate and exploit cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Discovery L2 teaching allows students to gain better insights into the target language and their native languages as well. Furthermore, the sound utilization of visual/multimedia resources has been illustrated as a highly favorable feature complementing the inquiry instructional process.

Some variables that might affect the successful implementation of inquiry-based teaching include the nature of the student group and the instructor’s ability to create a relaxed and pleasant learning environment. It goes without saying that a good rapport and trust between teacher and students are essential elements. Students may feel coerced if the instructor is too dominating or does not give them enough time to think before rendering an answer or solution.

While the results of the present study might not be significant enough given the small number of subjects, they do provide preliminary evidence which exhibits encouraging feedback and demonstrates a preference for this interactive and discovery teaching method. In order to obtain a fuller picture on the effectiveness of inquiry-based teaching, a sample of a larger number of participants is recommended in future studies. Prospective lines of study may deal with the investigation of the effects of inquiry teaching on students’ proficiency level and language performance as well as correlation analyses between ratings on inquiry teaching and selected affective or cognitive variables of learners.

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Promoting Communicative Competence within EFL Contexts: A UAE Case Study

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Abstract—Upon university graduation, under-graduate students studying in the United Arab Emirates are expected to acquire adequate communicative competence in English as a foreign language. Despite the efforts made within the area of teaching English to university students majoring in subjects other than English language and literature, the outcome as reflected by students' skills and competencies in English is still below expectations. Believing in the essential role literature can play in promoting communicative competence on the part of EFL learners; the current study introduces a literature-based course: LEARN AND GAIN. Adopting an experimental design, the research project involved two groups: experimental and control. To examine treatment effectiveness, the researcher set and administered a pre-posttest. The pre-posttest aimed to measure subjects' communicative critical reading competence and subjects' communicative critical writing competence in English. Based on the statistical findings, the experimental group students' achievement on the communicative critical reading competence pre-posttest and the communicative critical writing competence pre-posttest was significantly better than that of their counterparts of the control group students. In the light of findings and conclusions, a number of recommendations have been made.

Index Terms—English as a Foreign Language (EFL), communicative competence, literature within EFL contexts

I. INTRODUCTION

Upon university graduation, undergraduate students in the United Arab Emirates are required to acquire sufficient communicative competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In spite of English language practitioners' efforts within the field of teaching university students, the outcome as represented by students' achievements in English could still be better (Al Alami: 2013).

What could be some of the major factors that inhibit EFL university students' progress within the area of acquiring adequate communicative competence? According to the author, it could be a number of reasons one of which is lack of exposure to literature in the foreign language. Excluding students majoring in English, it is General English and in some cases ESP courses that students are taught, with little reference to literature (Al Alami: 2013). The author, as such, advocates utilising literature in the EFL classroom to promote students' communicative competence, amongst other factors. This belief is supported by some specialists' studies and recommendation which argue for utilising literature to enhance foreign language proficiency. For instance, McRae (2008) explains that using stories within teaching contexts will have a positive impact when considering skills such as reading for pleasure. Speaking of utilising novels within EFL contexts, Shaw (2007) explains that novels have the power to engage readers both cognitively and emotionally. According to De Naples (2002), when students learn how to understand fiction in the form of drama and poetry and engage in characters' lives, asking questions about the worlds authors create, they very often ask questions about their own lives and issues they encounter. Vocabulary, sentence structure, and patterns of organisation offer students many points from which to learn or to broaden understanding.

It would be reasonable then to conclude that, utilising literature may contribute to enhancing communicative competence within EFL learning contexts. The present research, therefore, aims to examine the validity and creditability of this viewpoint through teaching *novels and short stories* to university students majoring in subjects other than English language and literature. The *novels and short stories* course adopts the idea that literature is not an object but rather a main resource which can be actively utilised within EFL/ESL (Baba 2008).

For the purpose of the present research, acquiring adequate communicative competence has been defined in terms of sufficient acquisition of four components; namely, linguistic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, and socio-linguistic competence. Linguistic competence refers to acquisition of sufficient knowledge of the norms and conventions of language elements such as syntax, spelling, pronunciation and so on. This type of competence ensures accuracy in terms of language use and usage. Discourse competence refers to skill in manipulating both spoken and written language in stretches of discourse, thus resulting in fluent use of language. Strategic competence refers to skill in employing strategies which a language user can resort to when communication breaks down; hence ensuring communication is not hindered. And socio-linguistic competence refers to adequate knowledge of the target culture, which normally yields in appropriate use of language.

As well as Section One, the current paper includes the following sections: literature review, research questions, research hypotheses, study variables, research conduct, the proposed course at a glance, statistical treatment, statistical treatment, research findings, recommendations for EFL practitioners to consider, concluding word, as well as references. It is worthwhile mentioning in this context that, even though the current research project has been conducted in Dubai, the research topic, methodology, conclusions and recommendations can still be of use and interest to foreign language researchers and practitioners working in different parts of the world.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

As mentioned earlier, the current paper discusses how to promote communicative competence through utilising literature in the EFL classroom. Hence, the *literature review* section of the paper discusses two areas of relevance to the study: theories and approaches relating to literature teaching within EFL contexts, and teaching in the communicative classroom.

A. Theories and Approaches Relating to Literature Teaching within EFL Contexts

Language acquisition is a complicated human process whereby a variety of variables are involved, contributing either positively or negatively. Amongst the most prominent variables is the quality of instruction offered to learners. This part of Section Two seeks to delineate a number of related theories and approaches within the field of EFL literature.

A number of specialists recommend employing a stylistics approach in the EFL classroom. What does a stylistics approach mean and entail? Busse (2010, p. 6) explains that stylistics in its most general sense refers to 'the study of style in language and how this results from the intra-linguistic features of a text in relation to non-linguistic factors such as author, genre, historical period, and so on.' Busse proceeds to propose that new historical stylistics should be considered as a combined discipline of linguistic description and literary interpretation, which is characterised by being functional and formal. A new historical stylistic analysis of a text presumes an adequate knowledge of the context, the period, and the language in which the text is/was produced. Some context-related information guides our reading of a text, generic knowledge for example. According to Leech (2010, p. 17), stylistics can simply be defined as a 'way of using language.' When we examine language style, we talk about the style used in a certain textual domain, corpus for example, or the style of a particular text or an extract from a particular text.

Depicting stylistics in today's world, Carter (2010) thinks that it has a significant role to play in relation to methodology in the instruction of literature, and accordingly, in pedagogy developments in both first and second language teaching contexts. Amongst the most prominent developments is focus on 'textual transformations' whereby comparative text analysis can be used through rewriting a literary text from different positions, hence translating the text from textual to dramatic, verbal to visual, or spoken to written. Looked at from Prieto's point of view (2010), a stylistics-inspired pedagogy of both literary and non-literary texts has the advantage of providing learners with genuine chances for enhancement. Speaking of real-life language functions, such genuine chances are of great benefit in relation to enriching/expanding knowledge: creative, analytical and critical.

Warner (2010) discusses how pragmatic stylistics-an interdisciplinary branch of literary linguistic study that deals with literary texts as social acts of interactive communication- can function as a methodological basis for a pedagogical strategy of what can be referred to as contact pragmatics. Contact pragmatics stresses the relations between linguistic function and form, and as such, can be employed to promote learners' sensitivity to the use of linguistic choices, enabling them to recognise interpretation in certain social and historical contexts. Zyngier and Fialho (2010), on the other hand, explain that one of the problems with literature instruction and pedagogical stylistics is their divorce from theories of education. Of great importance for instructors to consider are both the instructional content and the context in which it is conducted; the social conditions in which they teach. Critical pedagogy is likely to help enhance literary awareness in an EFL stylistic context. What is more, the relationship between instructors and learners has to be based on mutual understanding and respect rather than superior to inferior relations. Thus, there has to be some intimate bonds between both parties. Lastly, the class has to be a healthy environment encouraging autonomy learning of major types: cultural, critical, and emotional.

The role of emotion in education has taken on more and more importance in the field, particularly as it relates to the teaching of literature in English in different cultural contexts, where the experiences recounted in novels, short stories and poems can be far removed from the day to day experiences of students in a context such as that of the United Arab Emirates. Proponents of the importance of emotion in literature testify to an underlying universality of experience we all share, regardless of differences in cultural and social contexts (Dawson, 2007; Brearely, 2000). According to Dawson (2007), the four emotions people share regardless of any considerations are: happiness, anger, sadness and fear. When in class, focus should be made on the role emotions play in relation to students' response to a reading text, literary texts in particular.

This part of Section Two describes a number of theories and approaches which can be adopted in EFL contexts. It's the author's recommendation though that the approaches outlined above, should testify to eclecticism when it comes to choosing an appropriate methodological approach to take with a group of students.

B. Teaching in the Communicative Classroom

What features characterise communicative language teaching? Stating it in general terms, Gilmore (2007) emphasises that we need to present language which is solidly contextualised, as well as sensitise students to the ways in which the discourse presents its context. However, since each culture is unique, each classroom is also unique not only all over the globe but also within the same country. This requires the need to adopt an elective approach, in order to meet individual students' needs. Gilmore goes on to stress that practitioners need to promote all components of communicative competence on the part of EFL students. The component of discourse competence refers to the ability to produce unified, coherent and cohesive spoken as well as written texts. Pragmatic competence may come from the friction of students' daily interactions. It refers to one's ability to make himself/herself understood, as well as establish and maintain smooth relationships. EFL students' pragmatic awareness can be enhanced by increasing the amount of pragmatic input, along with placing a genuine emphasis on this aspect of communicative competence. Linguistic competence refers to the linguistic knowledge of grammar, structure, and so on.

In Hiep's view (2005), communicative language teaching can be applied through information gap activities, pair and group work, as well as a variety of other practices that are likely to suit each local context by itself. Depending on the cultural and even physical setting, a practitioner can use tasks set for small groups, or/and for a whole class format. Generally speaking, a combination of the two is usually appropriate. Whatever the task, it is essential that students are exposed to a variety of life-like situations whereby they practise English for communicative purposes whilst enjoying the task.

Disappointment with both grammar translation and audio-lingual methods, for their inability to prepare learners for fluent use of language for genuine purposes in real-life situations, has resulted in what communicative language teaching is and how it should be characterised by. According to Savignon (2005), communicative language teaching is not only concerned with face-to-face oral communication. The principles of communicative language teaching also cover reading and writing activities that involve learners in explaining, negotiating, and conveying meaning. With the notion of context of situation in mind, communicative language teaching can be seen as an approach or theory of intercultural communicative competence, to be stressed when developing methods and materials appropriate to a given instructional situation.

Savignon (2002) argues that communicative language teaching is not exclusively concerned with oral communication. The principles of communicative language teaching also apply to reading and writing activities that engage readers and writers in the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning. Both Wesche and Skehan (2002) explain that communicative classrooms are generally characterised by use of authentic texts and communication activities requiring frequent interaction among learners, and learner-centred approaches prioritising above all learners' language needs. Generally speaking, communicative language teaching stresses provision of: opportunities for learners to focus on the learning process in contextualised settings, cooperative learning tasks for learners to exchange ideas in life-like situations, and substantive content for learners to learn as a means for language enhancement. Kleinsasser and Sato (1999), on the other hand, believe that communicative language teaching is derived from a multi-disciplinary perspective that includes; at least, language, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and education research.

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1993), the communicative approach is concerned with three sets: the nature of language, the process of learning, and the context within which learning takes place. Communication is usually based upon interaction, performance, purpose, and context. The language forms used in real-life situations vary in accordance with features of role, status, and formality. The following principles, as such, underlie a communicative approach to language teaching:

- (1) People learn best when they are interested in and can identify with the content of what is being taught.
- (2) A major role of education is to enable all learners to achieve their maximum potential.
- (3) No two learning situations are the same. The content of any lesson, therefore, is best negotiated between the teacher and the learner.
- (4) An essential aspect of any kind of teaching/learning a foreign language is the social context within which it occurs.
- (5) Integrating all four language skills should be emphasised.

In conclusion, language communication can be seen as a highly refined human process whereby a number of factors may contribute, either positively or negatively. It is, therefore, of great importance to investigate all the factors which may hinder and impede the communication process inside and outside the EFL class, and act accordingly.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present research seeks answers to the following questions.

Question One: What are the specifications and components of a literature-based course, designed for enhancing communicative competence on the part of EFL university students, studying in the United Arab Emirates?

Question Two: To what extent is the proposed literature course effective in enhancing communicative competence on the part of EFL university students, studying in the United Arab Emirates?

Within these two major questions, four sub-questions have been addressed to further investigate the main issue discussed throughout the current research. Sub-questions One and Two are related to performance differences between

the experimental and control groups, while sub-questions Three and Four are excluded to performance differences in relation to gender and college types amongst the experimental group students. The four sub-questions are:

- (1) Are there any significant differences between the two groups' achievement on the critical communicative reading pre-posttest?
- (2) Are there any significant differences between the two groups' achievement on the critical communicative writing pre-posttest?
- (3) Are there any significant differences between the female and male experimental group students' achievement on the critical communicative reading posttest as well as critical communicative writing posttest?
- (4) Are there any significant differences between the science and non-science experimental group students' achievement on the critical communicative reading posttest as well as critical communicative writing posttest?

IV. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

- (1) There are no significant differences between the two groups' achievement on the pre-post reading test.
- (2) There are no significant differences between the two groups' achievement on the pre-post writing test.
- (3) There are no significant differences between the achievement of female and male experimental group students, on the post reading as well as post writing tests.
- (4) There are no significant differences between the achievement of science and non-science experimental group students, on the post reading as well as post writing tests.

V. STUDY VARIABLES

The study includes two groups: experimental and control. Both groups include males and females; some of whom are science majors and some are not. The research variables are:

Independent variable: The suggested literature course set by the researcher: LEARN AND GAIN.

Dependent variable: Experimental and control groups' achievement on the pre-post reading as well as writing tests.

Moderator variables: Gender: male vs. female, and major type: science vs. non-science majors.

VI. RESEARCH CONDUCT

The research population is limited to EFL under-graduate students studying in the United Arab Emirates and majoring in disciplines other than English language and literature. The reason for excluding English majors is that such categories of students will normally acquire English language skills throughout their four-year study journey. The study sample is thirty-four students studying at a private university in Dubai where the researcher works. Piloting the study took place during the academic year 2008-2009 for one month, re-piloting the study took place during the academic year 2009-2010 for four months, and implementing the study took place during the academic year 2011-2012 for four months.

Seeking to emphasise quality conduct, the researcher implemented the research at the University she works for, in Dubai. The control group members were taught a general English course while the experimental group members were taught the proposed literature course. Involving both groups, the researcher administered a pre-posttest prior to and following research conduct. The test was comprised of two sections: reading and writing, in an aim to investigate whether the literature course was significantly effective whilst at the same time measuring the impact of the other variables identified for study purposes. For the purpose of gathering sufficient data about subjects' performance on the pre-posttest, both *Mann-Whitney test* and *paired data t-test* were conducted.

VII. THE PROPOSED COURSE AT A GLANCE

This part of the paper describes the proposed course in relation to the main aims and targets, organisation of the content, co-curricular activities performed throughout the implementation process, and points to consider when discussing novels and short stories within EFL contexts.

A. Main Aims and Targets

'Upon the completion of the proposed course, learners are expected to:

- (1) Read to find and handle information for a range of purposes, as well as read to enjoy and respond to a variety of texts.
- (2) Write for a range of purposes, to convey meaning in language appropriate to purpose and audience. Learners are required to develop their abilities in reading critically. In so doing, they should be able to:
 - (1) Distinguish facts, opinions and reasoned justifications.
 - (2) Grasp feelings, opinions and attitudes implied.
 - (3) Deduce meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context.
 - (4) Make judgments based upon personal knowledge and experience.
 - (5) Recognise the adequacy and effectiveness of employing literary devices.

Moreover, learners are required to improve their abilities in writing critically. In so doing, they should be able to:

- (1) Write coherent pieces of written discourse.
- (2) Utilise cohesive devices in a written piece appropriately.
- (3) Employ literary techniques in writing effectively.' (Al Alami, 2013, pp. 101-102)

B. Organisation of the Content

LEARN AND GAIN is comprised of seven main sections. These are:

Section one: *Warm up* including two activities-brainstorming and advanced organisers.

Section two: *Reading in action* including five sub stages-as you read find out, keeping track, close study, reader's response, and follow-up activities.

Section three: *Language practice* including three areas-word finder, grammar focus, and literary qualities.

Section four: *Oral production* including a variety of oral language activities such as debates, interviews, and role-play.

Section five: *Writer's workshop* including four stages: brainstorming, drafting, proofreading, and editing.

Section six: *Self-evaluation* including self-assessment checklists.

Section seven: *Building up your portfolio* including project work activities. (Al Alami, 2013, p. 102)

C. Co-curricular Activities Used throughout the Implementation of the Proposed Course

This part of Section Seven presents the co-curricular activities performed throughout the implementation of the proposed course, followed by some recommended websites which can be of use to EFL learners.

(1) **Movie making:** Make a thirty-minute movie based on a story you have read recently.

(2) **Make a jolly postman book:** Write different types of letters to stories' main characters.

(3) **Develop point of view by thinking like one of the main characters:** Write a specific event or quotation from the story you have chosen, and then depict what the character(s) is/are thinking at that time by either writing the thoughts or drawing pictures inside the outline of the head.

(4) **Compare/Contrast using graphic organisers:** After reading two different versions of the same story, create a *Compare and Contrast Diagram*, highlighting both similarities and differences.

(5) **Write acrostic poems:** Choose a key word from one of the stories you have read and write it down the left hand side of a blank paper. Then, you need to write a poem about the key word in which each line begins with a letter of the key word.

(6) **Write limerick poems:** Limericks are humorous poems which begin by introducing a person and a place. Limericks rhyme *A A B B A*, and have a strong rhythm. Write a limerick based on a story you have read recently.

(7) **Write riddles about main characters:** Having chosen some of the stories you have read recently; write a number of clues about story characters in a *Guess Who*.

Recommended websites

Pre-reading tasks

(1) Read-before-you-read

Socio-historical and literary background of author and text:

Web Quest: WebQuest.org

Wiki (PB works): <http://pbworks.com/using-pbworks-individual-classrooms>

(2) Write-before-you-read

Write some ideas or events based on your experience.

(3) Speak and listen-before-you-read

Record personal experience *Voice boards*: <http://clear.msu.edu/teaching/online/ria>

While-reading tasks

(1) Conversations: <http://clear.msu.edu/teaching/online/ria>

(2) Audio assignments: <http://clear.msu.edu/teaching/online/ria>

Post-reading tasks

(1) Multimedia project: <http://clear.msu.edu/teaching/online/mashup/index>

(2) Collaborative non-linear story writing: <http://www.novlet.com/>

(3) Communication and interaction: <http://www.english-corner-online.com>

D. Novels and Short Stories in EFL Contexts: Points to Consider

For a language/literature course to *function* effectively, EFL instructors are advised to provide students with stimulating tasks to practise language in a variety of contexts. Provision of such tasks involves the following:

(1) **Thinking:** for example, speculating, hypothesising, discovering.

(2) **Feeling:** for example, describing, reflecting on and describing their feelings.

(3) **Communicating:** for example, receiving and expressing ideas and information.

(4) **Making:** for example, stories, letters, projects.

It is the researcher's profound belief that sufficient comprehension of a novel/short story would require adequate discussions of the following areas:

- Language.** Does the language strike readers as unusual in any way?
- Repetition.** Is anything repeated again and again? What is the effect?
- Literal vs. metaphorical.** What literal details are given? What is the effect of that?
- Silence.** What relevant information is not given? What is the effect of that?
- Setting.** What use (if any) is made of the physical setting?
- Narrator.** What kind of narrator is used? Is the narrator a character in the story?
- Perspective.** Through whose eyes is the story told? What is the effect of that?
- Characterisation.** How is a character portrayed?
- Speech.** Does the narrator use direct speech, indirect speech, or some other method?

The researcher as such advocates exposing learners to as many purposeful reading tasks as possible. Whilst exposing learners to a reading experience, it would be helpful for practitioners to use the inherent power and natural flow of the story itself as a guide to teaching it; identify and drawing in students' past experiences through discussion; encourage students to seek and observe interconnections between aspects of the story; provide preparatory background before approaching difficult vocabulary and allusion; and stress the enjoyment of reading and discussing short stories and novels as a goal. Relating the discussion to pedagogical activities, it is essential that practitioners are aware of what activities to perform, when, why, and how. Speaking of the language elements of syntax and grammar, activities which can be conducted to improve students' control of syntactical patterns through short stories include amongst many others: dividing sentences into shorter ones followed by recombining the smaller sentences and comparing the result with the original, and having students rewrite parts of a story in another tense. Speaking of the language element of vocabulary, activities should not be excluded to explaining unfamiliar words and phrases. Highlighting denotations and positive / negative connotations is no less important. As far as oral activities are concerned, creating pre-discussion activities such as listing is expected to guide student discussions. Conducting a micro-teaching discussion activity would be helpful as well. Encouraging some story-club discussions would also be beneficial. For these story-club discussions to be functioning effectively, a practitioner is advised to observe students' participation in their discussions, recording both successful and less successful instances of involvement in their discussions.

VIII. STATISTICAL TREATMENT

As previously mentioned, four hypotheses have been formulated in accordance with research sub-questions. To test the first study hypothesis, both paired samples *t-test* and *Mann-Whitney test* were conducted.

TABLE ONE:
T-TEST EXPERIMENTAL GROUP-COMMUNICATIVE CRITICAL READING COMPETENCE PRE-POST TEST

Paired Samples Statistics

| Test | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|----------|---------|----|----------------|-----------------|
| pretest | 14.0000 | 17 | 4.86056 | 1.17886 |
| posttest | 18.0000 | 17 | 2.85044 | .69133 |

Paired Samples Correlations

| Test | N | Correlation | Sig. |
|----------------------|----|-------------|------|
| Pre-test & post-test | 17 | .645 | .005 |

TABLE TWO:
T-TEST CONTROL GROUP-COMMUNICATIVE CRITICAL READING COMPETENCE PRE-POST TEST

Paired Samples Statistics

| Test | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-----------|---------|----|----------------|-----------------|
| Pre-test | 13.4118 | 17 | 4.75735 | 1.15383 |
| Post-test | 15.4706 | 17 | 7.30683 | 1.77217 |

Paired Samples Correlations

| Test | N | Correlation | Sig. |
|----------------------|----|-------------|------|
| Pre-test & Post-test | 17 | -.128 | .624 |

Paired Samples Test

| Test | Paired Differences | | | | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---|---------|-------|----|-----------------|
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
| | | | | Lower | Upper | | | |
| Pre-test Post-test | -2.05882 | 9.21595 | 2.23520 | -6.79723 | 2.67958 | -.921 | 16 | .371 |

TABLE THREE:
COMMUNICATIVE CRITICAL READING COMPETENCE PRE-TEST & COMMUNICATIVE CRITICAL READING COMPETENCE POST-TEST COMPARISON
PRE-TEST

Hypothesis Test Summary

| | Null Hypothesis | Test | Sig. | Decision |
|---|---|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | The medians of score are the same across categories of group. | Independent-Samples Median Test | .731 | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 2 | The distribution of score is the same across categories of group. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .946 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

¹Exact significance is displayed for this test.

POST-TEST

Hypothesis Test Summary

| | Null Hypothesis | Test | Sig. | Decision |
|---|---|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | The medians of score are the same across categories of group. | Independent-Samples Median Test | .493 | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 2 | The distribution of score is the same across categories of group. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .946 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

¹Exact significance is displayed for this test.

Based on the statistical results, both groups could achieve progress towards the end of the academic semester, as indicated by their performance findings. However, the experimental group students could achieve a significant progress. As the *p-value* for the experimental group (*Sig.*=*.000*) is less than *0.05*, while the *p-value* for the control group (*Sig.*=*0.371*) is greater than *0.05*, then it is evident that there is a significant difference between the performance of the two groups on the communicative critical reading competence pre-posttest, in favour of the experimental group students.

To test the second hypothesis, both paired samples *t-test* and *Mann-Whitney test* were conducted to gather sufficient statistical data. Tables four, five, and six below reveal the statistical results.

TABLE FOUR:
T-TEST EXPERIMENTAL GROUP-COMMUNICATIVE CRITICAL WRITING COMPETENCE PRE-POST TEST

Paired Samples Statistics

| Test | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-----------|---------|----|----------------|-----------------|
| Pre-test | 13.0588 | 17 | 5.16715 | 1.25322 |
| Post-test | 16.7794 | 17 | 5.58659 | 1.35495 |

Paired Samples Correlations

| Test | N | Correlation | Sig. |
|---------------------|----|-------------|------|
| Pretest & Post test | 17 | .864 | .000 |

Paired Samples Test

| Test | Paired Differences | | | | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---|----------|--------|----|-----------------|
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
| | | | | Lower | Upper | | | |
| Pre-test Post-test | -3.72059 | 2.83516 | .68763 | -5.17829 | -2.26288 | -5.411 | 16 | .000 |

TABLE FIVE:
T-TEST CONTROL GROUP-COMMUNICATIVE CRITICAL WRITING COMPETENCE PRE-POST TEST

Paired Samples Statistics

| Test | Mean | N | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|-----------|--------|----|----------------|-----------------|
| Pre-test | 5.2647 | 17 | 5.90846 | 1.43301 |
| Post-test | 7.5000 | 17 | 1.69097 | .41012 |

Paired Samples Correlations

| Test | N | Correlation | Sig. |
|---------------------|----|-------------|------|
| Pretest & Post test | 17 | .376 | .137 |

Paired Samples Test

| Test | Paired Differences | | | | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|---|--------|--------|----|-----------------|
| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | | | |
| | | | | Lower | Upper | | | |
| Pre-writing Post-writing | -2.23529 | 5.50033 | 1.33403 | -5.06331 | .59272 | -1.676 | 16 | .113 |

TABLE SIX:
COMMUNICATIVE CRITICAL WRITING COMPETENCE PRE-TEST & COMMUNICATIVE CRITICAL WRITING COMPETENCE POST-TEST COMPARISON PRE-TEST

Hypothesis Test Summary

| | Null Hypothesis | Test | Sig. | Decision |
|---|---|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | The medians of score are the same across categories of group. | Independent-Samples Median Test | .018 | Reject the null hypothesis. |
| 2 | The distribution of score is the same across categories of group. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .001 ¹ | Reject the null hypothesis. |

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

¹Exact significance is displayed for this test.

POST-TEST

Hypothesis Test Summary

| | Null Hypothesis | Test | Sig. | Decision |
|---|---|---|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | The medians of score are the same across categories of group. | Independent-Samples Median Test | .000 | Reject the null hypothesis. |
| 2 | The distribution of score is the same across categories of group. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .000 ¹ | Reject the null hypothesis. |

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

¹Exact significance is displayed for this test.

Based on the statistical findings, both groups could achieve progress towards the end of the academic semester, as indicated by their achievement findings. However, the experimental group students could achieve a significant progress. As the *p-value* for the experimental group (*Sig.=.000*) is less than *0.05*, while the *p-value* for the control group (*Sig.=0.113*) is greater than *0.05*, then it is evident that there is a significant difference between the achievement of the two groups in favour of the students belonging to the experimental group.

To examine the third hypothesis, *Mann Whitney U test* was used. Table seven shows the results.

TABLE SEVEN:
MANN-WHITNEY TEST FOR HYPOTHESIS THREE

Hypothesis Test Summary

| | Null Hypothesis | Test | Sig. | Decision |
|---|--|---|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | The medians of prereading are the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Median Test | .620 ^{1,2} | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 2 | The distribution of prereading is the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .525 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 3 | The medians of postreading are the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Median Test | .644 ^{1,2} | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 4 | The distribution of postreading is the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .961 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 5 | The medians of prewriting are the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Median Test | 1.000 ^{1,2} | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 6 | The distribution of prewriting is the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .961 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 7 | The medians of postwriting are the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Median Test | 1.000 ^{1,2} | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 8 | The distribution of postwriting is the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .301 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

¹Exact significance is displayed for this test.

²Fisher Exact Sig.

Examining the *p-value (Sig.)* from the table, we cannot reject the null hypothesis. In other words, we have insufficient evidence to conclude that the performance of male subjects is significantly different from female subjects', on the communicative critical reading competence post-test and on the communicative critical writing competence post-test.

To examine the fourth hypothesis, *Mann Whitney U test* was used. Table Eight shows the results.

TABLE EIGHT:
MANN-WHITNEY TEST FOR HYPOTHESIS FOUR

Hypothesis Test Summary

| | Null Hypothesis | Test | Sig. | Decision |
|---|---|---|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | The medians of prereading are the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Median Test | .620 ^{1,2} | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 2 | The distribution of prereading is the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .383 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 3 | The medians of postreading are the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Median Test | .593 ^{1,2} | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 4 | The distribution of postreading is the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .130 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 5 | The medians of prewriting are the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Median Test | 1.000 ^{1,2} | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 6 | The distribution of prewriting is the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .442 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 7 | The medians of postwriting are the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Median Test | .294 ^{1,2} | Retain the null hypothesis. |
| 8 | The distribution of postwriting is the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test | .104 ¹ | Retain the null hypothesis. |

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

¹Exact significance is displayed for this test.

²Fisher Exact Sig.

Examining the *p-value (Sig.)* from the table, we cannot reject the null hypothesis. In other words, we have insufficient proof that the achievement of science majors is different significantly from non-science majors on the reading as well as writing posttests.

IX. RESEARCH FINDINGS

As mentioned earlier, question one has been stated as follows: What are the components and specifications of a literature course, proposed for promoting communicative competence on the part of EFL university students, studying in the United Arab Emirates? To adequately answer the aforementioned question, the researcher went through the pertinent literature, seeking the expertise of specialists and researchers within the field. Accordingly, LEARN AND GAIN has been designed and implemented for the sake of the current study. Question two, on the other hand, has been formulated as follows: To what extent is the proposed literature course effective in enhancing communicative competence on the part of EFL university students, studying in the United Arab Emirates? To thoroughly investigate the second question, four questions have been formulated (Refer to Section Three for details). Both *paired samples t-test* and *Mann-Whitney test* were conducted to gather sufficient statistical data. Based on the statistical tests conducted for the current study's purposes, the following results have been arrived at.

(1) As far as enhancement of communicative critical reading competence is concerned, both groups could achieve progress towards the end of the academic semester, as indicated by their achievement on the communicative critical reading competence pre-posttest. However, the experimental group students could achieve a significant progress.

(2) In relation to promoting communicative critical writing competence, both groups could achieve progress towards the end of the academic semester, as indicated by their achievement on the communicative critical writing competence pre-posttest. However, the experimental group students could achieve a significant progress.

(3) Based on *Mann Whitney U test*, the *p-value (Sig.)* indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the achievement of female and male experimental group students on the reading as well as the writing posttests.

(4) Based on *Mann Whitney U test*, the *p-value (Sig.)* indicates that there are no significant differences between the achievement of science colleges' students and non-science colleges' students, on the reading as well as writing posttests.

As proved by the findings of the current study, therefore, utilising literature to enhance communicative competence on the part of EFL university students studying in the United Arab Emirates has been significantly effective. Excluding the discussion to the experimental group students, no significant differences have been located between the performance of male and female students or between the colleges of science and colleges of non-science students, as a result of utilising literature to promote communicative competence on the part of study subjects.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFL PRACTITIONERS TO CONSIDER

Having discussed study findings, the current paper proceeds to present a number of recommendations which EFL practitioners can take into consideration. To begin with, equipping EFL university students with adequate communicative competence through utilising literature in general and novels as well as short stories in particular, would be of genuine support. Accordingly, literature should be approached as a valuable resource and a fruitful opportunity for an EFL student's growth.

To ensure quality outcomes whilst utilising literature in the EFL classroom, practitioners should first seek to identify EFL learners' needs, considering each and every learner's language proficiency level. Upon identifying needs clearly, careful selection of appropriate literary texts has to be stressed. Practitioners may argue over the issue of what it is that makes an appropriate literary text. Seen from the researcher's point of view, factors such as language complexity, age group, variety, cultural appropriateness, length, authenticity, relative contemporariness and human values should be considered throughout the selection process (See 8.3 for details). Whilst selecting literary texts for teaching/learning purposes, practitioners need to bear in mind that a literary text should appeal to students' interests, concerns and age. In so doing, a literary text has the potential to arouse motivation and instil in learners a love for literature which goes on beyond class and lasts for long. Speaking of teaching methodology, EFL practitioners should acquire a repertoire of pedagogical methods and approaches, adopting an eclectic approach when in class. Adopting an eclectic approach will then be based upon a genuine pedagogical wealth, ensuring wise selection of what may work most efficiently under different teaching/learning circumstances.

Mention of teaching methodology should not be made without mention of language assessment which also needs to be conducted properly. Characteristics such as reliability, validity, practicality, and credibility should be what a practitioner's assessment is characterised by. Assessment does not merely entail practitioners' assessment of their students. A student's self-assessment of his/her progress in the foreign language is no less important and should, as such, be an integral part of EFL curricula as it serves a number of purposes. Some of these concern self-assessment as being a pre-requisite for self-directed learning, for raising learners' awareness of language, as well as for increasing learners' motivation and goal orientation. Self-assessment, however, should not be excluded to learners. Instructors are also recommended to self-evaluate their teaching performance on a regular basis in order to ensure quality performance.

Last but not least, it is essential for all parties involved, whether curriculum designers, instructors, learners, examiners, or researchers, to bear in mind that the key solution to any single problematic issue within the field of EFL

can be summed up in two key words: *exposure* and *practice*. The more EFL students are exposed to adequate input as well as have meaningful practice, the better the outcomes will be. To maximise the effectiveness of both exposure and practice, *involvement* has a significant role to play. In the author's view, three components make up the construct of involvement: *cognitive* involvement involving thinking skills, *affective* involvement involving a spirit of motivation, and *interactive* involvement involving some action of appropriate reaction and purposeful performance (Al Alami, 2013).

XI. CONCLUDING WORD

The communication process begins when a writer/speaker has an idea. The form of the idea may be influenced by complex factors such as one's background, mood, culture, physical surrounding, and the context of the situation itself. Relating the discussion to EFL contexts, it would be helpful to use literature as an effective device which practitioners can utilise to promote communicative competence on the part of learners.

To end with, it is worthwhile mentioning that even though the current research project has been conducted in Dubai, the research may still be of use and interest to foreign language researchers and practitioners working in different parts of the world. What makes an exciting and productive learning experience for foreign language learners could be universal in a number of ways.

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Types and Attributes of English Writing Errors in the EFL Context—A Study of Error Analysis

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Abstract—This study seeks to explore five 6th grade EFL learners' major writing problems by analyzing the nature and distribution of their writing errors and it also investigates factors that cause errors in their writing in English through email communication. This study examined EFL learners' writing samples and followed taxonomy: grammatical, lexical, semantic, mechanics, and word order types of errors. Findings showed that participants made more mistakes on interlingual/transfer errors than on intralingual/developmental errors. Students used their L2 habits, rules, and patterns in the second language writing. However, students also had intralingual errors due to the overgeneralizations and partial exposure to the target language. In addition, students also included internet linguistic features in their writing. Some implications are drawn this study. First, for learners, error provided indications for teachers to understand what grammar is difficult for EFL learners. Teachers can include these errors in the teaching. For teachers explicit instructions on different errors are needed, and teachers should provide a context where fluent and accurate language use should be modeled to learners.

Index Terms—error, error analysis, interlanguage, intralanguage, second language acquisition

I. INTRODUCTION

English learners' errors should be analyzed carefully because these errors show the process of learning a language. The learners' errors are very important providing “insight into how far a learner has progressed in acquiring a language and showing how much more the learner needs to learn” (Ringbom, 1987, p.69). Traditionally, writing is defined as the paper-based modality; however, many writings today are happening through computer-based medium. Today's learners use computers as a tool to learning, and teachers have to adopt the use of technology to teach.

Many studies (Kim, 2011; Li & Zhu, 2013; Vurdien, 2013) have employed computer-mediated communication (CMC) in the language learning in the different contexts. CMC can be either synchronous or asynchronous. Synchronous communication is often referred to as real-time communication (e.g., chat, Messenger). Asynchronous CMC refers to communication is not real time. Both of users have to wait and receive the message in a delayed time. For example, email is the most popular form of asynchronous CMC. Many foreign language studies have included the use of email to develop writing skills (Chaffee-Sorace, 1999; Levy, 1997). This study continues to use the benefits of email in English as a foreign language (EFL) context in order to conduct an error analysis on EFL learners' writings. This study is significant because it includes the error study in a new learning context. The study would provide a clear linguistic feature analysis via email for educators and researchers.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Error Analysis (EA)

Error analysis is a type of approach to analyze a second/foreign language learners' speech or written performance. Several researchers already discussed error analysis from different perspectives. Corder (1967) and Brown (2000) both highlighted that language learners' errors are important to study because it shows the state of the learners' knowledge. Corder (1967) stated that error analysis are not just something to be eradicated, but rather can be important in and of themselves. Corder (1967) noted that students' errors should be not ignore because they are these errors are developing features for language learners. As was pointed by some researchers (Corder, 1967; Dai & Shu, 1994), error analysis is highly significant for second language acquisition in the following aspects. From Corder's perspective (1981), teachers can understand students' current level in learning. For researchers, they can understand how language is learned and structured. For students, they can utilize these errors as a learning device to improve their language proficiency. Based on these three aspects, this study would like to continue to examine more cases in EFL contexts.

B. Types of Errors

In the second language acquisition, different types of errors were defined. There are two major different types from the analysis of learners' oral and written performance. First, it is called intralingual/developmental error. According to Richards (1974), these errors are produced by the learners which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue, but overgeneralizations based on partial exposure to the target language. Overgeneralization generally involves the creation of one deviant structure in place of two regular structures, for example, "He can sing", "We are hope", "it is occurs". Second, interlingual/transfer errors (Selinker (1974) referred the negative interference from the learner's first language habits. For example many EFL learners think in their first language and they used direct translation when they speak and write in L2.

C. Writing through Email in Different Contexts

This section reviewed the literature that discussed the benefits of using email in learning writing, so the following studies inform this study to use email as the medium to observe students' writing. Many benefits were found to support the language learning through email. For example, language learning occurred through constant communication, so Coer and Selfe (1990) found that the email can generate more communication. Similarly, Pratt and Sullivan also found that the use of email increased the oral communication. Based on these two studies, namely, learners had more output in using the target language. In addition, learning a second/foreign language could be very stressful for students. Students' affective filter would be very high if they were asked to use the language face to face. Thus, Kern (1995) and Sullivan (1993) found that students felt less anxious when they joined the online discussion. For example, students were allowed to have more time before they write. They can draft their writing in an asynchronous manner. However, the face-to-face communication generated a lot of emotional stress. For example, Hoffman (1996) stated that the anonymous or non-face to face interaction can serve as a face-saving (p.55). Namely, language users will not feel embarrassed when produced the wrong usage of language.

In addition, students noted that the communication is more authentic through email. They can reach different audiences and received feedbacks and comments from their email pen-pals. Furthermore, the study conducted by Warschauer (1996), this study found that students who joined in the email writing group improved their writing skills. With these benefits, this study continues to use this medium to examine the EFL learners' errors. However, these studies did not analyze errors of language produced in computer-mediated contexts; therefore, this study would like to explore error analysis through asynchronous email writing by EFL students.

D. Previous Studies

Error analyses studied have been conducted in the English as a second or foreign language context. These studies are important to be conducted because students' errors always can provide knowledge how the language is learned, and it provided the information to teacher to revise their lessons. In the ESL context, Dulay and Burt (1973) examined Spanish-speaking children's writing, and this study found that 85% developmental errors. Namely, this is natural to encounter those errors when developing the accuracy. In this study, interlingual errors were not significantly found.

In the EFL context, Alhaysony (2012) examined written samples of 100 first-year female Arabic-speaking EFL students in the University of Ha'il. The findings showed that students made a considerable number of errors in their use of articles, especially, the omission errors. This study had a mixed finding because these errors included interlingual and intralingual transfer. Brown's (1994) study found that intralingual errors overtook interlingual errors. Brown concluded the overgeneralization of target language could cause errors on English learning. In Hong Kong, Chan (2004) studied 710 Hong Kong Chinese ESL students. There are 5 types of error found. This study found out that students used the syntactic transfer from Chinese to English. Therefore, it caused the run-on sentence and incomplete ideas.

Specifically, some studies were conducted in the same context like this study. Huang (2001) investigated the nature of distribution of different grammatical errors made by 46 English majors of a Taiwanese university. This study found the top six common errors were (1) verb (2) noun (3) spelling (4) article (5) preposition and (6) word choice. These errors were due to overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, simplification, incomplete application of rules and L1 negative transfer. Huang (2006) analyzed 34 Taiwanese English majors' writing errors based on a web-based writing program. This study found that 55% errors are on the usage. Namely, subject-verb is the main area EFL students need to study. Huang's study (2006) also found the errors on mechanics, style, and grammar, and these errors are transferred from the EFL students' L1. Among these previous studies, there was no agreement found in these studies; therefore, this study will continue to explore errors on EFL learners in Taiwan.

III. METHOD

A. Participants

The participants for this study consisted of five 6th grade EFL students in an elementary school in Taiwan. Participants spoke Mandarin Chinese as their first language. They are learning English as a foreign language at school. Participants attended this public school and they began receiving formal instruction of English as they are in the first grade. In this context, they have very limited opportunities to communicate in English outside of school. Second, these participants were similar in age, ranging from 11 to 12 years old. Namely, they have developed a certain language proficiency in using English. Therefore, they were able to produce data for analysis.

B. Data Collection Procedures

To collect the data, participants were administered a writing assignment that involved essay writing. They were required to write one topic assigned by the ESL teacher or self-selected by students weekly for twelve weeks. They were required to write through email.

Their writing samples were sent to an English-speaking pre-service teacher in the U.S. These native speakers were pre-service teachers who took a course of second language acquisition and literacy development in a teacher preparation program. These teachers were to be certified as an English as a second language (ESL) teacher or bilingual teacher in Texas. EFL learners' teacher assigned them different topics to write, or they selected a topic they would like to share with the pre-service teacher in Texas. The essays were ranged from one to one and a half page in length (100-150 words). There were a number steps taken in conducting an error analysis.

Essays were collected and analyzed to check various errors and numbers and ratios were counted. Based on the framework and the research design, this study sought answers to the following questions.

C. Research Questions

1. What types of grammatical errors are frequently found in the compositions written by Mandarin-Chinese EFL students?
2. What factors cause these errors in EFL students' writing samples?

D. Data Analysis

After data collection, the following steps of error analysis specified by Corder (1974) were followed. First, each essay was examined word and word and sentence by sentence. I generated the coding categories based on all writing samples. Second, I counted the number of errors and converted it into percentage to examine the occurrence. Corder's analysis approach had been used in many previous studies (e.g. Chastian, 1990; Frantzen, 1995; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 1992; Kroll, 1990). EFL students in Taiwan mainly learn American English, so these analysis followed the American English conventions. The step 2 and 3 in the Table I listed different types of errors. All errors were underlined and labeled.

For the second research question after analyzing type of errors, the researchers will categorize what factors cause these errors based on the distinctions between intralingual and interlingual errors. Intelligible errors will be labeled and discussed. Each researcher each researcher independently reviewed writing samples for common categories. The two authors then met to present our interpretations and arrive at a shared understanding the coding. Categories were compared for similarities, differences, and connections. Once the categories had been re-examined to determine how they were connected, the data were presented and clustered into common units of meaning or themes. Table I lists the steps to analyze each error found in the writing samples.

TABLE I.
STEPS TO ANALYZE ERRORS

| <i>Steps</i> | | Definition of steps | Examples |
|--------------|-----------------|---|--|
| Step 1 | Collect data | Written data through email communication | 40 writing samples were collected |
| Step 2 | Identify errors | Different types of errors | 1. (prepositions, articles, singular/plural, adjectives, relative clause, verb tense, singular/plural, nouns, pronouns, tense, articles, preposition, verb formation, subject-verb agreement, and fragment) 2. Word choice 3. Meaning 4. Use of punctuations. |
| Step 3 | Classify errors | It is an error of agreement? Is it an error in irregular verbs? | Grammatical type error Syntactic type error Lexical type error Semantic type error Mechanics type error |
| Step 4 | Quantify errors | How many errors of total? | How many errors of each feature occur? |
| Step 5 | Analyze source | cause of these errors | Intralingual (developmental errors) Interlingual (interference errors) Intelligible error (neither developmental nor interference errors) |

IV. RESULTS

The results of the study presented are based on the three research questions posed. The answers to the first questions focused on categories of grammatical errors, frequency of occurrence of each error, percentage of each error out of total words.

The answers to the first question include categories of grammatical errors found in the students' writing, their frequency of occurrence, and the percentage and rank order of each error type.

A. What Types of Grammatical Errors Are Frequently Found in the Compositions Written by Chinese EFL Students?

TABLE II
TYPE OF ERRORS

| Types of error | # | Error Categories | Frequency | Percentage | Rank Order |
|----------------------------|----|-----------------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Grammatical errors | 1 | Verb tense | 2 | 0% | 21 |
| | 2 | Sentence structure | 77 | 10% | 3 |
| | 3 | Coordination | 49 | 6% | 7 |
| | 4 | Relative clause | 1 | 0% | 22 |
| | 5 | Singular/plural | 58 | 7% | 4 |
| | 6 | Verb omission | 58 | 7% | 4 |
| | 7 | Subject omission | 55 | 7% | 6 |
| | 8 | S-V agreement | 96 | 12% | 1 |
| | 9 | Fragment | 88 | 11% | 2 |
| Lexical errors | 10 | Noun | 44 | 6% | 8 |
| | 11 | Pronoun | 12 | 2% | 18 |
| | 12 | Verb | 35 | 4% | 9 |
| | 13 | Adjective | 19 | 2% | 15 |
| | 14 | Adverb | 9 | 1% | 19 |
| | 15 | Article | 15 | 2% | 16 |
| | 16 | Preposition | 22 | 3% | 14 |
| | 17 | Word form | 30 | 4% | 12 |
| | 18 | Interjections | 5 | 1% | 20 |
| Sematic errors | 19 | Word choice (Meaning) | 24 | 3% | 13 |
| Mechanics error | 20 | Punctuation | 34 | 4% | 10 |
| | 21 | Capitalization | 13 | 2% | 17 |
| | 22 | Spelling | 33 | 4% | 11 |
| Intelligible errors | 23 | If any | | | |
| Total | | | 780 | 100% | |

In the analysis (see Table II) of grammatical, lexical, semantic, and mechanics errors, most errors were found from grammatical errors. Of the 22 categories of errors identified, this study found that students had the greatest problem in the subject and verb agreement. 12% of subject-verb agreement was found. The second and third most frequent errors were found in sentence fragment and sentence structure, both of which caused approximately similar percentage of error of sentence structure and fragment (10% and 11 %, respectively). The fourth and fifth most frequent errors were found in singular/plural and verb omission both of which caused approximately the same percentage (7%, respectively). Other types of errors, such as prepositions (3%) and fragments (3%) were found, too. The article use and pronouns wrong usage were also found in the writing. Students had 2% error rate out of all errors.

B. What Specific Type of Errors Found in Each Category?

The interligual errors in this study are classified as follows. I have analyzed the word and sentence levels, the mechanical errors, lexical errors, and word order. A total number of interligual errors amounted to 469 out of 780 total number of errors. There are 247 interligual errors found from students' writing samples. There are 78 lexical categories, 24 semantic errors, and 11 mechanics errors. It is clear that the grammatical category is the dominant error category. Especially, many subject-verb agreement errors were found from writing samples. Next, the second place error is lexical error. These errors include the use of noun. Namely, the noun usage is not specific and clear to refer the meaning in English. In the third place come the word choices.

C. What Factors Cause These Errors in EFL Students' Writing Samples?

Table III presents the result of factors causing the students' errors. First, in grammatical errors, this study found that the participants have 72% interligual/transfer errors and 28% intralingual/development errors. Second, in the lexical errors, 47% was found in the intralingual errors, and 53% was found in the interligual errors. Third, in the semantic errors, only 4% intralingual error was found, and the most of errors are interligual (96%). Last, mechanics errors were found due to the intralingual transfer.

TABLE III
CAUSES OF ERRORS

| Type of error | # | Categories of errors | Frequency | Intralingual/development errors | Intralingual/development errors (%) | Interlingual/transfer errors | Interlingual/transfer errors (%) |
|----------------------------|----|-----------------------|------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Grammatical errors | 1 | Verb tense | 2 | 2 | 100% | 0 | 0% |
| | 2 | Sentence structure | 77 | 9 | 12% | 68 | 88% |
| | 3 | Coordination | 49 | 35 | 71% | 14 | 29% |
| | 4 | Relative clause | 1 | 1 | 100% | 0 | 0% |
| | 5 | Singular/plural | 58 | 55 | 95% | 3 | 5% |
| | 6 | Verb omission | 58 | 8 | 14% | 50 | 86% |
| | 7 | Subject omission | 55 | 5 | 9% | 50 | 91% |
| | 8 | S-V agreement | 96 | 19 | 20% | 77 | 80% |
| | 9 | Fragment | 88 | 3 | 3% | 85 | 97% |
| Total | | | 484 | 137 | 28% | 347 | 72% |
| Lexical errors | 10 | Noun | 44 | 35 | 80% | 9 | 20% |
| | 11 | Pronoun | 12 | 4 | 33% | 8 | 67% |
| | 12 | verb | 35 | 3 | 9% | 32 | 91% |
| | 13 | Adjective | 19 | 4 | 21% | 15 | 79% |
| | 14 | Adverb | 9 | 2 | 22% | 7 | 78% |
| | 15 | Article | 15 | 10 | 67% | 5 | 33% |
| | 16 | Preposition | 22 | 18 | 81% | 4 | 19% |
| | 17 | Word form | 30 | 25 | 83% | 5 | 17% |
| | 18 | Interjections | 5 | 3 | 60% | 2 | 40% |
| Total | | | 147 | 69 | 47% | 78 | 53% |
| Semantic errors | 19 | Word choice (Meaning) | 24 | 1 | 4% | 23 | 96% |
| Mechanics errors | 20 | Punctuation | 34 | 25 | 74% | 9 | 26% |
| | 21 | Capitalization | 13 | 11 | 85% | 2 | 15% |
| | 22 | Spelling | 33 | 33 | 100% | 0 | 0% |
| Total | | | 80 | 69 | 86% | 11 | 14% |
| Intelligible errors | | If any | 0 | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Total | | | 780 | 311 | 40% | 469 | 60% |

V. DISCUSSION

Based on the collected data, the participants had the greatest difficulty in using subject-verb agreement. The possible explanation is the influence of their first language. In Chinese, verb does not change its form with different subject. Therefore, they were not aware of changing the verb form in English.

The second and third most frequent errors were found in sentence fragment and sentence structure. There are many segmental and run-on sentences were found. One possible explanation could be the transfer from Chinese grammatical rules, and did not have comprehensive knowledge on the use of conjunctions to connect different clauses.

Third, the participants also have difficulty in choosing correct noun to express their ideas clearly. Some messages were totally obscure due to incorrect word usage in the noun phrase. The meaning was not comprehensive in English usage because many nouns were translated from Chinese. Similarly, the participants also have difficulty in word choice in the verb phrase and prepositional phrases. Semantically, the wrong word choices in their writing mislead the readers. In addition, some participants wrote very little, and this might be explained by their limited vocabulary. They could not think of appropriate words and phrases to express their ideas. Some students' writing samples were very short because they did not have too much exposure in English writing. The lack of fluency in writing also increased the difficulty to comprehend students' writing samples.

In this study, I also analyzed the attributes of different types of errors. In the grammatical, lexical, and semantic errors, students made interlingual/transfer error from their first language to English. Only mechanics errors were due the intralingual transfer. There are several explanations for the interlingual transfer in sentence structure, vocabulary use, and word choices. First, these participants did not start to learn English until 3rd grade; therefore, their literacy skills in the first language affect heavily on their English learning. Second, the English teacher used Chinese as the instructional language to teach second language. Therefore, the model of fluency in speaking and writing was absent. The lack of fluency input could lead students' error from Chinese to English.

VI. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATION

There are some pedagogical implications can be drawn from this study. First, making errors are a normal language developmental process, so students' errors are great sources for improving teaching and learning. Teachers should not

labels students based on their errors in writing. Namely, students' effort of trying should be praised, and teachers should encourage students to engage writing for different purposes in order to language in the different contexts.

Second, for specific instructional activities for subject-verb agreement, explicit instruction in each linguistic feature should be included in the classroom. Teacher can provide interactive teaching ideas for practicing different subjects and verbs usage in the different contexts. Namely, interactive games and collaborative activities are highly recommended to practice each specific feature.

Third, this study would suggest teachers should prepare students to use English in real-life settings. Namely classroom activities should be embedded to authentic audience and materials. Participants in this study expressed that they feel motivated and excited when receiving feedback from native speaker of English; thus, teachers should design authentic tasks in ways that align English language learning with students' interests and learning styles. The majority of errors are from the translation of first language. This finding would imply the model of using fluent English for EFL students in this study. Teaching can include authentic materials, such as newspapers, magazines, websites, and published reading materials in teaching. For the future teachers and students, we believe that that the encouragement; positive corrective feedback, authentic target language input, interactive teaching and learning activated the students' motivation and awareness can facilitate language development.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study identifies different errors produced by Mandarin-Chinese speaking EFL students. This study presented different errors due to the interlingual and intralingual transfer. However, this study found that student's L1 has caused negative transfer on word and sentence levels. Namely, relying on the mother tongue is the main strategy used by the EFL learners when they compose the essay in English. However, this study would like to highlight that these errors have positive indications for language teachers and researchers. For teaching purposes, teachers need to design activities for areas needed for improvement. Teachers should keep in mind that overemphasis on errors can frustrate learners' motivation. Teachers could use these errors in class and revise the teaching activities. For students, we should allow students to learn when they are ready. In the classroom, teachers should be able to provide corrective feedbacks in a non-threatening way (e.g., recast, paraphrase, positive feedbacks) in order to raise learners' awareness to correct themselves. Teachers also should be able to model the complete sentence and lexical use in order to provide students more exposure in using English.

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CLT and ELT in Bangladesh: Practice and Prospect of Speaking and Listening

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Abstract—This paper aims to investigate the reasons behind the lack of practice of listening and speaking at the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) classroom of Intermediate level in Dhaka. After fourteen years of introducing CLT in the education system of our country, lots of students of post intermediate level cannot utter a single correct sentence. This poses a serious question on the efficacy of practicing speaking and listening at the classrooms of our schools and colleges. This study was conducted on four colleges among the English teachers of Dhaka. To collect the data, questionnaires and personal interviews were conducted. The findings attempt to suggest some prior measures to recover from the unsavoury situation that is going on at present in our education system.

Index Terms—CLT, speaking, listening, classroom, practice, teachers, students, English

I. INTRODUCTION

In the 1970s in European countries, the inclusion of CLT to the different methods of foreign language teaching was due to the failure of those methods in making the students communicatively competent and the reason behind its adaption and success in language teaching in EFL contexts in many countries is, CLT aims to develop all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The proponents of CLT believed “activities that involve real communication promote learning” (Richards and Rodgers 161).

When teachers communicate in English with the students studying in the first year at university, they find that a majority of them still cannot speak with a reasonable proficiency and cannot grasp the meaning from listening to the foreign accents of English. The main reason behind this problem lies in the lack of practice in speaking and listening in classrooms in schools and colleges. But, CLT textbooks were introduced at the Secondary and Higher Secondary levels with a particular aim, to quote Nipa Vhattacharjee, “Prof. Md. Yousuf Farook writes that the book is based on the principle that guided the writing of *English for Today* books from class 6 onwards—the principle of learning a language by actually practicing it. But the fact is that, the existing curriculum of secondary and higher secondary levels lacks the insights to develop speaking skills actually by practicing and experimenting with the language. The theoretical emphasis has overshadowed the much needed practical side and missed out the scope for practicing language ...”

The Government’s aim with the introduction of the CLT approach will remain unfulfilled if we cannot make our students efficient in real life speaking and listening.

The core of the study tries to find out:

1. Why cannot the students of the post Intermediate level speak English or understand English while listening?
2. Why listening/speaking modules of CLT are not effective, introduced and taught at the Intermediate level?
3. What practical barriers do the teachers face in conducting a speaking /listening class?
4. What prior initiatives could the Government take to make the speaking/listening modules more effective in the classroom?

Literature Review:

Since the initiation of research in the 1960s into effective teaching methodologies in EFL context in Europe, it became obvious that only the Structure does not constitute the whole of a language. Scholars Christopher Candlin, Henry Widdowson, British Linguists John Firth, M.A.K. Halliday, American Sociolinguists Dell Hymes, John Gumperz and William Labov- all felt that “functional and communicative potential of language”(Richards and Rodgers 154) ought to be included in classroom practice, so that, if needed, the students can transfer the knowledge and performance of language to real life situation as well.

While trying to develop a communicative syllabus for language teaching, British Linguist D.A. Wilkins(1972) illustrated two types of meanings, “1) Notional Categories(concepts such as time, sequence, quantity, location, frequency) and 2)Categories of communicative function(requests, denials, offers, complaints) Richards and Rodgers 154).

Hymes’ (1971) point of view is, “being able to communicate required more than linguistic competence, it required communicative competence-knowing when and how to say what to whom”(Cited in Diane Larsen-Freeman). So apart from the structure of the language, the CLT approach deals with pragmatics-situational context, shared knowledge, personal relationship and all the factors that one should be cognizant of while communicating in a foreign language.

According to Richards and Rodgers, CLT sees language from the following points of views:

Language is a system for the expression of meaning.

√ The primary function of language is to allow interaction and communication.

√ The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses.

√ The primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features but categories of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse. (161)

So, from the views of the proponents of CLT, it can be assumed that speaking and listening should be the prior concern of the foreign language teaching that follows CLT approach.

Some of the cardinal goals of CLT are summarized by William Littlewood:

1. The learner must attain as high a degree as possible of linguistic competence.
2. The learner must distinguish between the forms which he has mastered as part of his linguistic competence and the communicative functions that they perform.
3. The learner must develop skills and strategies for using language to communicate meanings as effectively as possible in concrete situations.
4. The learner must become aware of social meaning of language forms. (06)

CLT is very effective in helping the learners get introduced with various aspects of linguistic competence, knowledge of discourse and pragmatics etc. But to make it fruitful, to attain its goals, we must practice listening and speaking at the classroom.

Teacher's role is of paramount importance in attaining the goals of CLT in classroom. In the classroom, apart from acting as co-communicator, the teacher should bridge the gap between structure and function to "contextualize the language and as learners to practice responses which would be:

- a) Realistic ways of performing communicative acts in
- b) Situations they might expect to encounter at some time" (10)

For that such situations should be created at the classroom where the learner "must use language as an instrument for satisfying immediate communicative needs and where the criterion for success is functional effectiveness rather than structural accuracy." (Littlewood 07)

Extrapolating from the above discussion, we can rightly say that speaking and listening are the first and foremost aspects of CLT. Ignoring them, we can never make our students communicatively competent.

CLT in Bangladesh:

In the 1930s, an American National Curriculum commission observed, "Experience is the best of all schools...The ideal curriculum consists of well selected experiences." (Richards and Rodgers 158)

From the Bangladeshi perspective, it is only the experience of using language that is missing in the classroom. Only written discourses are dealt with in the classroom whereas spoken discourse should be practiced more because spoken discourse is much difficult than the written discourse in a number of ways, "Spoken discourse is instantaneous. The listener must process it 'online' and there is often no chance to listen to it again....unlike written discourse, spoken discourse is usually unplanned and often reflects the processes of construction such as: hesitations, reduced forms, fillers and repeats." (*Teaching Listening and Speaking from Theory to Practice* 3-5)

For all these reasons of difficulties, the speaking and listening practice should have been done more frequently in the classroom than going haywire.

Another importance to practice listening arises from the fact which is mentioned by Masum Billah in his feature *Is CLT Working in Bangladesh?* in The Financial Express that "40% of our everyday conversation we do through listening, 35% speaking, 16% reading and only 9% through writing." Since in the melee of practicing only reading and writing in the classroom, listening and speaking do not get a chance to stand its ground in our country, it means "we assess our students' performance only on 25% skills. It clandestinely proves that our assessment is seriously faulty." (*Is CLT Working in Bangladesh?*)

CLT started its journey in European countries in the early 19th century but in our country, it was introduced as the English language teaching method at the secondary level in 2001 and then at the higher secondary level which remains effective still now. English is a compulsory subject to the students of our country up to class twelve. But in most cases, it is taught following Grammar Translation Method, that is only the practice of reading and writing get momentum in the classes of schools and colleges. Since English had a high demanding status in the society, educational institutions and job market during the colonial period, the teaching and practicing of English received greater attention which continued till 1971. After the Liberation War of 1971, Bangla became the national language of the country and as a result of Bangla Implementation Act of 1987, the status of English started deteriorating day by day. To check the decline in English proficiency, 7 education commissions over the last decade have recommended various steps, unfortunately, none of them could be effectively implemented. As a result, there was a lack of harmony in English teaching methodology in terms of syllabus, materials, methodology, testing and evaluation. After the failure of Grammar Translation Method in bringing the expected English proficiency among the learners, CLT was introduced in 1999 by the English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP) which was sponsored by the Ministry of Education. The Government's intention in introducing the CLT method in English language teaching failed to integrate the practice of 4 basic skills of English in the classroom because much less attention was paid to listening and speaking skills.

Ellis (213-18) contends, “CLT does not respond well to Asian education conditions.” But what could be the probable reasons behind that? Barman, Sultana and Basu (156-60) identify eight basic constraints that hinder the practice of listening and speaking:

1. Inefficiency of ELT practitioners
2. Economic constraints
3. Administrative set-up
4. Infrastructural limitations
5. Cultural conflicts
6. Sitting arrangement in classroom
7. Class size and language teaching and learning
8. Testing

Also most teachers get extremely poor salary which is a seriously demotivating factor to them. The demotivation of the teachers is tantamount to the demotivation of the students. At present the Government policy is to ensure the highest percentage of pass marks at the board exams, which deflects the students from putting the best effort to pass the exams. The worst of all is, the administrations of most institutes are cognizant of the guardians’ demand of exam oriented class conduction, and the result is, they run the English courses based on totally reading and writing skills. But the survey of the Institute of the Modern Languages, University of Dhaka, reinforces the demand of the adult learners of foreign languages of being efficient in speaking and listening. This survey was conducted on 600 students of various foreign language courses from July 2008 to March 2009. The result of the study shows that 57.5% students wanted to most proficient in Speaking, 14.5% students wanted to be efficient in Listening, 8.2% in Writing and 19.8% in Reading. (Mohammed Ansarul Alam 2008). So, the necessity of the practice of Speaking and listening in the classroom is undeniable. But in our country, the worst thing is, as the corollary of not testing the speaking and listening at the board examinations, they are not encouraged to be practiced at the classrooms which confirms the view that “if listening isn’t tested, the teachers won’t teach it.”(*Teaching listening and speaking from Theory to Practice* 1-3)

Limitations of the study:

First of all, the sample size of the study could be a limitation. The questionnaire and the interview covered only 4 colleges of Dhaka. The second limitation could be the data collection procedure. Thirdly, the information gathered from the study could be dissimilar to the actual practice of the real life classrooms.

II. METHODOLOGY

The method of random sampling was used to conduct personal interview and administer questionnaire survey on the teachers of four non-government colleges of Dhaka. Questionnaire survey provides data that is easily quantifiable, less time consuming and demands less efforts from the participants, as well as ensures the anonymity of the participants. The procedures of data collection and analysis reflect both qualitative and quantitative nature, that means, the methodology of the present study is the mixed method approach which “enables the researchers to draw on all possibilities” (Tashakkori and Teddlie, cited in Diana Ansarey 2012)) and provides a broader perspective to the study as the qualitative data helps describe aspects that the quantitative data cannot address (Cresswell, 2003).

Description and results of the study:

The participants of the study were 10 English teachers of 4 non-government colleges of Dhaka city and 70% of them are aged between 38-50 years holding teaching experience for 10-18 years. There were 7 open ended and 5 close ended questions for them. The return rates are high, almost 100%. Frequency rates are calculated to elicit the central tendency of the teachers.

Findings:

The core findings of the study are presented on two tables below. Table 1 enumerates the major problems in conducting speaking and listening classes and table 2 shows the probable remedies.

TABLE 1:
IMMANENT REASONS FOR NOT PRACTICING SPEAKING AND LISTENING CLASSES AT THE INTERMEDIATE CLASSROOMS

| Problems | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| √ The students don’t respond /like the speaking/listening class | 5 | 50% |
| √ There are no available apparatus at the institution | 10 | 100% |
| √ Teachers do not use English all through the class always | 10 | 100% |
| √ Teachers are not Trained in conducting speaking/listening class | 7 | 70% |
| √ Students do not need speaking/listening class to pass the board examinations | 5 | 50% |
| √ The classes are teacher centered | 2 | 20% |
| √ The students cannot speak English fluently | 3 | 30% |
| √ The students have problems in understanding listening class | 2 | 20% |
| √ The students cannot pronounce English correctly | 2 | 20% |

TABLE 2:
THE TEACHERS' RECOMMENDATION TO REMEDY THE PRESENT SITUATION

| Recommendation | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| √ Steps should be taken to boost up speaking/listening practice at the classroom | 10 | 100% |
| √ There should be proper materials/equipment | 4 | 40% |
| √ The government should allot marks/include speaking and listening tests at the board exams | 5 | 50% |
| √ The teachers should be trained | 3 | 30% |
| √ The institutions should arrange seminars | 1 | 10% |

III. ANALYSIS

So, the results of the study show that after 14 years of introduction of CLT into the national education system, approximately only 30% of the teachers at the college level are trained to hold speaking/listening sessions. The rest 70% are not even trained to hold speaking/listening class, so they do not ever hold any speaking or listening class. Again, none of the institutions where the study was conducted had necessary apparatus/instruments for holding a speaking/listening class which is a serious drawback for implementing CLT approach at the classroom. 50% of the teachers mentioned that speaking/listening classes are not held at the intermediate level, because the students do not require them to pass the board examination. So, our board examination system is a major demotivating factor for conducting speaking/listening class. It is high time we started incorporating speaking and listening testing at the board exam. To quote Wilkins (1976), "while some people are experimenting with the notional syllabus as such, others should be attempting to develop the new testing techniques that should, ideally, accompany it (Cited in C. J. Brumfit and K. Johnson)." One of the teachers observed that "Having no compulsion (to do speaking/listening class) as the whole syllabus (200 marks) is on writing" is one of the inherent reasons for lack of practice of speaking/listening at the classroom. Another factor to be taken seriously is, 50% of the teachers reported that one of the problems they face while conducting speaking/listening class is that the students want exam oriented class and that they do not like/respond enough for the teachers to be enthusiastic to conduct speaking/listening class on a regular basis. 30% of the teachers feel that the students cannot speak English at the class which makes a speaking class a failure. 20% of the teachers found out that the students cannot understand listening sessions. And last but not the least, 90% of the teachers mentioned that they use English all through the classroom "sometimes" and one of them exposed the reason for that, "considering the standard of English among the students, I've to take the step." But to quote Fakhru Islam (2008) "if learners get used to hearing nothing but English lesson, they will very soon understand and later learn to say words like 'good', 'alright', 'fine' etc. This will help them to use relevant word/words in specific context."

From the Table 2, it is clear that the teachers of all the institutions where the study was conducted hold positive attitude towards the importance of developing listening and speaking skills of the students. 100% of them supported the view that measures should be taken to boost up speaking/listening practice at the classroom. 50% of them feel that marks should be incorporated at the board exam/syllabus to reinforce the necessity of practicing speaking/listening at the classroom. One of the teachers commented, "It should be compulsorily included in the syllabus and suitable environment should be created." At this point, Ranjit Podder (2012) put forward the collective opinion from his *Demand from a CLT Workshop* "Although it is feasible to include the assessment of listening and speaking in schools if the schools are proactive, the workshop decided, a government order asking the schools to start assessing listening and speaking skills can bring momentum in the secondary English classrooms where, all teachers and students will practice English." (<http://newagebd.com>) 30% of the teachers think that the teachers should be properly trained to hold speaking/listening class. 40% of them opined that the educational institutions should be provided with necessary instruments/materials.

What to do in the classroom:

Before going for the classroom practice, we have to focus on what kind of problem the students normally may face in interpreting English from the listening. The students face a number of difficulties while they try to segment sound units from the continuum of speech. Here are the answers to the question "What are your problems in listening to English?" (Cited in Tsinghong Ma, 2009)

1. Trouble with sounds: I have trouble catching the actual sounds of the foreign language.
2. Have to understand every word: I have to understand every word; if I miss something I feel I'm failing and get worried and stressed.
3. Can't understand fast, natural native speech: I can understand people if they talk slowly and clearly; I can't understand fast natural native sounding speech.
4. Need to hear things more than once: I need to hear things more than once in order to understand.
5. Find it difficult to keep up: I find it difficult to keep up with all the information I'm getting and can't think ahead or predict.
6. Get tired: If the listening goes on a long time I get tired, find it more and more difficult to concentrate.
7. Insufficient vocabulary: My vocabulary is smaller than the text demands and there are some words that I can't understand.

This study shows that most of the students are following the Bottom Up strategy, they would not feel some of these difficulties if they followed the Top Down strategy. According to Top Down strategy, the students have to activate their existing schema at the pre-listening stage that will help them to 'keep up' with the listening speed, at the same time they will still understand some messages from the listening text if they miss some words from the text. Apart from the Top Down or Bottom Up strategies, there are some other apposite strategies, some of them are enumerated by Nunan, 1999 (Cited in Tsinghong Ma 2010):

1. Listening for the gist: Is the speaker describing a vacation or a day in the office? Is the radio report about news or weather?
2. Listening for purpose: Are the speakers making reservation or ordering food? Is the speaker agreeing or disagreeing with the suggestion?
3. Listening for main idea: Why is the speaker asking the man questions? Did the speaker like or dislike the movie?
4. Listening for inference: What are the speakers implying by what they said?
5. Listening for specific information: How much did they say the tickets cost? Where did she say the meeting was being held?
6. Listening for phonemic distinctions: Did the speaker say first or fourth? Did the speakers say they can or can't come to the party?
7. Listening for tone/pitch to identify the speaker's attitude: Did the speaker enjoy the wedding or not? Is the speaker surprised or not?
8. Listening for stress: What is more important, where he bought the watch or when?

To save the weak students from performing poor listening comprehension task, the teacher can gradually introduce these strategies to the students one by one, can tell them beforehand what is their aim with today's listening practice, can give them some prior information regarding that days' listening text and lead them through the listening text. Here one thing should be taken into consideration, we should give the students practice in listening with an aim of not only developing their listening comprehension skill but also facilitating its role to help their acquisition of English. According to Schmidt, 1990 (Cited in Jack C. Richards, 13-16), the conscious attention to the learning is of paramount importance, he says that "we won't learn anything from input we hear and understand unless we notice something about the input. Consciousness of features of the input can trigger the first stage in the process of incorporating new linguistic features into one's language competence". Schmidt (1990:139) further clarifies this point in distinguishing between input (what the learner hears) and intake (that part of the input that the learner notices). According to him, "only intake can serve as the basis for language development." So our target in EFL context of CLT approach at the classroom should be to encourage the students to notice the part of the text or practice that could be taken as intake and transfer them to the real life communication. At this stage, to develop not only the linguistic competence (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) but also the communicative competence. We can follow some teaching models that will help the students of all difficulty levels to participate at the class activities.

The model for teaching receptive skills proposed by Harmer, 1991 (Cited in Tsinghong Ma, 2009) contains five basic stages:

1. Lead-in: here the students and the teachers prepare themselves with the topic of the listening tasks and exercises.
2. Teacher directs comprehension tasks: Here the teacher makes sure that the students know what they are going to do. Are they going to answer question, fill in a chart, complete a message pad or try and re-tell what they heard/saw?
3. Students listen for task: The students then read or listen to a text to perform the task the teacher has set.
4. Teacher directs feedback: When the students have performed the task the teacher will help students to see if they have completed the task successfully and will find out how well they have done.
5. Teacher directs text related task: Teacher will then probably organize some kind of follow up task related to the text. Thus if the students have filled a form based on a heard discussion, the text related task might be to discuss in groups the same or related topic.

IV. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The implications of the study show that after introducing CLT in our country, proper measures have not been taken to implement it as long as the attention to practice speaking and listening is concerned. Relegating some cardinal issues like teacher training, allotting marks to the board exam, supplying instruments, motivating the students, it can never be implemented successfully. Extrapolating from all the discussions, we can incontrovertibly contend that, as long as our teachers are positive minded about practicing speaking/listening at the classroom, even at the lackluster classroom, the Government should take some effective measures to make it ubiquitous in the classroom practice. On the prior basis, first and foremost, practicing speaking and listening at the classroom should be made compulsory by the inclusion of speaking/listening test at the board exam, it not only will make the students and the guardians to appreciate speaking/listening session, but also will make the administrations of the concerned institutions think that it is not a mere waste of time to allot enough time for speaking and listening sessions at the classroom. Secondly, the teachers should be properly trained and last but not the least, the institutions should be supplied with available materials and apparatus to conduct speaking/listening classes.

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Correlation between the Tutor Competency Aspects and the Results of the Students' Basic Writing Skills at Open University Makassar

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Abstract—The purpose of this research was to examine the correlation between tutor competency aspects and the results of the basic writing skills for students of elementary school teacher, in particular for the distance learning Program of Open University Makassar in academic year 2012. This research was ex post facto research. It was correlation research. The populations of the research were 387 and the samples were 100. The samples were taken by using multistage random sampling technique. The data were collected by using questionnaire and documentation study of the final semester examinations score. The data were then analyzed by using regression analysis with IBM SPSS Statistics 19. The result of the SPSS analysis shows a simple regression. That is $\hat{Y} = 21,986 + 0,354X$. It shows that every increase for one score of tutors competency aspects (X) causes the increase of 0,354 score for the results of basic writing skills (Y) on constant 21,986. Then, the value of R Square value obtained 0,576. It means that 57.6% of the variation occurs on the results of the basic writing skills can be explained by variations in the tutors' competency aspects through regression equation. That is $\hat{Y} = 21,986 + 0,354X$. Results of hypothesis testing found that there is a positive and significant correlation between tutor competency aspects and the results of basic writing skills.

Index Terms—tutor competency aspect, basic writing skills, students

I. INTRODUCTION

Face-to-face tutorials is conducted because distance higher education students are likely to have an average independent study (Sugilar,2000, p 187) [1] or low independent study, that is 29,8% (Darmayanti, Islam, and Asandhimitra, 2000, p. 191) [2].

Creative and productive model Tutorial come from the targets of a strategic plan of University Open in 2010-2021 and the operational plan in 2010-2013. The target is the Open University should accredit tutor as much as 50% of the Units of distance learning Programs for open universities in Indonesia.

In order to accelerate the target, in 2009 the Open University organizes a training i.e. formation of the core team for Tutors Coach [3]. In 2010, 1 Unit of distance learning Courses at the Open University of Makassar has been carrying out creative and productive model tutorials for basic writing skills course /PDGK4303. Momentum of creative and productive tutorial models is becoming a source of inspiration to examine more specifically whether the tutors' competency aspects have a positive and significant correlation with the results of the basic writing skills. The purpose of this research was to examine the correlation between tutor competency aspects and the results of the basic writing skills for students of elementary school teacher, in particular for the distance learning Program of Open University Makassar in academic year 2012. This research has two significances. They are theoretical and practical significances. The theoretical significance is providing information relating to proof theory or the development of the study for the tutors competency aspects and the results of basic writing skills. The practical significance is as the materials expected to be input and consideration for stakeholders such as the Center for human resources development for Open University and distance learning Program Unit for open universities in Indonesia in order to make decision and a policy in developing the implementation the creative and productive model for basic writing skills subject and other subjects in the future.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Tutorial

Generally, technical term "tutorials" or "tutoring" is interpreted as a guidance and learning support among friends or colleagues at peer tutoring. Concept of tutorial is also interpreted as a process when a person giving assistance and tutoring to others both individuals and groups. In this tutorial, the party who guided or assisted is called, tutee. The party who gives guiding and helping is called tutor. Both of them obtain an advantage, because either the tutor or the tutee is learning together (Tim PAU-PPAI-UT, 2001) [4].

B. Tutor

Legislation of the national education system, number 20 in 2003, article 29 paragraph: 2, mentions that tutors are professional personnel in charge of planning and implementing the process of learning, assessing learning outcomes, conducting supervision and training, as well as conducting research and devotion to the community especially for educators at College [5]. Academic tutors' qualification must be at least master's degree (S-2) in a relevant field of study and obtained from an accredited study programs (BSNP, 2007) [6]

C. Creative and Productive

The word of creative is English language absorption. That is "creation". Creation is an abstract noun. The adjective is "Creative" in Indonesian language being "*kreatif*" (Yusmansyah, 2008, p. 44-45) [7].

Ariwibowo and Roy S. (2003, p. 77) [8] describes that the creativity comes from basic words of "*kreatif*". It has the root of word "to create". Kaufman, J.C. (2009, p. 24) [9] explains that creativity is the interaction among the domains, the environment, and ourselves. A domain is an area of expertise that is already owned. Creativity is the core of a person's ability to create something new, either in the form of an idea or a real work which is relatively different from previously existing.

Sugono, d. (2010, p. 1103) [10] States that productive is something that is able to produce in large quantities, and also bring or giving useful results.

Productivity is related to the final result, i.e. how large the final results obtained in the production process. Determinant factors of productivity consist of knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitude. Creative and productive Model Tutorial is the right solution in basic Writing Skills tutorial because this model involves the students intellectually and emotionally in learning. In addition, it presents the opportunity to students to complete the task with responsibility and requiring hard work, dedication, enthusiasm, and confidence [11].

D. Tutor Competency Aspects

The term of "*kompetensi*" is a term derived from the English "competency" which means intelligence, and authority. In the educational context, competency is knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and skills reflected in the habit of thinking and acting. The habit of thinking which is conducted consistently and continuously allows someone to become competent in a particular field. Therefore, it can be said that an individual is considered competent if he or she has the knowledge, skills, and values that are reflected in the basic habits of thinking and acting (Harsanto, 2007, p. 130) [12].

Competency is a combination of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which are reflected in the habit of thinking and acting. Mc Ahsan (1981: 45) (cited by Muliya (2004, p. 38) [13] mentions that competency is defined as the knowledge, skills and abilities possessed by someone who has been a part of him, so that he can conduct cognitive, affective, and psychomotor behavior carefully.

There are several aspects or concepts contained within the sphere of competency as follows:

- a. Knowledge is the awareness in the fields of cognitive, e.g. a teacher knows how to perform the identification of learning needs, and how to make the learning of students in accordance with their needs
- b. Understanding is deepening the cognitive and affective, owned by individuals. For example, a teacher who will carry out learning must have a good understanding of the characteristics and conditions of learners, in order to carry out learning effectively and efficiently
- c. Skill is something that is owned by an individual to perform a task or job that is charged. For example the ability of teachers in choosing, and making simple learning tool for the learners to provide ease of learning.
- d. Value is a standard of behavior that have believed and fused in a person psychologically, for example the standard behavior of teachers in learning such as: honesty, openness, and democracy
- e. Attitude is the feeling of happy-unhappy, like-dislike. It is a reaction to a stimulus that comes from the outside such as a reaction to the economic crisis, a feeling of wage increases and so on
- f. Interest is the tendency of a person to commit any act, for example, interest for learning or doing something.

Spenser & Spenser (1994) quoted Hutapea & Thoha (2008, p. 4) [14] reveals that there are three main components of common competency, namely: knowledge owned by someone, skills, and individual behavior. Competency of tutors is an unconscious competency. It is when someone can do the job proficiently so that he can do it automatically. Competency is a set of intelligent actions, and a responsibility that belongs to a person considered as a condition for being able to perform the tasks in the community in the field of a particular work (Kepmendiknas of the Republic of Indonesia number 045/U/2002, article 1) [15]. John Stevenson (1991, p. 18) [16] mentions that the competency consists of knowledge and skills specifically in doing applied work in accordance with the requirements that have been determined. Thus, the competency owned by the tutor will show the quality of the actual tutor. The tutor must have the

ability to compile and execute the tutorial program. Competency is the absolute requirement that should be owned by every tutor. If the tutor has no competency, the tutor may not be able to perform the duties of tutorial properly and optimally. Related to how important competencies for tutors, a Prophet Hadith narrated by Imam Bukori Shohih Bukrorinya, cited in Irfan, (2010, p. 5) [17] which means that Abu Hurayrah-Zubair said, "the Prophet said, "If an affair (jobs) were handed to people who are not expert in this, then beware of the arrival time (the doomsday destruction)". This indicates that the tutors in delivering the tutorial should have competency and high professional in accordance with the field.

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that the competency is an idea of what that person does or should know in order to carry out its job properly. Competencies describe how someone is expected to behave in order to finish his work properly in accordance with the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are controlled by a part of himself. Tutor competency related to their field should have professionally because competency is a demand which has moral responsibility for the tutor.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

A. Kind of the Research

This research was ex post facto. It was correlation research.

B. Research Design

This research used the design of a symmetrical relationships by Rosenberg M (1968, p. 3) [18]. It was a one-way correlation consisting of one independent and dependent variable, as in the following figure:

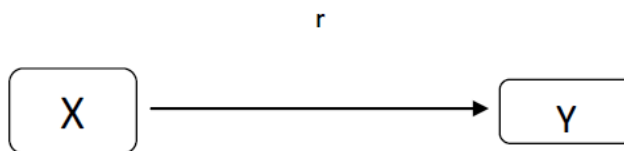


Figure 1. Research Design

Notes:

X = Tutor Competency

Y = The result of basic writing skills

r = Correlation

C. Populations and Samples

The populations in this research were 387 and the samples were 100. The samples were taken by using multistage random sampling technique consisting of technique of area, proportional, and random. The data were collected by using questionnaire and documentation. The questionnaire is used for assessing tutor competence aspects, while the documentation is used for obtaining semester final exam score for basic writing skills subject. The samples were taken by using the following Slovin formula (Umar, 2004, p. 108) [19].

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Notes:

n = Total of Samples

N = Total of population

e = inaccuracy percent due to the looseness of sampling errors that can still be tolerated

From the inaccuracy of 10%, then by using the above formula, the samples were obtained as follows:

$$n = \frac{387}{1 + 387(0,10)^2} = \frac{387}{1 + 4,87} = \frac{387}{4,87} = 80$$

Researchers took 100 samples, which means that they are the above of minimum desired sample by Slovin

D. Questionnaire Testing

Questionnaire was tested by using the advance validity test, and the expert validity test. The advance validity test shows that accuracy in measuring the indicators for each item of the instrument for tutor competency aspect is between accurate and very accurate. In addition, the validity shows that the clarity of the language used for each item of the tutors' competence is clear. The validity also shows that component charts on the instrument of tutors competency aspects are in a good category. Thus, it can be concluded that the details of these 64 instrument statements can be used to measure the aspects of tutor's competency (Azwar, 1999, p. 53) [20]. The expert validity test shows that. Assessment

results of validator 1 and 2 toward the response to the questionnaire for the tutor’s competency aspects of have high validity coefficients. That is $V > 0,75\%$ (Ruslan, 2009, p. 2) [21].

Thus, the questionnaire for tutor competence aspects is reasonable to be used in this study. For more details the assessment result can be seen in the table below:

TABLE 1.
ASSESSMENT RESULT

| | | Validator I | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | | Not Relevant Score (1 – 2) | Relevant Score (3 – 4) |
| Validator II | Not Relevant Score (1 – 2) | 1 | 1 |
| | Relevant Score (3 – 4) | 0 | 62 |

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Hypothesis is that there is a correlation between the Tutors competence aspects (X) and the results of the basic writing skills (Y).

Statistical Hypothesis:

$H_0 : \rho_y = 0$ means that the hypothesis is rejected (not significant)

$H_1 : \rho_y > 0$ means that hypothesis is accepted (significant)

The Result of hypothesis testing can be seen in the following table

TABLE 2
SIMPLE REGRESSION EQUATIONS

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | -21.986 | 8.793 | | -2.500 | .014 |
| | KOMP.TUTOR | .354 | .031 | .759 | 11.541 | .000 |

Table 2 above shows that the simple regression analysis on the data of the basic writing skills score and score for data of the tutors competence aspect results in a constant "α" of regression coefficients 21,986 and regression coefficients "β" is 0.831. Therefore, the equation of regression is $\hat{Y} = 21,986 + 0,354X$. The testing found that the equation of regression is significant and linear.

The equation of regression shows that every increase of one score for tutor competency aspects (X) causes the increase of 0,354 score results of basic writing skills (Y) on the constants =21,986 as shown in the figure 2 below:

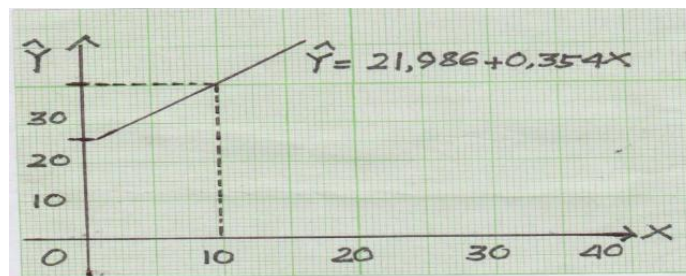


Figure 2. Simple Regression equations for X and Y

Simple correlation analysis toward the score for tutors’ competence aspects (X) and the results of the basic writing ability (Y) shows that the correlation coefficient of r_{y1} is 0,759. Significant correlation coefficient test results by using the t-test shows that t_{count} 11,541 is significant on the significance level of 0.000. This means that, the correlation between the tutors’ competence aspect (X) and the results of the basic writing ability (Y) is significant.

In order to clarify the results of the analysis of the coefficient of correlation and coefficient of determination, it can be seen in the table of Model Summary ^b below:

TABLE 3.
MODEL SUMMARY ^b

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------|-----|-----|---------------|
| | | | | | R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change |
| 1 | .759 ^a | .576 | .572 | 6.998 | .576 | 133.200 | 1 | 98 | .000 |

Results of analysis showed that the positive correlation between aspects of tutors competence (X) and the results of the basic writing ability (Y) is supported by the determination of the coefficient of $r_{y1}^2 = 0,576$. It means that 57.6% of the variations that occur in the result of basic writing skills can be explained by variations in aspects of competence of tutors (X) through the equation $\hat{Y} = 21,966 + 0,354X$.

Aspect of competence of tutors consists of the ability in drawing up the draft activity tutorial, tutorial activity unit. It is also implementing the creative and productive model tutorial with a step-by-step orientation, exploration, interpretation, recreation, as well as feedback and general impression including mastery of the material, use of language, and the appearance of tutor. Tutor is one aspect of determining whether or not a tutorial is successfully. The success of the tutorial is determined by the readiness of participants in preparing a tutorial participant through the tutorial activity. If tutors have a less than optimal preparation, the tutor cannot provide optimal performance. Therefore, the competence of tutors is considered to have a positive relationship to the results of the study of basic writing skills.

Ranse & Grealish (quoted Widhiarso, 2010, p. 3) [22] mention that competencies are divided into two types, namely personal and operational competency. The personal competency is knowledge about something, whereas operational competency is the ability to demonstrate something practically.

Research results in Sunaryo (2004, p. 140) [23] related to the quality of the Basic Skills course tutor Writing found that tutors are mastering the material well, excited, attentive about the success of student learning. In addition, tutors are delivering the material to be learned by answering the question of students to solve the problems faced. Another common impression found is that between 95-99% of the language tutor can be followed by students well. It also found that 75-94% tutor utterance is clear so that it is easily understood by students and the material presented stage by stage is in accordance with the order of the modules.

It suggests that the higher the competence of tutors who are owned by the tutor, the higher the results of basic writing skills of students. It is an evidence that the higher competence of tutors who are owned by the tutor, the higher the basic writing skills of students. Therefore, the tutor in carrying out the tutorial must create a design tutorial activity, and activity unit tutorials. The draft is a draft tutorial activity face-to-face tutorial for one semester or one subject, whereas the unit of activity is the formulation of the draft tutorial for a face-to-face meeting. The unit of activity is the reference for tutor in carrying out tutorial. The implementation is that tutors must have appropriate personal competence education. Besides the tutors must have operational competency as formulated in the draft activity for creative and productive models.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, then it can conclude that, there is a high correlation between the tutors' competence aspects (X) and the results of the basic writing skills (Y) for students at the Open University of Makassar. The correlation coefficients are 0.831. It means that competence of tutors include drafting ability activity tutorial, tutorial, activity unit the ability execute tutorial, mastery of the material, the use of proper grammar. Tutors performance is a crucial role in improving the results of basic writing skills for teacher education students for the Unit of distance learning Programs at the Open University of Makassar.

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Reflective Thinking on EFL Classroom Discourse

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Abstract—This study investigates eight TEFL pre-service teachers' reflective thinking on their classroom discourse in a middle school in China. The data comes from reflective journals, interviews and classroom observations. Three major themes emerge from the journals: physiological aspect, interpersonal aspect and pedagogical aspect of discourse. Moreover, the features of their reflective thinking on classroom discourse are explained. It is concluded that conceptualization is the most prominent feature. Additionally, the study finds out three influential factors on the focuses and features of pre-service teachers' reflective thinking: lack of teaching experience, lack of knowledge on students and teachers' identity dilemma.

Index Terms—reflective thinking, classroom discourse, conceptualization

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the terms of reflection are so popular in TEFL teacher education and development programs (Farrell, 2012). Many compliments are given to reflective teaching: it can improve teaching (Farrell, 2007), can make teachers more confident (Barlette, 1990), increase new comprehension (Laboskey, 1993) and so on. In this case, many programs on reflective thinking proceed worldwide. The objectives the teacher reflects are various. According to Akbari's (2010) Reflection Questionnaire, there are at least 42 items. However, in language classroom, discourse is an essential topic to research because it embodies two distinct meanings: the aim of teaching and the carrier of teaching. Thus, for a language teacher, the classroom discourse should be an unavoidable content of reflection. This study draws on a case study of 8 TEFL student teachers' reflection on classroom discourse in a middle school in China. It describes the main focuses they mention and analyzes the features of their reflective thinking and the reasons behind, based on the data collected from their reflective journals, interviews and classroom observations.

II. DEFINING REFLECTIVE THINKING

Reflection was initially proposed in education by Dewey. In his monograph *how we think* he put forward that "the challenge of learning is learning to think" (Lyons, 2010. p.11). Indeed, in his eyes, the aim of education is to teach students to think critically. In Dewey's words reflective thinking means "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (Dewey, 1933; as cited in Rodgers, 2002). It is apparent that reflective thinking is an inner dialogue in essence. Further, Dewey (1933) suggests six phrases across reflective thinking: suggesting; intellectualization; the use of hypothesis to initiate operations; the mental elaborations; testing hypothesis; actual action. Echoing Dewey's understanding, Schon (1987), Gagatsis & Patronis (1990), Lee (2005), Rodgers (2002) and many other scholars propose similar phrases of reflective thinking. Although a great number of differences exist among these phrases, there is the same thread throughout: name a problem; analyze the problem; solve the problem; put the solution into practice. It is necessary to mention the origin of the problem. Some think the problem comes from the experience, such as Dewey, Schon, Lee and Rodgers. They believe the problem emerges naturally when people communicate with the outside world. This phenomenon is called a situation of problem full of doubts. Others think it can be fixed initially, such as Gagatsis & Patronis. This article takes the first viewpoint, namely, the problem comes from experience. No matter how the initial steps are different, the final phrases of the problem are the same, that is, no end. According to Rodgers (2002), the last phrase in Dewey's view acts as experiment as well as experience (it is also the beginning step of a new reflective thinking). So reflective thinking is cyclical and of no end. The process of reflective thinking can be summarized like this: it begins with a situation of problems, proceeds in a rather equilibrium situation, continually develops in a situation of new problem and cyclically advances. So the functions of reflective thinking is to transform a situation "in which there is experienced obscurity, doubt, conflict, disturbance of some sort, into a situation that is clear, coherent, settled, harmonious" (Dewey, 1933. p.100). Another point should be mentioned that the problem is not only troubles, but also puzzles or other interested matters the reflective practitioner encounters in experience. After making clear the definition of reflective thinking, it is necessary to discuss the literature of researches on reflective thinking on TEFL classroom discourse.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many researches on reflective thinking about TEFL classroom discourse. Some talk about the focuses and the procedures the teacher should mention in reflection, such as Richards & Lockhart's (1996) monograph *Reflective*

Teaching in Second Language Classroom. In this book, the authors sketch out various topics the teacher need to reflect and present some guidelines, action researches and other useful points for reflecting the classroom discourse. However, the monograph doesn't provide one detailed empirical example. Even in practice, the number of systematic researches about reflective thinking on TEFL classroom discourse is rather limited. Among these published researches, a program in Israel is worthy of note. Orland-Barak&Yinon (2007) detailed this program based on a new EFL methods course titled *Classroom Discourse: Student teacher examine their practice*. In this program, student teachers are encouraged to reflect their classroom discourse and one aim of the program is to enhance their reflections at different phrases of reflective thinking. However, the purpose of this research is designed to understand whether student teachers connect CLT theories with their classroom practice. These kinds of researches mostly regard classroom discourse as an integrated performance of good teaching and ignore the details. Some researches pay attention to details, but merely focus on one point of classroom discourse, such as the use of L1 in the classroom (Orland-Barak & Yinon, 2005); codeswitching in the classroom (Macaro, 2001).

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN

A. Research Focuses

Situated in an EFL pre-service "reflective practicum" program in Southwest University in China, the current research tries to answer the following questions: (1) what are the focuses and the features of pre-service English teachers' reflective thinking on their classroom discourse? (2) what influences pre-service English teachers' reflective thinking on classroom discourse?

B. Research Subjects

There are 8 pre-service English teachers engaging in the study. The following presents their brief introductions.

TABLE I
MAIN INFORMATIONS ABOUT PARTICIPANTS

| number | Name | gender | Grade |
|--------|------|--------|--------|
| 1 | A | Female | Junior |
| 2 | Z | Female | Junior |
| 3 | Xin | Male | Senior |
| 4 | P | Female | Junior |
| 5 | Zh | Female | Senior |
| 6 | Hu | Female | Junior |
| 7 | W2 | Female | Junior |
| 8 | Su | Female | Junior |

All of them took teaching practice in the same middle school from September to December in 2012. Xin is the only male in the participants. Among 8 pre-service teachers, Zh and Xin took lessons in Senior classes while the others in Junior classes. All of them are very interested in this study and volunteer to engage in it.

C. Instrumentation

All the data examined in this paper were collected from three sources: reflective diary, semi- interview, classroom observation. Pre-service teachers' diary is the main data source. Semi-interview and classroom observation are ancillary data. According to the content of their diaries, we will invite them to clarify the ambiguous points. In the classroom observation, we make field notes or rapid transcriptions on the discourse episode in details, which is helpful to understand their diaries and their interviews. In some sense, interviews with the student teacher are helpful to promote reflection deeply and broadly.

D. Procedure

All the participants are required to write down at least three diaries on their classroom discourses during the practicum. Diary is an important and useful approach for teachers' reflective thinking and self-development (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p.68; Bailey et al.2009, p.48). Bailey et al. (2009, p.59) lists four advantages of reflective diaries: articulating puzzles and problems, venting frustration, stretching ourselves professionally and clarifying and realizing. Further, Liou (2001) suggests that EFL student teachers' reflection should be given some guidelines, so we provide one reflective diary template on classroom discourse with an appendix which illustrates why we reflect in this way. Aligning with the abovementioned definition of reflective thinking, the template is designed on five principles:

1. Name a problem clearly and try best to analyze or explain.
2. Try best to find out a clear solution and predict what you will do if facing the similar context in the future.
3. Before setting the problem, try best to describe the phenomenon in details.
4. When explaining the problem, try best to think why you explain it in this way.
5. Welcome to deliberate the same focus constantly.

The first two principles is only a whole-phrase circle of reflective thinking, and the last principle reminds student teachers of thinking the problem over constantly and cyclically. The third and the forth are based on Dewey's views and

Rodgers’ reframing. The phrase of naming the problem “demands that the individual continually ground his or her thinking in evidence and not overlook the important data that may not fit his or her evolving ideas (Rodgers, 2002)”. These evidence and important data begin with discreet observation and description in details. When explaining the problem, the teacher might make a spontaneous reasoning. This simple-minded analysis needs “active, persistent, and careful consideration (Dewey, 1933, p.9)”, so he or she need to reflect the belief behind their explanation.

Based on the five principles and the diary template, we get 36 reflective diaries from the student teacher in the end in total. Four of them volunteer to write down another 12 diaries. Besides, we, as mentors, attend every teacher’s lecture and make some field notes, but these field notes are merely ancillary to understand teachers’ diaries and interviews. We believe the problem should be noticed by the teachers themselves at first. After receiving and reading their reflective diaries, we mark the ambiguous points and make an semi-interview concerned the points. Additionally, the data of diaries and interviews are in Chinese. We translate all of them into English after collecting all the data. The number of all the data collected is shown below.

TABLE 2
THE NUMBER OF DATA COLLECTED

| Number | Name | Diary | Interview | Classroom Observation |
|----------|------|-------|-----------|-----------------------|
| 1 | A | 5 | 5 | 2 |
| 2 | Z | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3 | Xin | 6 | 4 | 3 |
| 4 | P | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| 5 | Zh | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| 6 | Hu | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| 7 | W2 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| 8 | Su | 8 | 1 | 4 |
| In total | | 36 | 24 | 17 |

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

A. *The Focuses of Pre-service Teachers’ Reflective Thinking on Discourse*

The contents of reflective thinking on discourse can be divided into two categories: the first is the knowledge of discourse. Johnson (1990, p.279) makes a detailed aspect: physiological aspect; interpersonal aspect; pedagogical aspect. The second is the sociocultural knowledge related to discourse such as discourse identity, cultural characteristic, and discourse control and so on. In the study, the main focuses of pre-service teachers’ reflective thinking on discourse are shown as below.

TABLE 3
THE FOCUSSES OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS’ REFLECTIVE THINKING ON DISCOURSE

| Knowledge of discourse | Problem | Frequencies in Diaries | In Total |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------|----------|
| physiological aspect (the physical features of teacher talk) | low voice | 14 | 40 |
| | pronunciation mistakes | 5 | |
| | not fluent expression | 7 | |
| | grammatical mistakes | 11 | |
| | unnatural English expression | 3 | |
| interpersonal aspect (this aspect is conducive to build, develop and maintain the relations among teachers and students) | less prompts | 7 | 7 |
| pedagogical aspect (it is the most important aspect, the knowledge of language are transferred through it) | dull assessments on students’ words | 8 | 48 |
| | too much repetition | 13 | |
| | use Chinese | 2 | |
| | inefficient feedback | 10 | |
| | inefficient words | 2 | |
| unclear instruction | 13 | | |

In the table, the first four high-frequency problems include low voice, too much repetition, grammatical mistakes and unclear instruction. The last three includes unnatural expression, the use of Chinese, and inefficient words. The total 11 points on discourse covers physiological aspect, interpersonal aspect and pedagogical aspect. On the interpersonal aspect, the student teachers don’t care about it. What’s more, they do not present any ideas about the sociocultural aspect.

The focuses are mostly paid on physiological aspect and pedagogical aspect in student teachers’ reflective diaries. For example, they write “low voice is not good for students”, “unclear instructions lead to lesson hindrance”. Further, one point should be pointed out that the problem of the use of Chinese appears in two teachers’ diaries and their ideas on it are different. The teacher A thinks that the use of Chinese is unsuitable and concludes that “in the future, I will try my best to use English totally” in the interview. Teacher W2 also mentions this problem, but does not regard it as a bad

thing because “for Junior students, they are too young and lack of English vocabulary, so if teaching in English totally is unsuitable, the teacher’s words might be difficult to understand”. She insists teaching both in English and Chinese. On her last lesson in practicum, she wrote that “the experienced teacher spoke English all the time in English class last time. Some students reflected that they could not understand her, so could not follow her, but they didn’t dare to tell her. In my class, whenever I think students can not understand, I would use Chinese. Several students say that they are more confident than before because they know all my words. I fell happy”. It is apparent that W2 does not agree with A. The other thing worthy of note is that all the problems are about the troubles in teaching. The following only presents the two problems pre-service teachers focus intensively: repetition and unclear instruction. Further, the features of their reflection will be elucidated as well as the influential factors on their reflection.

B. Findings

(1) conceptualization

conceptualization means that the pre-service teachers prefer to define, explain or solve the problem according to authority(Wang Rong,2012). They take authority’s idea as a self evident truth, such as the mentor’s words, the contents of the course book or the education policies. The following is two examples of conceptualization around the problem of “too much repetition” and “unclear instruction”.

Repetition

Repetition has been regarded as an useful strategy for modifying the classroom discourse (Richards & Lockhart, 1996, p.183). However, most of the student teachers think they should reduce repetition. Two teachers’ reflection data will be explained one by one.

Teacher Su

Teacher Su writes down repetition problem like:

“I shouldn’t repeat my sentences many times. Last time my mentor told me that. However, I can not help doing it because I am afraid my English is not good enough. Next time I would try my best to avoid it.” (source: Su 20120920D)

In this statement, Su expresses her guilty of not obeying the mentor’s words and regards too much repetition as her problem of discourse. She does not describe the immediate context and makes this judgment directly. However, according to the classroom observation, her repetitions occur frequently when the students are too noisy. In a sense, her repetition is necessary, which can confirm all the students can hear her words and keep the lesson going. After all, it is the right for every student to hear the teacher’s words clearly. Her wrong judgment on the problem comes from her dependence on the mentor. This dependent thought is proved in the interview again. The interview on her repetition shows below.

Extract 1

Interviewer: Why do you think your repetition is bad to students?

Su: When I took the micro-teaching last semester, my mentor gave me a suggestion that repetition is not good. Unfortunately, I made this mistake again.

Interviewer: Did your mentor give you the same advice on this lesson?

Su:No, she just advised me to be more confident and to manage the class more efficiently. I think my repetition can be avoided if I am more confident.

(source: Su 20120921I)

In Su’s words, she cites the mentor’s old suggestion to set the current problem. Even if the mentor’s suggestion is not discussed about repetition, she still associates it with her difficulty in teaching. Apparently, she defines the mentor’s words as a rigorous criterion for her problem on discourse. Her behavior is compatible with one of Locke’s Wrong Belief “the first is of those who seldom reason at all, but do and think according to the example of others, whether parents, neighbors, ministers, or who else they are pleased to make choice of to have an implicit faith in, for the saving of themselves the pains and troubles of thinking and examining for themselves. (cited from Dewey,1910,p.23)”. No doubt this dependence on authority influences the teachers’ judgment seriously. Dewey values judgment on the problem very much. His idea can be read clearly in this paragraph:

“a man of good judgment in a given set of affairs is a man in so far educated, trained, whatever may be his literacy. And if our schools turn out their pupils in that attitude of mind which is conducive to good judgment in any department of affairs in which the pupils are placed, they have done more than if they sent out their pupils merely possessed of vast stores of information, or high degrees of skill in specialized branches.”(Dewey, 1910, p.101)

In Dewey’s ideas, the ability of judging a problem is more important than that of literacy. It is regarded as a basic phrase of reflective thinking. He wrote “a question well put is half answered”(Dewey,1933,p.108). Further, only if the problem is decided will the teacher take the next step. The quality of the problem is the key for reflective thinking. However, Su does not name it considerately. She proposes the problem intuitively and did not mention the context. Her criterion for deciding the problem is the authority’s view-the mentor’s view. This phenomenon can be widely found in other teachers’ reflection.

Teacher Xin

Extract 2

1 T: Now let’s have a practice. Finish, finish the sentence. (on the PPT, there are two blank-filling sentences: His parents don’t allow him _____[go] with us; We don’t allow _____ here. However, “go” in the first sentence and

“here” in the second sentence do not appear on the screen, so the teacher read and write the two words again in the following.)

2 Ss: Silent.

3 T: GO, GO, HERE. (point at PPT)

4 Ss: To go, to go. (several students answer)

5 T: The first one?

6 Ss: To go.

7 T: Yes. To go. Allow somebody to do something. Number two?

8 Ss: Smoking.

9 T: Yes, smoking. allow somebody smoking something. And the last one, ... (the teacher continues.)

(source: Xin 20121129T)

This is an excerpt from Xin’s class. The teaching aim is that all the students can grasp the word “allow”. After class, Xin reflected the classroom discourse. According to his reflective diary, many problems appear. One prominent problem is many repetitions filled in his talk. The teacher writes like this “When some student gives me correct answer, I always repeat their words. Sometimes I think it is too verbose. I hope next time I can overcome this fault”. Here, “sometimes” means not all the repetitions are problems in his opinion, but he does not make a further illustration on it. Moreover, it is obvious that Xin decided to reduce inefficient words and avoid too much repetition. His reflective thinking begins with defining the problem, then evaluate this problem, finally make a solution. In the three short sentences, he just finished two phrases of reflective thinking: name the problem and solve it. It is apparent this thinking is lack of analysis phrase. Analysis means “clarifying the seemingly incoherent and disconnected facts after clearing up the problem” (Dewey, 1910, p.111). It is a core phrase of reflective thinking. His incoherent reflection just falls on the second phrase of spontaneous interpretation of the experience, Dewey described this step like this:

“[a person] may jump without weighing the grounds on which it rests; he may forgo or unduly shorten the act of hunting, inquiring; he may take the first ‘answer’, or solution.” (Dewey, 1933, p.10).

The above talks about the feature of student teachers’ reflection in reflection-on-action. The following will present an example in reflection-in-action.

unclear instructions

“unclear instructions” are proposed 13 times in total. Here is teacher A’s example below.

Teacher A

In the classroom observation, the researcher wrote down the field note like this:

“when the teacher said ‘Now, discuss the topic ‘my friend’ with your partner.’, students begins to discuss with their partner. After a while, the teacher asked ‘you know PARTNER?’. Some students near the teacher stopped to listen to the teacher, but others did not. Then the teacher continued to say ‘I’ll give you about five minutes’ in a louder voice. At this moment, more students mentioned the teacher’s words.” (source: A 20121107F)

Extract 3

Interviewer: In your diary, you talked about the problem about unclear instruction. Could you talk more about it?

A: yeah, I feel my instruction is not clear. Some students don’t follow my instruction after I make instructions. I must use simpler instructions next time.

Interviewer: What do you mean “simpler instruction”?

A: This Monday, In my class, I used an inefficient instruction, you know, I taught English in Class Two.

Interviewer: Yes.

A: When I asked students to talk the topic “my friends”, my instruction was complicated and not concise. A few students began to discuss after I instructed. When I added some more instructions, many students did not mention my words. Next time I will make a simpler one.

Interviewer: How do you make it simpler?

A: Maybe I can use shorter words or sentences.

(source: A 20121108F)

According to the field note, the problem teacher A has met is that her instructions are not mentioned by students. In teacher A’ words, her problem is unclear instruction and the solution focuses on the modification of the words and sentences. The careful analysis on the field note shows that her instruction did not occur at the moment the students are quiet and ready to listen enough. Her problem is partly to complicated sentences and partly to the noisy environment when giving instruction. It is easy to comb down her reflection thread: the problem is complicated instruction upon which students cannot catch, so a few students discuss with partner. The teacher made a spontaneous analysis by observing the students’ behavior in the action and took a solution of asking if they know the meaning of “partner”. It seems this reflection-in-action is perfect, but her judgment and analysis deviates, which leads to inappropriate solution. Compared with A’s solution, the other two pre-service teachers’ answers are much more abstract on “unclear instruction”. Su wrote down “I will do my best to present a clear instruction”, Xin wrote down “Next time I will attention the efficiency of my instruction”. Those solutions are hard to be tested in practice although it sounds reasonable. It is possible that they cannot solve the similar problem because they have not found out a specific measure.

To sum, conceptualization is one typical feature of student teachers’ reflection. Some characteristics of

conceptualization emerge during the phrases of these student teacher's reflective thinking. 1. The ideas from the authority become criteria for deciding and solving the problem. These criteria are be used in any situations and in any time in student teachers' reflection. 2. The student teachers often stop at spontaneous interpretation of the experience. This is similar to "reflect instinctively" proposed by Schon (1987). Although the conceptualization thinking influences the quality of reflection, the student teachers' attitude should be praised. For the teacher Su, she strives to connect her cognition with the practice and be aware of the importance of confidence as a teacher.

(2) Three reasons why student teachers' reflection is conceptualized

The abovementioned has discussed the focuses and feature of pre-service teachers' reflective thinking on classroom discourse. This section summarizes three main influential factors on it. The first one is the lack of teaching practice. The second is the lack of knowledge about the students. The third is their identity.

As a pre-service teacher, the most significant annoying thing is the lack of teaching practice. Because of the limited practice experience, they feel out of control when facing the incidents unexpected. Based on their reflection, incidents unexpected often leads to much repetitions, unclear instruction and other bad points in classroom discourse. As Rodgers (2002) said "the explanations that arise will come from a synthesis of the meaning derived from the current experience with that drawn from previous experience". Student teachers, lack of experience, means they lost one important teaching cognition resources for recourse compared with experienced teachers. In Wallace (1991, p.19)'s TEFL Teachers' Reflective Professional Development Model, it also proposes received knowledge are necessary for reflection. Tsui (2003) made a comparative study on the teaching cognition schemata between experienced teachers and novice teachers. The result shows that experienced teachers' cognition schemata is much more complicated. When they face the difficulty in class, they can draw a solution from their cognition and make an informed decision rapidly. Comparatively, pre-service teachers are nervous at the face of difficulties and are easy to make unsuitable reactions in the class.

As a new comer in a middle school, pre-service teachers' understanding on their students is rather limited. They don't know what language knowledge the students have grasped, and which teaching method the students prefer best. Their reflection is full of these puzzles. For example, W2's diary wrote, "when I ask students to answer my question, no one responds, so I think maybe they don't know my words, but I don't know which words they don't understand, and finally I translate all of my words into Chinese". From her reflection, the problem of "too much use of Chinese" comes from her lack of knowledge about the students.

Pre-service teachers' identity is in an embarrassed situation in that teacher identity and student identity converge together during the period of practicum. The two identities are in conflict, which require them to adjust flexibly and carefully. Although they are teachers in the class, they regard themselves as students on most occasions. During teaching, they will pay much attention to the mentor's facial expression on the last row in the classroom^①. After the class, they will ask for their mentors' suggestions in time. Of course, learning from more able teachers is necessary and beneficial. However, it influences their teaching if overloaded. Hu complained that her class was always being monitored by her mentors, which gave her uncomfortable feeling. The reason is that she thinks she is an independent teacher in the class and her teaching shouldn't be monitored every time. Her uncomfortable feeling influenced the classroom discourse deeply while being monitored. In her reflection on the problem of "inefficient feedback", she wrote, "I thought I must make some mistakes because the monitor looks very serious. I felt very nervous and hoped to end this class as soon as possible". Apart from her, some other pre-service teachers have similar feeling. Further, they perform in a lack of self esteem, which leads to lose the ability to control the lesson if they take the authority as the criterion of defining the problem. In some sense, these discourses are symbols of pre-services' periphery identity in language teaching because they don't establish a stable status in the class and often feel guilty at the first sight if meeting troubles in the classroom. Wang Chunguang (2007) thinks that the pre-service teacher wants legitimate position in a new environment, which stimulate them to struggle to win mentors' or supervisors' positive appraisal. This intention directs them to mention themselves too much and handicaps their quality of reflective thinking.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

A. Some Important Points

(1) As the abovementioned, the focuses of pre-service teachers' reflective thinking emerge with 11 points on the classroom discourse. Their reflective diaries and interviews are all full of self-blame. They are so eager to improve teaching and acquire a legitimate position in the community of English teaching that they put too much focuses on their own behavior. This anxiety promotes the teachers to reflect actively on one hand, but shades their eyes to pursue other evidences to analyze the problems.

(2) The features of pre-service teachers' reflective thinking on discourse are as following: in judging the problem, their reflection tends to be dependent on authorities; in analyzing the problem, their reflection is lack of collecting various evidences; in solving the problem, their reflection tends to be absolute or abstract. In fact, they often conclude the solution spontaneously. These features reflect that pre-service teachers' reflective thinking on discourse are full of conceptualization. The sources of conceptualized theories are various, such as the textbooks or the mentor.

^① In China, the mentor usually sits on the back row to observe the student teachers' teaching.

(3) The hidden reasons for conceptualization is lack of experiences, knowledge of students and the dilemma identity. Because of lack of experiences, student teachers' schemata are not enough to think broadly and deeply and deal with unexpected problems in teaching instantly. Owing to lack of knowledge of students, they don't know what instructions can be understood easily by the students. The dilemma identity leads to a tension between dependent growth and independent growth during the period of practicum.

B. Suggestions

As mentioned earlier, the student teachers concerned about physiological aspect and pedagogical aspects a lot in their reflection. Moreover, their reflections are conceptualized: depending on authorities and lack of the phrase of careful analysis. The hidden reasons include their small teaching schemata, their dilemma identity and a little knowledge about their students. However, it is hard to deny the functions of the authorities totally. After all, at the beginning of teaching, the teachers need a strong dependence, which can support them when they fall into troubles and resist the failure feeling. However, they should learn to face many troubles independently in the future. Some suggestions are shown with respect to the teacher educators and pre-service teachers in reflective practice.

(1) What the teacher educator does during practicum is to scaffold pre-teachers, not to provide suggestions directly. The teacher educator should assist pre-service teachers to be a thoughtful and critical thinker, not directly propose the measures. Since reflective thinking in practicum is the basis of teachers' professional development (Han Gang, 2011, p.40), the teacher educator should pay much attention on how to improve pre-service teachers' thinking. When they point out student teachers' fault, they need to direct them to think logically. Furthermore, they should be much more reflective on their instruction. It is no doubt that unreflective teacher educator is hard to cultivate reflective teachers. The teacher educator must be clear about their role in practicum period.

(2) Pre-service teachers should try best to know their students and enhance teaching schemata. Two points are necessary to mention. First, there is a wrong viewpoint that the knowledge of students and teaching can merely be grasped in practice as the public theories and experiences are enriched. Actually, the pedagogical lessons can provide them enough psychological and educational knowledge about students when they study in their University. These public knowledge should be digested and reflected in-depth before they enter into practicum. Second, they should fulfill any chance to know their students and teaching in practicum, such as chatting with students, getting students' information from their headmaster, asking help from experienced teachers etc.. To some extent, "face" is the most obstacles to hinder Chinese teachers to accumulate teachers' knowledge. In this study, most of pre-service teachers admit that asking for help is to present their weakness and lose their face. For them, the only way to know their students is limited to classroom teaching.

C. Recommendation for Further Research

There are some limitations in the study. On the research method, the further researches can combine quantitative investigation and qualitative methods. Moreover, pre-service teachers' reflective thinking ability can be traced along with teaching experience increasing. Teachers' professional development begins with the pre-service period and develops in in-service period, so a longitudinal research is quite meaningful. On research perspective, the further study can explore the students' viewpoints on teachers' reflection on classroom discourse systematically. After all, an ecological classroom is created by both of teachers and students.

APPENDIX 1

Basic principles for the semi-structured interviews

- (1) only ask the question with the interrogatives like "why", "how", "what".
- (2) Discuss around the reflective diaries.

APPENDIX 2

One example of teacher Su's reflective diary (original edition)

针对本节课的 retell 环节, 从我本身的话语里可以看出存在以下问题:

(1) 太多重复句了。就是在下指令或者让学生注意的时候, 不停地在重复同一句子。例如: ok, now 这些词。

分析原因: 首先肯定最重要的原因还是我本身的问题。当时很紧张, 所以就不停的重复句型来缓解紧张的情绪。

其次, 因为是初一的学生, 没有很好的学习习惯, 上课很吵闹, 所以很多学生就没有听到我的指令, 所以需要进一步的来重复刚才的指令, 这样才能让学生听懂。

具体改进: 对于重复的问题, 以后我会尽可能多避免, 在平时的说话当中就要尽力避免, 这样才能形成良好的习惯。

我可以等班上学生安静以后在进行下一步的指示, 这样就可以避免类似情况的发生, 或者一个眼神, 一个动作来示意给吵闹的学生, 让学生明白自己已经影响到了上课秩序。

-----Su 2012 年 11 月 11 日

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An Inquiry into Students' Application of Metacognitive Strategies in Reading Technical Materials

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Abstract—Metacognitive reading strategies are strategies that function to monitor or regulate cognitive strategies (Skehan, 1993). From questionnaire survey, research results unveil that out of all 28 reading strategies, the informants showed significant divergences in the adoption of eight reading strategies between the group of low- and high-reading competence level.

Index Terms—metacognitive strategies, reading comprehension, technical materials, Vietnam

I. INTRODUCTION

In English learning context at Saigon Technology University (STU), reading is the skill that is highlighted in technical English courses. Students are required to take the reading as the compulsory section of technical English courses and tests since it is believed that technical students have to fluently read English technical materials to improve and update knowledge of their specific subject areas. Although students have spent much time of their six courses of English learning in improving their reading competence, in fact some of them are still not very confident in their comprehension of English technical texts. Some students, nonetheless, have been successful in exploiting written English technical materials. There may be certain factors behind students' problems, but it is most likely that such unsuccessful readers students are not aware of the use of English reading strategies, whereas others are actively engaged in texts in meaningful ways by using strategies in their reading process. In such a context, there has been no research undertaken to investigate students' knowledge of reading strategies in English learning at Saigon Technology University (STU). This strongly provokes in the researcher a need to examine to what extent high performing students and low performing students at Saigon Technology University (STU) realize and utilize reading strategies in their English classes.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. What Is Reading?

Reading is an important receptive language skill since it enhances students' pool of information to augment the quality of the product of other language skills. Reading is viewed as "the process of getting linguistic information via print" (Widdowson, 1979); however, from cognitive standpoint, this process is a problem-solving task that is conducted in knowledge structures of the reader's brain (Bernhardt, 1991). In the classroom, reading is particularly crucial since readers tend to be addressed in their social roles rather than their individual ones (Wallace, 1992).

Reading is the journey on which readers interact with the text and map segments of the text into knowledge structures in their brain to decipher the meanings as Bush and Mildred (1970) view reading as "a thinking process whereby one gets meaning from symbols by relating them to his own meaning experience" (p. 10). The knowledge structures in their brain contain these meaning experiences from which readers build assumptions about the meaning of a word or a segment of the text, then retrieve more experiences to narrow down the meaning. Reading is thus defined by Goodman (1971) as a "psycholinguistic guessing game" (p. 35), which indicates that "the reader uses general knowledge of the world or of particular text components to make intelligent guesses about what might come next in the text [and] samples only enough of the text to confirm or reject these guesses" (Barnett, 1989, p. 13).

This view by Goodman (1971) also implies that in the reading process, readers should not only process the information bottom-up, namely traveling along the words of the text to construct the meaning, but also process the information top-down in an active role, from their world knowledge, decoding the author's intention and values

underlying all individual words. The active reader should realize “what the brain tells the eye is more important than what the eye tells the brain” (Smith, 1971). The active reader should also be interactive, producing the interaction between information through bottom-up decoding and information through top-down analysis (Eskey, 2002). The active reader also deciphers the text through the interaction between their prior knowledge and conceptual abilities and processing strategies (Coady, 1979). The role of prior knowledge in the interaction with graphemic features, syntactic feature, and intratextual features of the text is found in Bernhardt’s second language constructivist model (1986) which, however, incorporates metacognition component. Readers with metacognitive strategies not merely map their prior knowledge to the text to discern links among the elements of the text, but also “think[s] about how the reading process is working (metacognition)” (Barnett, 1989, p. 47). Through metacognitive strategies, readers diminish their dependence on the text and make the flow of understanding of the text smoother.

Teaching readers is more important than teaching texts (Hass and Flower, 1988). To become sustainably effective readers, students need to be trained to build reading strategies rather than being immersed in accumulating vocabulary and structures from a variety of texts. With the accent on reading as the process rather than the product, students should be equipped with reading strategies to decode text types, registers, and cultural elements underlying the text. The next section of this literature review will revolve around metacognitive strategies.

B. Reading Strategies and Metacognitive Reading Strategies

Teachers’ reading instruction tends to be far from teaching reading strategies. Rather, teachers involve their students in practicing one skill, “silent reading”, and in answering questions which they believe are “comprehension questions”. This practice entails the first two levels of Bloom’s (1956) taxonomy: knowledge and comprehension. Nonetheless, it is believed that students should learn how to read effectively and strategically reflect on reading through the use of strategies in order to transcend these two levels to analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Range of strategies exist that can be introduced into language teaching as well as reading instruction to assist students with their reading performance and achievement. From Stern’s (1992) perspective, there are five key language learning strategies, including Management and Planning strategies, Cognitive strategies, Communicative-Experiential strategies, Interpersonal strategies, and Affective strategies. O’Malley and Chamot (1990) categorized language learning strategies into three subcategories: Metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, and socioaffective strategies. Strategy for reading is defined by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) to be composed of the three components: 1) intentional, carefully planned techniques by which readers manage their reading process, 2) actions and procedures that the readers utilize while working directly with a text, and 3) fundamental support mechanisms intended to aid their readers in deciphering the text.

One of the definitions of metacognition that is taken into consideration comes from Flavell (1976, p. 232), who views metacognition as “one’s knowledge concerning one’s own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them”. Based on Flavell’s (1976) perspective, a more succinct formulation was constructed by Baird (1990): “Metacognition refers to the knowledge, awareness and control of one own learning” (p. 184). Metacognitive development therefore can be depicted as a development in one’s metacognitive competencies or the motion to greater knowledge, awareness, and control of one’s learning. Veenman (2012) also distinguishes metacognitive skills from metacognitive knowledge. The former denotes the regulation of cognitive processes; the latter, on the contrary, relates to the knowledge about the cognitive system. Also according to Veenman (2012), learning outcomes are determined by metacognitive skills, whereas the acquisition of metacognitive skills necessitates metacognitive knowledge as a crucial precursor.

Metacognitive awareness is viewed as the crucial factor for effective strategic reading (Yüksel and Yüksel, 2012). Metacognitive strategies, through their interaction with and regulation of cognitive strategies, can contribute to self-regulated learning. Strategic learners in general and strategic readers in particular may get stuck during the top-down process of mapping their prior knowledge to the elements and segments of the text, so need to read strategically with emergent metacognitive strategies to solve problems on the reading journey. McDonough (2011) deems metacognitive strategies as strategies for structuring particular solutions to specific problems and contends that this concept should be extended beyond the cognitive to the affective and social-interactive dimensions. McDonough (2011) also highlights its superiority over competing models of strategy adoption in English learning.

According to Skehan (1993), metacognitive reading strategies are strategies that function to monitor or regulate cognitive strategies, which encompass:

a) Planning for reading is the way that the readers set the reading aims or goals, and then keep aims or goals in mind, figure out what needs to be accomplished, discern reading task expectations, plan steps or actions prior to reading, and finally overview texts prior to reading.

b) Monitoring of comprehension is checking if comprehension takes place, checking comprehension when encountering new information, controlling concentration or attention during reading, noticing when confusion emerges, and double-checking comprehension when coming across ambiguous information.

c) Evaluation of reading is accessing levels of text difficulty and reading demands, engaging self-questioning while reading, and appraising accuracy in reading such as through task completion performance.

(Skehan, 1993)

Metacognitive strategies encompass five elements: planning-evaluation, directed attention, person knowledge, mental translation, and problem solving (Rahimi and Katal, 2012). Metacognitive strategies, according to Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002), encompass three typologies. The first typology is global strategies including building purpose in mind and previewing the text. The second typology is problem-solving strategies including adapting reading speed and rereading the text. The third typology is support strategies including utilizing dictionaries and taking notes.

Using a sample of 423 students at an American community college, Munro (2011) sought to investigate the disparity in the use of metacognitive reading strategies between a group of students in a developmental reading course and a group of students in a college-level English course. The research findings revealed that the two groups equally resorted to problem solving strategy; nonetheless, the group of students in a college-level English course demonstrated higher frequency of using global and support strategies than the group of students in a developmental reading course.

To understand the role cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies in learners' reading performance, Mehrdad, Ahghar, and Ahghar (2012) conducted an investigation into one hundred and eighty undergraduate students majoring in English from Azad University at three different English competence levels – elementary, intermediate, and advanced – which were classified through Michigan test. Experimental group (EG) and control group (CG) were randomly selected from each level and put through the research process. The findings from the analysis through independent samples t-tests denoted that cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies merely had significant impact on intermediate learners' reading performance, but did not have significant impact on elementary and advanced learners' reading performance. These results can be explained by the fact that elementary learners have limited pool of vocabulary and structures, so metacognitive strategies map their world knowledge into the reading text as if mapping to the black hole. Learners of advanced level, on the contrary, have rich pool of themes, vocabulary and structures, so can move smoothly through the reading text with less frequent resort to metacognitive strategies.

Through a quasi-experimental research with the participation of a contrast group and a treatment group from the population of EFL learners in Iran, Aghaie and Zhang (2012) found that four months of metacognitive strategy-based instruction contributed to the improvement in the treatment group in comparison with the contrast group in terms of reading comprehension and reading strategy transfer.

Via the survey of reading strategies in academic reading among Turkish university students, Yüksel and Yüksel (2012) sought to investigate their use of global, problem-solving and support reading strategies. The research findings reveal highest frequency of problem-solving strategies use and lowest frequency of supporting strategies use in students' process of academic reading.

Cesa (2012) also researched learners' use of metacognitive strategies, however, in decoding nonnarrative social studies discourses. The research aimed to discern the disparity in use of metacognitive strategies between competent readers and struggling readers. A random selection assigned participants into one of the three groups: reader response group, reciprocal teaching group, or control group. Research findings showed that for competent readers, metacognitive development was found highest in reciprocal teaching group, and for struggling readers, metacognitive development was found highest in reader response group.

In Akkaya's (2012) research into the interconnection between learners' level of metacognitive reading strategy use and their critical thinking disposition, 420 students from Department of Turkish Language Teaching, Buca Faculty of Education, Dokuz Eylül University were invited as participants of the research. The positive correlation between use of metacognitive reading strategies and critical thinking skills was corroborated from the data collated through the questionnaire survey.

On a sample of one hundred and forty-one EFL learners, Rahimi and Katal (2012) examined whether perceived utilization of metacognitive strategies is good predictor of podcasting use for English learning. The analysis of the data from the questionnaire survey divulged that there was the significant correlation between podcasting use and metacognitive strategies awareness. The results also showed that except mental translation strategies, other elements of metacognitive strategies (planning-evaluation, directed attention, person knowledge, and problem solving) positively related to podcasting use, especially the strongest linkage was encountered with problem solving strategies.

The understandings of fundamental concepts are presented in this review which provides a framework within which this research is underpinned. First, ways of viewing reading are looked at. The nature of reading entails readers' prior knowledge, conceptual abilities and process strategies. For a better understanding of reading process, the three approaches to reading - bottom-up, top-down, and interactive approaches are depicted with their features and teaching implications.

Definitions of strategies and reading strategies are then revisited. An awareness of reading strategies is a part of readers' metacognitive knowledge. Reading strategies are also pointed out to be tools which enable readers to immerse themselves more actively and proactively in reading process. It is also noted that teaching reading strategies should be a priority in reading classes.

There exist a range of strategies for readers to enhance their comprehension. In sequence, the focus on metacognitive strategies resulted in a discussion on metacognition, which is seen as a form of cognition which imposes active control over cognitive process. From the findings of the prior empirical studies, the positive interconnection between metacognitive strategies and reading performance and achievement has been established.

In a nutshell, the results of the research studies within the review of related literature denotes that there is a relationship between metacognition and reading comprehension, leading to an emphasis on teaching methods that encourage a incessant focus of metacognitive reading strategies in English reading curriculum.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This research uses a survey to investigate metacognitive reading strategies of first-year students. Quantitative approach was employed to gather data. To collect quantitative data, first a set of questionnaires are utilized to collate detailed information on strategies that students employed in reading texts. Then the reading test is administered and its scores are used to cluster students into high English proficiency and low English proficiency groups. Previous studies show that these methods were also employed to examine the use of metacognitive strategies as exhibited in Table 1.

TABLE 1.
INSTRUMENTS USED IN PREVIOUS STUDIES ON SCHEMA AND LANGUAGE SKILL ACQUISITION

| Author(s) | Focus of the research | Instruments used |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Munro (2011) | Learners' adoption of metacognitive reading strategies | Survey questionnaire |
| Aghaie and Zhang (2012) | Role of metacognitive strategies in reading comprehension and reading strategy transfer | Quasi-experimental design with participants from a contrast group and a treatment group, questionnaire adapted from Chamot and O'Malley's (1994) metacognitive strategies framework |
| Mehrdad, Ahghar, and Ahghar (2012) | Role of cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies in EFL learners' reading performance | Experimentation with experimental group (EG) or control group (CG) at the three diverse English competency level – elementary, intermediate, and advanced |
| Yüksel and Yüksel (2012) | Learners' use of global, problem-solving and support reading strategies | Questionnaire survey |
| Cesa (2012) | Competent learners and struggling learners' use of metacognitive strategies in comprehending nonnarrative social studies discourses | Experimentation with comprehension test |
| Akkaya (2012) | Linkage between metacognitive reading strategy use and critical thinking | The California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI) and the Metacognitive Reading Strategies Questionnaire (MRSQ) |
| Rahimi and Katal (2012) | Relationship between metacognitive strategies and podcasting use for English learning | Questionnaire survey |

B. Population and Sampling

592 first-year students at Saigon Technology University (STU) who started technical English courses in the academic year of 2012-2013 is the target population of this research. At the start, the students were divided into two classes (namely, Class T1A and Class T1B) according to their performance on English placement test. To be suitable to the English classroom size, the students in each class were clustered into seven groups, namely, Group T1A1, T1A2, T1A3, T1A4, T1A5, T1A6, T1A7, T1B1, T1B2, T1B3, T1B4, T1B5, T1B6, and T1B7. A stratified random selection is used in the sampling process of this study. Two groups in each class - Class T1A and Class T1B - are randomly selected, so altogether four groups are immersed in this research. Furthermore, from the ethical consideration, the names of the groups and the participants' personal data remain anonymous. As a result, a total of 128 first-year students are invited to participate in this survey.

C. Instruments

According to Isaac and Michael (1995, p. 105), "Instrumentation is the process of selecting or developing measuring devices and methods appropriate to a given evaluation problem". In this research, the instruments used for data collection include questionnaire, reading test, and interview. This research is designed to examine students' application of metacognitive reading strategies. Since most reading strategies are unobservable, a questionnaire is used as a major research instrument to elicit data from informants. Anderson (1998) maintains that the questionnaire had become one of the most useful means of data collection. Data for this research is therefore collated through a questionnaire adapted from Mokhtari and Sheorey's (2002) survey of reading strategies (SORS).

In recent years, some studies have introduced questionnaires as powerful instruments in measuring learners' metacognitive awareness in reading processes. Taraban et al. (2004) introduced metacognitive reading strategy questionnaire (MRSQ) which seeks to explore reading comprehension (analytic-cognitive component) and academic performance (pragmatic-behavioral component). Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) introduced Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSQ) to gauge native English speakers' metacognitive awareness of reading processes.

With the intention to measure ESL students’ metacognitive awareness and perceived use of reading strategies, Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) revised Mokhtari and Reichard’s (2002) Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSII) into Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS), mainly through rewording so that non-native English speakers can understand questions more readily. Global strategies, problem-solving strategies, and support strategies are the three dimensions in Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS). Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) is used in this research as a conceptual framework to appraise the use of metacognitive reading strategies by first-year students at Saigon Technology University (STU) since the items in the SORS questionnaire are simple and easy for students to understand, and since the strategy items used in the SORS cover a wide array of metacognitive strategies involving the reading process such as planning for reading, monitoring of comprehension, and evaluation of reading.

Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) view the SORS as an effective instrument for helping learners to “develop a better awareness of their reading strategies, for helping teachers assess such awareness, and for assisting learners in becoming constructively responsive readers”. The SORS consists of 30 items under three dimensions of reading strategies: Global strategies, Problem-Solving strategies and Support strategies. Ranging from 5 (always), 4 (usually), 3 (sometimes), 2 (occasionally) to 1 (never or almost never), a 5-point Likert scale is used to measure the frequency of the strategy use. The following is a brief depiction of each dimension of the SORS and the number of items within each dimension. Global strategies are those deliberate, thoroughly planned techniques readers use to monitor their reading, such as having an aim in mind, previewing the structure of the text (13 items). Problem-solving strategies are the actions which readers utilize in the process of working directly with the text such as adapting the speed of reading when the text becomes difficult or easy, guessing the unfamiliar words, and rereading the text to deepen understanding (8 items). Support strategies are fundamental support mechanisms to help readers understand the text such as using dictionaries and taking notes (9 items) (Mokhtari and Sheorey, 2002, pp. 3-4).

The Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) is used in this research as a main instrument because it emphasizes the role of metacognitive strategies in reading comprehension, which fits the conceptual framework of this research.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The responses to the survey questionnaire are clustered into four parts: Global strategies, Problem-Solving strategies, Support strategies, and Overall. The tables portray the comparison of the strategy use between the students in high- and low-proficiency groups by using an independent-sample *t*-test with the statistically significant difference at .05 level.

A. Global Strategies (GLOB)

To examine the differences in the Global strategy use between high-reading proficiency and low-reading proficiency students, the mean, the standard deviation, *t*-values, and *p*-values of these strategies are computed as presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2.
DIFFERENCES IN RESPONDENTS’ USE OF INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES IN GLOB CATEGORY

| Strategy item | Reading proficiency | M | SD | T | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---------------|---------------------|------|------|--------|-----------------|
| GLOB 1 | High | 3.48 | 0.85 | - 1.08 | 0.16 |
| | Low | 3.71 | 1.02 | | |
| GLOB 2 | High | 3.39 | 1.37 | - 0.26 | 0.82 |
| | Low | 3.52 | 1.14 | | |
| GLOB 3 | High | 3.38 | 1.16 | 0.42 | 0.47 |
| | Low | 3.31 | 1.12 | | |
| GLOB 4 | High | 3.26 | 1.08 | 2.07 | 0.18 |
| | Low | 2.91 | 1.37 | | |
| GLOB 5 | High | 4.05 | 1.06 | 1.49 | 0.01 |
| | Low | 3.42 | 1.24 | | |
| GLOB 6 | High | 3.88 | 0.84 | 1.73 | 0.00 |
| | Low | 3.19 | 1.17 | | |
| GLOB 7 | High | 3.62 | 1.25 | 2.36 | 0.01 |
| | Low | 2.58 | 1.13 | | |
| GLOB 8 | High | 3.87 | 1.32 | - 1.85 | 0.04 |
| | Low | 4.24 | 0.68 | | |
| GLOB 9 | High | 3.69 | 1.14 | 0.83 | 0.36 |
| | Low | 3.42 | 1.18 | | |
| GLOB 10 | High | 4.24 | 0.73 | 0.46 | 0.43 |
| | Low | 4.11 | 0.86 | | |
| GLOB 11 | High | 3.86 | 0.89 | 0.81 | 0.27 |
| | Low | 3.57 | 1.07 | | |
| GLOB 12 | High | 2.90 | 1.09 | 0.48 | 0.58 |
| | Low | 2.68 | 1.27 | | |

Predicated on the individual strategy item analysis, three strategy items (25% of the Global strategies) which were in statistically significant difference between the high and the low groups were “using prior knowledge” (item 5, *p* = .01),

“using text features, e.g., tables, figures” (item 6, $p = .00$), and “using context clues, e.g., first, but” (item 7, $p = .01$). No significant divergences were discerned in the adoption of other nine remaining strategy items between the two groups.

Nonetheless, the result of frequency average demonstrates that students in high-reading proficiency group were cognizant of these strategies and most of them used these strategies at the high level of frequency, such as “using typographical aids, e.g., bold face, italics” (item 8, $M = 3.87$), “checking one’s understanding of new information” (item 9, $M = 3.69$), “predicting the text content” (item 10, $M = 4.24$), “confirming prediction” (item 11, $M = 3.86$). On the other hand, albeit the students in the low-reading proficiency group were also cognizant of these strategies, the students in high group reported using most of the Global strategies more frequently than those in the low group. The findings reveal that there were nine strategy items (75% of the Global strategies) that the students in high-proficiency group employed more frequently than the students in the low one. Furthermore, the result of frequency average also displays that the students in high group were the high level users of this strategy category while the students in the low one were at the medium level of strategy usage.

B. Problem-solving Strategies (PROB)

To appraise the divergences in the Problem-Solving strategy use between high-reading proficiency and low-reading proficiency students, the mean, the standard deviation, t-value, and p-value of these strategies are calculated as exhibited in Table 3.

TABLE 3.
DIFFERENCES IN RESPONDENTS’ USE OF INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES IN PROB CATEGORY

| Strategy item | Reading proficiency | M | SD | t | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---------------|---------------------|------|------|------|-----------------|
| PROB 13 | High | 3.38 | 0.77 | 0.09 | 0.83 |
| | Low | 3.32 | 1.06 | | |
| PROB 14 | High | 4.11 | 0.72 | 2.37 | 0.01 |
| | Low | 3.39 | 1.18 | | |
| PROB 15 | High | 3.79 | 0.91 | 0.42 | 0.46 |
| | Low | 3.52 | 1.18 | | |
| PROB 16 | High | 3.86 | 1.16 | 0.48 | 0.72 |
| | Low | 3.63 | 1.06 | | |
| PROB 17 | High | 4.27 | 0.82 | 1.83 | 0.03 |
| | Low | 3.58 | 1.14 | | |
| PROB 18 | High | 3.91 | 1.13 | 2.81 | 0.00 |
| | Low | 3.27 | 0.85 | | |
| PROB 19 | High | 3.81 | 0.88 | 1.57 | 0.21 |
| | Low | 3.17 | 1.27 | | |

As regards the individual strategy item analysis in the table, purely two strategy items (29% of the Problem-Solving strategies) were found significantly different between the high and the low-proficiency group. These were “adjusting reading speed” (item 14, $p = 0.01$) and “guessing meaning of unknown words or phrases” (item 18, $p = 0.00$). No significant differences were observed in the adoption of other five remaining strategy items between the two groups. However, the result of frequency average indicates that the students in the high group used all Problem-Solving strategies more frequently than the students in the low one.

Research findings furthermore divulge that the strategies which the high-reading proficiency students used were viewed as specifically focused strategies when problems arise in comprehending textual information. Thus, for surmounting their comprehension difficulties, besides the two above strategies, they also utilized other strategies such as “reading slowly and carefully” (item 13, $M = 3.38$), “pausing and thinking about the text” (item 15, $M = 3.79$), “visualizing information while reading” (item 16, $M = 3.86$), “re-reading for better understanding” (item 17, $M = 4.27$), and “getting back when losing concentration” (item 19, $M = 3.81$). On the contrary, the students in low-reading proficiency group apparently lacked their ability in using these strategies appropriately and effectively when comprehension failure transpired.

C. Support Strategies (SUP)

The divergences in the Support strategy use between high-reading proficiency and low-reading proficiency students are displayed through the mean, the standard deviation, t-value, and p-value of these strategies (Table 4).

TABLE 4.
DIFFERENCES IN RESPONDENTS' USE OF INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES IN SUP CATEGORY

| Strategy item | Reading proficiency | M | SD | t | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---------------|---------------------|------|------|--------|-----------------|
| SUP 20 | High | 2.63 | 1.08 | - 0.47 | 0.48 |
| | Low | 2.82 | 1.21 | | |
| SUP 21 | High | 3.18 | 1.16 | - 0.57 | 0.43 |
| | Low | 3.49 | 1.05 | | |
| SUP 22 | High | 2.24 | 1.18 | - 0.26 | 0.81 |
| | Low | 2.37 | 1.32 | | |
| SUP 23 | High | 3.52 | 1.29 | - 0.14 | 0.86 |
| | Low | 3.58 | 1.37 | | |
| SUP 24 | High | 2.82 | 1.27 | 0.08 | 0.89 |
| | Low | 2.76 | 1.14 | | |
| SUP 25 | High | 3.34 | 1.12 | 1.07 | 0.00 |
| | Low | 2.58 | 1.16 | | |
| SUP 26 | High | 1.67 | 1.04 | - 0.65 | 0.37 |
| | Low | 1.94 | 0.82 | | |
| SUP 27 | High | 2.41 | 1.08 | - 2.09 | 0.02 |
| | Low | 3.38 | 1.36 | | |
| SUP 28 | High | 3.09 | 1.37 | 1.34 | 0.04 |
| | Low | 2.62 | 1.22 | | |

As regards the individual strategy item analysis in the table, three strategy items (33% of Support strategies), “going back and forth in the text” (item 25, $p = .00$), “translating English into Vietnamese” (item 27, $p = 0.02$), and “thinking in both English and Vietnamese” (item 28, $p = 0.04$) were significantly different between the two groups. No significant differences were discerned in the implementation of other seven remaining strategy items.

The frequency result unveils that the students in low-reading proficiency group reported using six strategies (67% of Support strategies) more often than those in the high-reading proficiency group, the use of Support strategies for both groups was in the lower end of the medium level of frequency. Therefore, it can be inferred that STU first-year students in both groups of proficiency seemed to lack effective use of some metacognitive strategies which are deemed more difficult and skilled than the others such as “taking notes while reading” and “paraphrasing for better understanding”. They should be trained in using these strategies.

D. Synthesis of Three Strategy Categories

The analysis of the differences in the adoption of reading strategies in terms of category and overall between high and low proficiency students involves the mean, the standard deviation, t-value, and p-value of these strategies as shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5.
DIFFERENCES IN RESPONDENTS' USE OF STRATEGY CATEGORIES

| Category & Overall | Reading proficiency | M | SD | T | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------------------|---------------------|------|------|--------|-----------------|
| GLOB | High | 3.72 | 0.26 | 1.37 | 0.19 |
| | Low | 3.46 | 0.48 | | |
| PROB | High | 3.81 | 0.29 | 2.51 | 0.01 |
| | Low | 3.52 | 0.14 | | |
| SUP | High | 2.86 | 0.67 | - 0.18 | 0.66 |
| | Low | 2.94 | 0.45 | | |
| OVERALL | High | 3.41 | 0.57 | 1.25 | 0.14 |
| | Low | 3.29 | 0.43 | | |

The results exhibit no significant difference between students in high and low proficiency group for the strategy use under GLOB and SUP category, as well as the Overall since they show greater p -value than .05. The mere significant difference in strategy use between the high group ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 0.29$) and the low group ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.14$) is under PROB category; $t(12) = 2.51$, $p = .01$. The significant difference of PROB category means either that STU students who reported more frequent use of Problem-Solving strategies show better reading comprehension competence than those who reported less frequent use of Problem-Solving strategies, or that the STU students who showed better reading comprehension competence reported more frequent use of Problem-Solving strategies than those who showed worse reading comprehension competence.

V. CONCLUSION

Divergences in the adoption of each individual strategy between the two groups in tables 2, 4, and 6 indicate interesting results. Out of all 28 reading strategies, the participants showed a significant difference in the use of eight reading strategies between the group of low- and high-reading proficiency level, for example, “using context clues, e.g., first, but”, “guessing meaning of unknown words and phrases”, and “going back and forth in the text”. The high-reading proficiency group reported using seven out of eight strategies more frequently than the low-proficiency group did. Interestingly, nonetheless, the only strategy in significant difference that the low-proficiency group reported using more

frequently than the high-proficiency group was “translate into Vietnamese”. This strategy is a typical strategy that low-reading proficiency English learners use frequently, particularly when reading. Low-reading proficiency English learners rely much on word-for-word translation. On the contrary, high-proficiency readers try to avoid literal translation and they try to guess meaning of the unknown words through linguistic clues. Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) depict that low-proficiency readers use translating more frequently than high-proficiency readers do and sometimes it can slow the learners down, forcing them to go back and forth constantly between a native language and a target language.

As research findings denote, STU first-year students utilized metacognitive reading strategies at medium level. They frequently employed certain types of strategies and some specific strategies. In addition, there were significant differences in the use of Problem-Solving strategies and the use of eight strategies as individual strategy items between the students in two proficiency groups. On the other hand, the results point that the students in high-reading proficiency group reported using 19 of the total 28 strategies (68%) more frequently than those in low group. Thus, in spite of many factors that could encourage and hinder the students’ reading, it seems to infer, to a certain extent that using proper metacognitive reading strategies may contribute to the students’ success in reading performance.

As in every empirical research, limitations of this study have been discerned (Luu, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2012d, 2013a, 2013b). This study was conducted on 592 first-year students at Saigon Technology University (STU) only through non-random sampling approach. Therefore, the research findings can be utilized in this university merely or in other schools with similar conditions with caution.

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Cultural Metaphor and Translation Strategies in English and Chinese Animal Idioms

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Abstract—Idiom is an important part of language. Thanks to the intimate relationship with animals, there are a large amount of animal-related idioms in human language. Human tend to express different emotions and reflect some social phenomena in certain times with the help of animals. As a result, most of idioms which include animals are terse but concise, short but comprehensive. A lot of animal idioms are found in English and Chinese language. However, since there are great differences in history, culture, geographical environment, fairy tale, custom, religion and mode of thinking between England and China, people who speak English and people who speak Chinese as their native language have different ideas for the same animals. So do the animal associations. Therefore, there will be different cultural metaphors in English and Chinese idioms. These cultural differences can be divided into three groups: conflict of cultural meaning between English and Chinese animal idioms and cultural exclusiveness of English or Chinese animal idioms, which lead to great trouble in translating. Combined with a large number of examples, this paper aims to analyze characteristics, differences, and reasons of animal idiom from the perspectives of conceptual metaphor and try to probe into some suitable translation strategies when translators are facing a variety of difficulties, whether direct translation or changes animal in English (Chinese) idiom with another animal in Chinese (English), so as to meet the target of retaining the original meaning.

Index Terms—animal idioms, cultural metaphor, cultural difference, translation strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

In mechanics people sometimes cannot observe a system without altering it. Linguists have altered language system and have created linguistic metaphors that are indeed be readily and widely used to in everyday language use, on the Internet. David Hawkes & John Minford's translation work *The Story of the Stone* (1973-1986, 1979-1987) have set the directions of metaphor research for years to come. They collected sets of organized cultural metaphorical language data that reflect conventional thought structures in human mind. After learning English years after years, I have found that people speaking English and people speaking Chinese have different thought structures and moods about many animals. For example, Chinese people identify dog as negative while English-speakers see it as positive, which arouse my interest in studying how western and Chinese people express animal idioms and their thought structures. As idiom is the pith of language and bears a thick ethnical cultural atmosphere, a deep culture as well as a long history, I treated animal idiomatic expressions from *The Story of the Stone* as if they indeed pervade our lives.

Till now, many scholars around the world have deeply studied this topic. Experts in China have probed into connotation of common animals such as cat, dog, and horse or animals that western people are more familiar with. In *English Idioms and Their Cultural Origin*, Li Yuping (2008, p.102-110) fully analyzed the connotation of pets and listed many examples. Editor group in Xiamen University collected 90 idioms whose connotations are connected with dog, and 80 with horse, 60 with cat, and compiled them in *Comprehensive English Idiom Dictionary* (Liu Xianbing, et.al, 2006). For the classification of animal idioms, one Chinese scholar Luo Shiping (2006) has divided animal idioms into four categories in his book *The Research of Idioms*. They are land animal idioms, flying bird idioms, aquatic animal idioms and insect idioms. Professor Ping Hong & Zhang Guoyang (2000) assorted animal idioms into noun idioms and verb idioms in *English Idioms and England and American Culture*. What's more, Chinese language experts have discussed many methods to study idioms. Among them, some popular methods are comparison of English and Chinese, metaphor understanding, context learning, origin tracing and translation comparison and contrast. For example, in *Language and Culture---The Comparison of English and Chinese Culture and Chinese and English Idioms*, written by Deng Yanchang & Liu Runqing (1989), a comparing and contrasting culture difference has been adopted to study metaphor among English and Chinese animal idioms. Professor Zhuang Hecheng (2002) utilized origin-tracing method in his book *Tracing the Origin of English Idioms*.

Early linguists mainly concentrated on the assortment of idiom origin and description of idiom expressing function. One of the representatives is linguist Logan Pearsall (1925) who regarded animal idioms as a part of idioms and divided animal idioms according to their communicative functions. He thought animal idioms can be used to express feelings, attitudes, will, anger, curse and so on. Other linguists assorted animal idioms on the basis of animals' behaviors. Christine Ammer (2013) divided animal idioms into pet (like dog and cat) idioms, bird idioms, pasture-related idioms, park animal idioms and underwater animal idioms. Prof. Smith once said among all the animals, dog and horse play the most important role in animal idioms. Owing to the impact of system-functional linguistics, Australian linguist Fernando (1996) and Kramsch (2000) discussed the function of animal idioms during communication. In *Patterns of Culture*, Mr. Benedict (1934) regarded cultural meaning of animal idioms can be indicated in three layers: surface layer, middle layer, and deep layer. What the surface layer culture animal idioms transmits is material culture, including all tangible and touchable material and intellectual products, which are reflected in architecture, clothing, diet, tools and so on. What the middle layer culture animal idioms mainly display is institutional culture, such as system, law and regulation, manner and custom. What the deep layer culture animal idiom implies is intellectual culture. It is manifested by way and product people produces through thinking activity. It contains values, way of thinking, aesthetic taste, and habit of thinking, morality, religion and philosophy.

A. Definitions

Metaphor is a popular concept for scholars at home and abroad. Unlike simile, metaphor often hides its real meaning. Aristotle (1984) defined metaphor as follows: expressing meaning by using words which are used to refer to other things. He believed that metaphor was a rhetorical tool, which was mainly used in literary, and was especially widely applied in poetry. "On the basis of some common features of the two things, speakers do not directly identify them while depending on readers to understand the meaning, known as metaphor" This sentence is derived from *English Rhetoric* written by Xie Zujun (1981).

Scholars in our country have already cited the concept---"cultural metaphor", but no one has ever defined it. As a concept, cultural metaphor is only defined by Dr. Martin J.Gannon (2001), a professor from Colombia University, author of *Cultural Metaphor: Readings, Research, Translation and Commentary*. In Gannon's opinion, cultural metaphors is a unique or distinctive customs, phenomenon or activity in one country or culture, this custom, phenomenon or activity is accepted by the vast majority of people and it is cultural metaphor that distinguishes them from other peoples.

Idiom generally refers to phrases which are commonly used together with a specific form. Its meaning can't be understood by speculation of single words. Idiom is the carrier of culture and the essence of language, and animal idiom is even a wonderful flower (miracle) with dazzling shine of language. Usually, it includes sayings and proverbs, proverbs, slang, jargon. Known by many people, animal idioms are idioms which contain animal words. Animals mentioned in this thesis are almost common animals in everyone's daily life.

B. Research Significance

There is no denying that animals in idioms not only represent animal themselves, they also show readers characteristics of their own culture. Studying animal idioms can help people who speak English and people who speak Chinese know each other's culture better. Therefore, translators who are responsible for exactly expressing another language most people are unfamiliar with in their mother tongue in order to make more civilians understand the correct meaning of animal idioms play an important role during the process. The quality of translation directly decides the degree of understanding another culture. So, there is a need to deeply probe into the topic.

C. Research Content

Dream of the Red Chamber is a famous classical literature with highly ideological content and artistic quality. It uses a large amount of expressive spoken language, dialect words and lexical meaning as well as the idiom, proverb and Xiehouyu which are full of thick life breath, comprehensively depicts the rise and fall of a noble family in the feudal society, and profoundly criticizes the feudal and decadent. Someone praises "*Dream of the Red Chamber*" as "China feudal society's encyclopedia" and a treasure word.

Animal's cultural metaphor discussed in this thesis is mainly based on David Hawkes translation *The Story of the Stone* (1973-1986, 1979-1987). Looking at the full paper, I have studied many animals, such as dog, fish, wolf, horse, crane etc. Reasons for choosing these animals are: they can well reflect Chinese and western cultural differences make people who are interested in expressing thoughts and feelings pay attention to the Chinese and western cultural differences in expression.

II. SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

A. Similarities

Language and culture influence and interact with each other. Because human's living environment is much the same, there are many animal idioms which have the same or similar cultural metaphor of the same animal. These similarities between English and Chinese peoples have been reflected in terms of life experience and understanding of common. At

this point, the English and the Chinese have the same association, giving animal idioms same connotation of cultural metaphor.

• Wolf

In English and Chinese culture, people believe that "Wolf" has a "cunning, greedy, cruel" nature, and used to compare wolf to greedy, murderous people. In a Chinese idiom "wearing a wolf in sheep's clothing" is used to cynically imply who looks nice but is ruthless in fact. Also there are many "Wolf" idioms in English. For example:

原文：中山狼，无情兽，全不念当日根由。(第五回)

译文：Zhong-shan wolf; Inhuman sot; Who for past kindnesses cared not a jot!

Man is a wolf to man (尔虞我诈).

The lone sheep is in the danger of the wolf (孤羊逢狼，必定遭殃).

The death of wolf is the safety of the sheep (狼的死亡就是羊的安全).

In Chinese culture, people like to criticize the erotic as "wolf"; in English "wolf" also means man who harasses the female.

• Other Animals

Some animals in English and Chinese idioms show an amazing similarity or similar cultural metaphor. For example, the donkey is stupid and inflexible; deer is timid and meek; lambs are adorable; pig is greedy and dirty; crows are inauspicious; snails are slow; snake is diabolicalBelow is a table about animal which clearly reflects some similarities of cultural metaphor between English and Chinese.

| | | |
|-----|--------------|---------------------------|
| 狼 | wolf | cunning, greedy and cruel |
| 驴 | donkey | stupid and inflexible |
| 鹿 | deer | timid and meek |
| 羔羊 | lamb | adorable |
| 猪 | pig | greedy and dirty |
| 乌鸦 | crow | inauspicious |
| 蜗牛 | snail | slow |
| 蛇 | snake | diabolical |
| 熊 | bear | rude and stupid |
| 百灵鸟 | lark | happy |
| 兔子 | rabbit, hare | agile |
| 鸽子 | dove | peaceful |

B. Differences

In the process of human civilization, due to differences in geographical environment, customs, religion and other aspects, the language which can reflect the culture is also different. English and Chinese are originated from different ethnics and geography, which give animals different meanings. English and Chinese is completely distinctive culture, their strong cultural connotations make exactly corresponding vocabulary in two languages relatively rare. People will always think of certain characteristics for the same animal in western and Chinese culture, but there is a big difference in association with characteristics.

1. Same Animal Idioms with Different Cultural Metaphor

As we all know, English and Chinese belong to completely two different cultures. The strong cultural connotation of two languages makes it nearly impossible to produce corresponding vocabularies. Owing to differences in geographical environment, historical events, manners and customs, and religious beliefs, the two ethnics tend to emphasize on different things when choosing animal metaphorical objects for language exchange and communication, which makes it possible to generate such a phenomena that people select the same animals but endow them with totally different cultural meanings.

• Dog

Different social customs, cultural traditions, ways of thinking, values geographical environment, religious beliefs can not only make different ethnic groups have their own reliance on the animal metaphor selection during the process of transmitting and exchanging language, or even lead to same metaphor with contrary meaning. The most typical one is reflected on the dog.

Dog is a humble animal in Chinese culture. Although China has thousands of year history of feeding dog, dogs act as doorkeeper, so it is also called the "guard dog". With a strong sense of being negative, Chinese give the dog "servility". It is commonly used to describe the bad people and bad things. Oriental culture pays attention to the negative characteristics of dogs. That is to say, everything relating to ugly words is given to this animal in order to express humanity disgust and contempt.

For example, if someone is bullying people with his hegemony, people will call him “狗仗人势”; if someone is reckless and audacious, people will call him “狗胆包天”; If someone doesn't make sense, people will call him “蝇营狗苟”; if bad guys speak something ill, people will say “狗嘴里吐不出象牙”; if someone has no conscience, people will

scold him “狼心狗肺”；if someone interrupt other people’s business, people will say “狗拿耗子多管闲事”；if someone can’t distinguish the good from the bad, people will criticize him “狗咬吕洞宾,不认好心人”。

Even dog’s movements and habits are also used to describe bad people and bad things. For example, “狗急跳墙”, “狗改不了吃屎”, “狗眼看人低”. “狐朋狗友” is used to refer to people who like to idle away in seeking pleasure and ignore their own occupation. An example from *A Dream of Red Mansions* is as following:

原文：恼的是那群混帐狐朋狗友的扯是搬非，调三惑四的那些人。（第十回）

译文：She was upset to think that those horrible boys at the school should be able to twist things round and say such terrible things about him.

Anything related to dog will basically have no good reputation. Although there are a few vocabularies which are related to dog sounding nice, basically “狗” is replaced by the “犬”, such as “愿效犬马之劳”. Every year in Guizhou, local citizens still keep the custom of eating dog meat, but in English speaking countries the situation is completely unthinkable and unbearable.

However, in western English-speaking countries, the main purpose of feeding a dog is to keep as a companion. A pet dog has become an important part of people’s daily life. Many people keep dogs as a part of the family and treat them as family. Therefore, dogs are considered as the most loyal friends of human beings. People often praise it and often compare the dog to human, and this has become a kind of fashion. So it is reasonable to generate an idiom--- “love me, love my dog”, translated as “爱屋及乌”. Although nowadays more and more Chinese begin to keep pet dogs, attitudes toward dogs between western and Chinese people are somewhat different, which can be found in the following examples:

When a woman who keeps a pet happily knows that she is going to give birth to a new life, westerners say: “Our children are going to have the best partner once he or she is born”.

The Chinese will say: “Take your pet out! Be careful of your child!”

When a man takes a walk with his children in the street, on the opposite comes a man with a dog.

A westerner would say: “Baby, look! That is a dog. It is our human friends.”

The Chinese people will say: “Baby, look! Dog! Don’t go to there! Beware of dog biting you!”

Seeing the examples, do you understand something?

In the west, because the dog’s image is positive, most idioms with dogs in English except for the part due to the impact of other languages are positive. In English, dog is a metaphor of human behavior, such as a lucky dog(幸运的人), a gay dog(快乐的人), a top dog(胜利或身居要职的人), a clever dog.(聪明的人). There are a number of other dog-related idioms. For example, “Every dog has his day” describes a person may not always in adversity. In addition, “Old dog will learn no new tricks” means you can’t teach an old dog new things; “Help a lame dog over a stile” means to help people over the difficulties; “A wet dog” is used to praise someone that swims good; “As happy as a dog with two tails” describes a very happy people. We can see that people in English-speaking countries view the dog as a good animal from the above examples. People put the dog as best friend.

• Fish

Britain is surrounded by sea, fishing and farming which originated from its unique geographical location and natural conditions also have an important influence on English. You can find fish-related idioms everywhere. The British use fish to represent all kinds of people: a big fish (a tycoon); a loose fish (a dissipated person); a queer fish (a strange man); a poor fish (a fool) etc. There are many idioms which are composed of fish, for example “like a fish out of water” (metaphors someone feel uncomfortable in a strange environment); “drunk as a fish” (extremely drunk); “have other fish to fry” (have other important things to do); Never fry a fish till it’s caught (do not act with haste) etc. In Chinese culture, people love fish. In addition to its edible value, it is also a beautiful cultural symbol. In Chinese, we send good wishes to people like “Fu Gui You Yu”, “Ji Qing You Yu”, and “Jin Yu Tong He”. And there is a sentence about fish in *A Dream of Red Mansions*: “吉庆有鱼”银钹十锭(第十八回). It can be translated as “Ten silver medallions with a design showing a stone-chime flanked by a pair of little fish (carrying the rebus-message ‘Blessings in abundance’)”.

Because the pronunciation of “fish” is similar to “Yu”, which means much money, fish is auspicious.

2. Different Animal Idioms with Same Cultural Metaphor

Every nation has a different experience of life and ways of thinking, so metaphor of many animals in the ideology of people in different ethnic groups is different.

Therefore, it is possible to express the same phenomenon or concept with the help of different animals.

• Cattle and Horse

“Horse” in the English often plays the role of the “cow” in the Chinese. In ancient times, agriculture is the pillar and foundation of China’s economic development, people need cattle to do farming. The painstaking cattle work day and night. As time passes, it is endowed with images which have great force and bear the burden of responsibility. Thus, Chinese people have a special feeling to cattle and there are many cattle-related idioms, for example:

the spirit of old cattle---老黄牛精神;

gulp---牛饮;

He’s a stubborn little chap when he’s made his mind up!” they said---众人都笑说：“天生的牛心古怪。”（第二十

二回)

For English-speaking countries, people, horses represent strength and speed. Horse is very important to farms. Instead of the work of the cattle in Chinese, horses are farming tools in English. Therefore, the "horse" in English corresponds to the "cattle" in Chinese. So many idioms will be translated like this: "talk horse"---吹牛; "He is as strong as a horse"---他壮如牛; "He is really a willing horse"---他真是头老黄牛; "Work like a horse"---努力工作; "Stubbornness"---牛脾气.

• Other animals

Other animals are also found to have the corresponding cultural metaphor in animal idioms, as you can see from the below chart.

| 汉语 | 英语 |
|---------|------------------------------|
| 一箭双雕 | to kill two birds with stone |
| 虎口拔牙 | beard the lion |
| 缘木求鱼 | seek a hare in a hen's nest |
| 像热锅上的蚂蚁 | like a cat on the hot bricks |
| 猫哭耗子 | to shed crocodile tears |
| 如鱼得水 | like the duck to the water |
| 亚洲四小龙 | the four tigers of Asia |
| 一丘之貉 | birds of a feather |

3. Animals Which Have Exclusive Cultural Metaphor in Chinese

As every ethnic has its own experience of life and mode of thinking, cultural metaphors of many animals differ from one ethnic to another ethnic. Therefore, as one of the most ancient civilization countries in the world, Chinese people usually apply something animals which have special cultural meaning in Chinese culture to describe certain situations.

• Crane

The crane is a symbol of longevity in Chinese culture. Thus parents giving names like "鹤年" and "鹤龄" show their hope that the child will live to a ripe old age. The crane is often paired with the pine tree, which is a symbol for sturdiness and long life. For example:若无知音,宁可独对着那清风明月,苍松怪石,野猿老鹤,抚弄一番,以寄兴趣,方为不负了这琴。(第八十六回)

译文:If there is no one able to share your music's true delight, then sit alone, and serenade the breeze and moonlight, hymn the ancient pines and weather-worn rocks; let wild monkeys and venerable cranes hear your song.

In paintings and art designs, the two often appear together with the motto (松鹤延年). Gifts with such designs are favorites for older people, especially on birthday occasions. But to Western minds, the crane does not arouse any association, so it is impossible to produce any cultural metaphor. If there are any associations at all, they probably came from stories about the bird in Aesop's fables.

• Turtle

Chinese symbolism that goes with the tortoise or turtle is twofold. On the one hand is longevity. Stone tortoises symbolic of venerable old age can be seen in front of ancient halls, temples and palaces. On the other hand, the creature is also the symbol of the cuckold. To call a person a turtle or tortoise or a turtle egg is highly insulting and highly profane. For example:

原文:女儿悲,嫁了个男人是乌龟。(第二十八回)

译文:The girl's upset: She's married to a marmoset(狨猴---the smallest monkey in the world, it refers to a coward).

In Western culture, there is no such occasion. The turtle is just a slow-moving and not very attractive creature. The English term "turtleneck sweater" often brings a grimace to Chinese when they learn that such is the English name for "翻领毛衣" they are wearing.

4. Animals Which Have Exclusive Cultural Metaphor in English

Idiom can provide interesting little glimpse or clues to a people's geography, history, social organization, social views, attitudes. The same goes for English idioms. Some animal-related idioms in English will have its unique features.

• Bull

To Chinese, bull carries no particular metaphor. They are merely animals that may or may not be common, may or may not be useful. Chinese might be able to guess the meaning of "a bull in a China shop", but they would not have the image that would be evoked in the minds of English-speaking people: an angry, snorting bull charging into a shop filled with exquisite fragile porcelain. Consequently, Chinese would be less appreciative of the vividness of the expression---meaning a person who is clumsy and bungling and causes a lot of trouble in a situation requiring tact and delicacy.

• Beaver

The beaver is chiefly a North American animal, not widely known in China. Its constant activity, its habit of gnawing down trees and building complex "homes" and its skill and ingenuity in doing this have earned for the animal the name "eager beaver"(卖力的河狸). In metaphor, an eager beaver is a person who is anxious to get something done, works hard, and is somewhat impatient. The term sometimes has a slightly derogatory connotation.

III. REASONS FOR THE DIFFERENCES

Very few people interpret things without relying on their cultural preconditioning. Culture shapes our perceptions and behavior. Due to differences in historical development, Chinese and English have different historical background, beliefs and customs. Languages of different culture will have big differences. The following paragraphs will discuss the topic from four aspects: geographical environment, historical events, manners and customs and religious beliefs.

A. Geographical Environment

Cultural characteristics and geographical environment are closely linked; any kind of culture will have its own characteristics because of the distinctive characteristics of the geographical environment. Britain stands in the British Isles. With a vast coastline, it has more developed fisheries. Affected by the fisheries, many fish-related idioms are found in English, for example "dull fish" is used to describe boring man, "drink like a fish" is used to express someone that drinks too much, "cool fish" is used to describe cheeky man. However, China is a large agricultural country, the cattle is used as a major farming tools. Cattle bring the joy of planting and harvest. Cattle-related idioms are largely discovered in Chinese, such as "牛脾气""吹牛".

B. Historical Events

Every nation writes its own history in different ways in the advance of civilization. A lot of English and Chinese idioms are of historical events. They are a reflection of Western and Chinese history. In general, the meaning of idioms is often its meaning of general historical events or its implied meaning.

UK received more than one invasion in the history, such as the ancient Romans, Greeks and Jutes. Therefore, the nation's culture has impacted on the British culture, of which many imprinted by their national culture. For example:

(1) rain cats and dogs (下倾盆大雨)

This idiom is created by invasion of the Scandinavians during the development of English idioms. Ancient Lord God is Odin. Dog symbolizes wind and cat symbolizes cat. Therefore, cats and dogs symbolize "thunder and storm."

Chinese culture also has a long history. The vast majority of Chinese idioms have the stigma of the times or retaining traces of the historical development, among which are related to all aspects of political life. For instance:

(2) paper tiger (纸老虎)

This idiom comes from Mao Zedong's famous quotations. "All the imperialists and reactionaries are paper tigers." Then it is used to imply someone who has powerful appearance but is weak in fact.

C. Manners and Customs

Manners and customs are important parts of a nation's social culture, reflecting people's lifestyles and ideological criteria. Due to the impact of people's own politics, economy, religion and literary works, people who live in different regions have different customs. As an important part of the culture, there is no doubt that language will also be affected social customs, not to mention the idioms. Let's take eating habits for example. British men have their particular eating customs. Britain and Americans tend to eat meat, beef, chicken and fish are the common things of the table. The flavor of McDonald's and KFC's fried chicken drifts into every corner of the world. It is precisely because of this eating habits that generates a lot of idioms such as chicken-hearted (胆怯), talk turkey(直率地说), walk turkey(前后左右颠簸), be as red angry as a turkey(因生气而满脸通红).

Chinese eating culture has a long history. Types of poultry are also extremely diverse. Lamb meat is popular in many parts of China (especially in northern areas). Therefore, some idioms related to the "sheep" such as "羊毛出在羊身上", "羊质虎皮", "羊肠小道", "挂羊头卖狗肉" have a long history.

D. Religious Beliefs

Religion is not only a social phenomenon, but also a cultural phenomenon. Religion is an important part of human ideological culture. Different religious beliefs have a profound impact on the culture and life. Chinese and English-speaking people have different religious belief. Therefore, animal idioms which have connection with religion can better reflect the impact of religion on language. Buddhism was introduced into China for more than a thousand years. Chinese culture (such as philosophy, art, literature, etc.) has a very close relationship with Buddhism, and it is reflected in language. There are many idioms associating with Buddha or Buddha art theory and basic doctrine such as "人面兽心" and "牛头马面". China's indigenous Taoism is another religion which has an important impact on China. Therefore, there are many animal idioms which are associated with Taoism such as "一人得道, 鸡犬升天".

In the West, especially in the Anglo-American countries, people believe in Christianity. Christian doctrine "Bible" has a great influence on English, which is unmatched by any other old book. Many animal-related stories in the Bible are transformed into the idiom. For example:

(1) Separate the sheep from the goats

This phrase is abstracted from the *New Testament Matthew*. Sheep and goats are used to describe good guys and bad guys, so this idiom means "to distinguish good man and bad man" or "discern good and bad".

(2) Lion in the way

The phrase comes from the *Bible, Old Testament, Proverbs*, it means "stand in the way" or "terrible obstacle".

IV. PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATING AND TRANSLATION STRATEGIES

A. Problems in Translating

When translating, we should pay attention to the positive and negative meaning. Let's take "Birds of a feather flock together (物以类聚, 人与群分)" as an example. It seems that there is no derogatory meaning in this idiom, but in general it is only used in negative conditions.

When translating, we should pay attention to many fixed idioms with specific meanings. These idioms should not be translated according to their literal meanings. For example, "watch the birdie" should be translated as "look here" rather than "to see the bird" because children always look around when people take family photos. In order to let children look to the camera, the photographer calls out "watch the birdie" to attract the eyes of the young children, and then presses the button.

We should retain its national and local characteristics when doing idiomatic translations. In both languages, the meaning of some idioms is roughly the same, but each contains more obvious national and local characteristics. For instance, "When the cat is away, the mice will play" can be translated as "猫儿不在家, 老鼠闹翻天" rather than applying the Chinese idiom "山中无老虎, 猴子称霸王".

B. Translation Strategies

With the continuous development of Chinese and western cultural exchanges, the contact and communication between British men and Chinese are increasingly frequent. The precise translation of idioms will cross cultural barrier for people, promoting cultural integration, play an important role in "removing barrier". In order to obtain accurate translation of the idioms, help people overcome the cultural gap, and achieve the transformation of language and the transplantation of culture, translators should adopt corresponding translation strategies for different cultural connotation. Concluding all the animal idioms translation both at home and abroad, we find the following translation strategies:

1. Direct Translation

For idioms which almost have the same connotations, we can translate directly. In this way, we can not only accurately grasp their metaphorical meanings, but also maintain the integrity of expressions, for example:

原文: 如今我们家赫赫扬扬, 已将百载, 一日倘或乐极生悲, 若应了那句-树倒猢猻散的俗语, 岂不虚称了一世的诗书旧族了。(第十三回)

译文: Our house has now enjoyed nearly a century of dazzling success. And suppose that in the words of another proverb---when the tree falls, the monkeys scatter. Will not our reputation be one of the great cultured households of the age then turn into a hollow mockery?

One swallow does not make a summer. 一燕不成夏

The frog in the well knows nothing of the great ocean. 井底之蛙

a wolf in sheep's clothing 披着羊皮的狼

2. Replacement of Animal

For idioms which have some corresponding connotation, we can replace animals in English idioms by Chinese animals which have the same metaphor. Thus it will not only express the original meaning of the idiom, but also achieve the same effect, for instance:

原文: 一面又向贾政笑道: "令郎真乃龙驹凤雏, 王在世翁前唐突, 将来雏凤清于老风声, 可量也。" (第十五回)

译文: The prince observed to Jia Zheng that - the young phoenix(龙—凤凰)was worthy of his sire. I trust I shall not offend you by saying so to your face, he said, but I venture to prophesy that this fledgling of yours will one day sing sweeter than the parent bird.

As timid as a hare 胆小如鼠(兔—鼠)

The fox prays farthest from home. 兔子不吃窝边草(狐狸—兔子)

Every dog has its day. 凡人皆有得意时(狗—人)

3. Direct Translation with Annotation

As for idioms which have completely different cultural meaning, we can use direct translation with the help of annotation. Direct translation cannot completely express the original meaning of an idiom, therefore direct translation and annotation can be used to deal with this problem. This method not only makes the meaning clear at a glance, avoiding translator devouring its original meaning on the basis of understanding, but also enable readers more accurately grasp the profound metaphorical metaphor. For example:

原文: 如今便赶着躲了, 料也躲不及, 少不得要使个'金蝉脱壳'的法子。(第二十七回)

译文: There isn't time to hide. I shall have to do as the cicada does when he jumps out of his skin: given them something to put them off the scent.

To shed crocodile tears 鳄鱼流眼泪, 假慈悲

The Trojan horse 特洛伊木马, 引起内部破坏的因素

Dark horse 黑马, 原来不为人知、意外取胜的选手

4. Free Translation

Some animal idiom's expression in English does not exist in Chinese. In this case, we usually paraphrase (free translation), that is not to seek the literal peer-to-peer meaning of but translate deeper meaning. The features of paraphrase method is that idioms can be simply and easily understood by people, making its meaning clear but not exposed, reaching the effect of reappearing original language effect, which allows its idea to be conveyed more easily, for example:

原文: 一面又向贾政笑道: “令郎真乃龙驹凤雏, 王在世翁前唐突, 将来雏凤清于老凤声, 可量也。” (第十五回)

译文: The prince observed to Jia Zheng that - the young phoenix was worthy of his sire. I trust I shall not offend you by saying so to your face, he said, but I venture to prophesy that this fledgling of yours will one day sing sweeter than the parent bird.

Sow dragon's teeth 播下仇恨与敌意的种子

Live a cat and dog life 整日争吵不休

As proud as a peacock 骄傲的神态

V. CONCLUSION

Although animal-related idioms takes up for a limited portion in Chinese and English, due to the close relationship between animals and people's lives, the use of animal idioms make the language more interesting. By comparing and contrasting cultural information English and Chinese animal idioms hosted, we can see English and Chinese idioms reflect the unique cultural characteristics of the two ethnics. Professor Fan Cunzhong remarks that there are equivalent phrases or sentences between the two languages, but it is relatively few. There are more correspondent phrases or sentences, and the vast majorities are neither equivalent nor correspondent. By comparing English and Chinese animal idioms, cultural metaphors under different background differ. Therefore, translator should focus on accumulating cultural knowledge between English and Chinese animal idioms, trying to understand their metaphor meanings. Translators should accurately grasp the hidden meaning expressed in the original idiom, rationally use translation strategies, and represent rich connotation and language style in English animal idioms.

Besides, translators should proceed from their cultural background in the specific practice of translation departure, seeking joint point in both English and Chinese cultures, so that translation of animal idioms can demonstrate their own cultural characteristics without losing original cultural connotations of the words or accurately transfer cultural information purposes, thus promoting cross-cultural exchange of English and Chinese.

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Detecting and Correcting Unmotivated Tense Shifts by EFL English-major Jordanian Undergraduates

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Abstract—A multi-dimensional process, writing demands that the writer coordinate several dimensions at a time, including grammar. Particularly in dealing with tenses, a good number of English-major EFL learners find it challenging to maintain a consistent tense during a writing task. They are usually unaware of the fact that tense shifts are necessary in some contexts but unnecessary in others. Students need to know that when they cast an essay in one tense, they need to remain consistent throughout. The researchers developed and administrated a grammatical error detection and correction test to 270 Jordanian English-major undergraduates with the aim of assessing their ability to detect and correct unmotivated tense shifts. Descriptive (percentage, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (*t* test and One-Way ANOVA) were used for data analysis using SPSS 20. The results revealed that the easiest tense type to identify was the simple past while the most difficult was the simple present. As for correction, the easiest was the simple past whereas the most difficult was the present perfect. The results also showed significant differences associated with students' GPA, academic level and perceived grammatical knowledge.

Index Terms—Arab EFL learners, error detection, error correction, tense shift

I. INTRODUCTION

Godfrey (1980) stresses the role of tense cohesion in making texts integrated pieces of discourse. He warns EFL learners that they must "retain and attend to the identity of tense continuities they establish if their production is to be judged acceptable" (p.94). The present study stems from this need to draw EFL instructors' attention to the importance of adopting a text-oriented approach to teaching tense to EFL learners. Any attempt at understanding utterances in isolation from the discursual contexts in which they occur will be incomplete and piecemeal as learners are denied the opportunity of seeing the systematic relationships between form, meaning, and use (Nunan, 1998). Therefore, educators and pioneers in language teaching assert the importance of introducing authentic texts into the learning situation (Widdowson, 1979; Littlewood, 1981; Nunan, 1987, 1998; Peacock, 1997). Authentic materials help learners realize the communicative value of the grammatical structure being acquired.

Nunan (1998), a proponent of the communicative language teaching approach, asserts that learners need to be provided with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes. He argues that unless learners are given the chance to explore grammar in context, they will not be able to see "how and why alternative forms exist to express different communicative meanings. For example, getting learners to read a set of sentences in the active voice, and then transform these into passives following a model, is a standard way of introducing the passive voice". Such practice, according to Nunan, would require that students are given "opportunities to explore when it is communicatively appropriate to use the passive rather than the active voice" (p.103).

Findings of empirical research (e.g., Rao, 2002; Tuan, 2011; Nunan, 1987) suggest that learners have a general preference to integrate both communicative and non-communicative activities in the EFL learning situation. Rao (2002), for instance, reported the views of 30 Chinese university students on the effectiveness of communicative and non-communicative activities in EFL courses. Participants reported a preference for a combination of communicative (e.g., student-teacher interaction, student-student interaction, personal response to students' exercises and songs) and non-communicative activities (e.g., workbook type drill and practice, audio-lingual drill, dictionary exercise, grammar rule explanation by the teacher, error correction and obedience to teacher's instruction) in their English classroom. All the

subjects were aware of the fact that English learning could only be facilitated by a reconciliation of communicative and non-communicative activities.

Tuan (2011) examined the effectiveness of task-based learning as a means of accommodating learners' needs and promoting communication. The findings of the study revealed that the task of negotiation positively impacted students' communicative competence as it "generated motivation and involvement, promoted their learning initiative, enhanced their sense of progress, and facilitated group cohesion"(p.24). This in turn, proved the productivity and workability of the communicative approach. Students' responses to the tasks also proved their acceptance of the approach. Therefore, one of the underlying assumptions undertaken by the researchers of this paper is that Arab EFL learners should receive a considerable amount of well-balanced meaning-oriented and form-focused instruction through authentic communication before they can use the language in real life. This is in line with a recent general shift toward using techniques where students are more actively involved. In line with this understanding, the researchers in this study presented the participants with an authentic text instead of discrete sentences to investigate their understanding of tense relations and eventually detecting unmotivated tense shifts. The study proposes that a combination of meaning-oriented and form-focused instruction must be implemented towards communicatively competent language learners.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Language learning is fundamentally "learning how to operate the verbal forms of that language" (Palmer, 1965, p.5). It is thus plausible to claim that failure to master the verb forms of the target language makes errors inevitable in the process of learning a foreign language (Dulay & Burt, 1974; Liu, 2012). Much of the studies conducted on Arab EFL learners' writings reveal that English temporal system is one of the difficult grammatical areas for EFL learners to master (Kambal, 1980; Abdul Haq, 1982; Mukattash, 1983; Mattar, 2001; Farrokh, 2011; Al-Hazaymeh, 1994; Al-Khasawneh, 2010; Mourtaga, 2006, 2010). Kambal (1980), for instance, analyzed the writings of first year Sudanese university students with the aim of identifying the syntactic errors made by these students in the verb phrase. He found that three types of errors featured in the students' use of the verb phrase: verb formation, tense, and subject-verb agreement. Errors in tense included tense sequence, tense substitution, tense marker, deletion, and confusion of perfect tenses. Mukattash's (1983) wide-scale study reported similar problems; students make serious syntactic errors when trying to express themselves communicatively, which is attributed mainly to students' lack of motivation and ineffective teaching methodology.

Mattar's (2001) investigation of Arab EFL learners' writings revealed that students systematically replaced the present perfect tense in English with the simple past tense. Students' attempt to avoid the appropriate tense in question was attributed to the fact that students were unable to establish proper form-meaning/tense associations. Farrokh (2011) analyzed errors made by 50 Iranian EFL learners. Among most common mistakes made by students was inappropriate use of tenses. Her argument was that students were unable to render the tense in question because of lack of structural correspondence between the mother tongue and the target language.

This line of inquiry is supported by the findings of studies based on computer learner corpora, electronic collections of spoken and written texts produced by foreign/second language learners. For example, Granger (1999) reported inappropriate tense shifts by EFL French learners. He argued that students were taught tenses at the sentence level and thus were not aware of discursive context in their use of tenses in English. He concluded that tenses should be taught at discourse level. Liu (2012) conducted an error analysis of the learner's writing competence based on Chinese Learner English Corpus (CLEC). The corpus collected more than 1000,000 words from the written production of Chinese learners at different proficiency levels. It was found that even advanced-level learners had repeated difficulties using tenses. Simple present tense was the most frequently misused tense, followed by misuse of simple past tense. These were followed by misuses of past perfect tense and present perfect tense. Present progressive tense, present perfect progressive tense, past progressive tense, future tense and past future tense were misused less frequently in the corpus. No misuses of future perfect progressive tense, past future progressive tense and past future perfect progressive tense were found. Granger attributed errors in tense use to mother tongue influence, target language interference and cognitive factors.

The findings of these studies coincide with one of the basic principles of the communicative language teaching approach. Any attempt by EFL learners to produce efficient English in real life situations is hindered by their inability to use language for communication. Instructors need to provide learners with practice that focuses on both grammatical accuracy and discursive context in an attempt to arrive at an integrated piece of writing. Moreover, most previous studies adopt a production-based assessment to identify grammatical errors made by students. Due to the fact that EFL learners sometimes tend to use avoidance as a strategy to steer around from those aspects of the grammar of English over which they have no or limited mastery, this entails a real risk. Therefore, the present study asks students to judge whether a tense verb is appropriately used as a way of assessing their knowledge of L2. The benefit of asking students to detect and correct errors is that it gives the researcher a chance to highlight those aspects of the target language students intentionally steer around. Based on the issues raised in the review of relevant literature, this study attempted to answer the following questions:

RQ1: To what extent are English-major Jordanian undergraduates capable of detecting and correcting unmotivated tense shifts?

RQ2: Is there any significant relationship ($\alpha = .05$) between students' ability to detect and correct unmotivated tense shifts and their GPA, academic level and perceived grammatical competence?

RQ3: Is there any significant correlation ($\alpha = .05$) between students' ability to detect and correct errors?

III. METHOD

A. Participants

The participants of the study were 270 English-major undergraduate students enrolled at a public university where they are required to choose their majors upon entering college. Since most students begin their first year by enrolling in general education courses that are approximations of the necessary prior general academic knowledge and are rarely enrolled in courses that contribute to their advancement in language per se, they were intentionally excluded from this study. The students in this study were either in their second ($n=112$), third ($n=81$) or fourth academic year ($n=77$) at the time when the study was conducted. Since Grade Point Average (GPA) is a commonly used indicator of academic performance, the students were categorized into three groups according to GPA (low=2.5-3.; intermediate=3.1-3.50, and high=3.51-4). Participants were asked to answer a two- part instrument. The first part elicited general information (e.g., gender, GPA, and academic year) whereas the second part elicited information about participants' performance associated with their ability to detect and correct errors pertinent to tense shift.

B. Instrument

To assess students' ability to detect and correct errors related to tense shifting, a test was designed for this purpose. The test included 24 unmotivated tense shifts distributed over four paragraphs that included a total of 336 words. It was designed to include multiple occurrences of four English tenses, namely simple past, simple present, past perfect and present perfect. To ensure the validity of the instrument, the test was given to five university professors. They were requested to indicate: (a) their belief about the appropriateness of the text to students' level; (b) whether there is an ambiguity in the target verb tense in each occurrence; and (c) the appropriateness of the text length for the study participants.

C. Procedures and Analyses

270 copies of the instrument were produced and then administrated to students in the presence of one of the researchers. The test was conducted during regular class time. Having been informed of the purpose of the study and the importance of their participation, students were asked to sign the informed consent form. The test came with a two-column table that required students to list the errors detected in the first column and to correct the error in the second column.

D. Statistical Analysis

The data for this study was analyzed using SPSS version 20. Both descriptive (mainly the mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t test and One-Way ANOVA) were used.

IV. RESULTS

This paper has two foci: (a) to depict students' ability to detect and correct errors pertinent to unmotivated tense shift and (b) to investigate the impact of demographic variables (academic year, GPA and students' perceived grammatical competence). Table 1 sheds light on students' performance pertinent to error detection and error correction on the overall test.

TABLE 1.
STUDENTS' RESULTS ON THE OVERALL TEST IN TERMS OF ERROR DETECTION AND ERROR CORRECTION

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | SD |
|------------------------|-----|---------|---------|------|------|
| Error Detection | 270 | 2.00 | 22.00 | 9.41 | 4.27 |
| Appropriate Correction | 268 | .00 | 21.00 | 4.98 | 3.59 |

The results indicate that the mean response on the overall error detection test was as low as 9.41/ 24.00. Astonishingly, the mean response on students' correct responses was much lower ($M= 4.98/24.00$). Since the test included 24 errors, and the participants were 270, the maximum possible score for the entire group of participants was 6480. Among this total, the participants managed to detect 2542 errors. This means that the percentage of detected errors was 39%. Since the number of errors on the different tenses was not equal on the test, the mean values are used to show the discrepancy in students' performance on these tenses. Ordered from easy to difficult to detect, the shifted tenses came as follows: (a) simple past ($M= .56$, $SD= .30$); (b) past perfect ($M= .49$, $SD= .32$); (c) present perfect ($M= .40$, $SD= .25$); and (d) simple present ($M= .19$, $SD= .19$).

TABLE 2.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE ON ERROR DETECTION BY TENSE TYPE

| | Mean | SD |
|-----------------|------|-----|
| Simple Past | .56 | .30 |
| Past Perfect | .49 | .32 |
| Present Perfect | .40 | .25 |
| Simple Present | .19 | .19 |

The results of students' performance on error correction by tense type (Table 3) indicate that the easiest to correct was the simple past, followed by the simple present and the past perfect. The most problematic to correct was the present perfect. The number of errors appropriately corrected was 1326. Divided by the total number of errors on the test (6480), it becomes clear that they managed to appropriately correct almost 20% of the entire pool of errors on the test. It also becomes clear that compared to the number of detected errors, the students managed to correct almost 52%.

TABLE 3.
RESULTS FOR STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE ON ERROR CORRECTION BY TENSE TYPE

| | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|-----------------|------|----------------|
| Simple Past | 2.51 | 1.35 |
| Simple Present | 1.69 | 1.18 |
| Past Perfect | 1.03 | 1.33 |
| Present Perfect | .81 | 1.12 |

It is also beneficial to see the frequency of detection and correction by individual errors.

TABLE 4.
FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES FOR STUDENTS' RESPONSES ON ERROR DETECTION AND ERROR CORRECTION BY INDIVIDUAL ERRORS

| Error No. | Error Type | Detection | | Undetected | | Correction Correct | | Incorrect | |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------|------|------------|------|--------------------|------|-----------|------|
| | | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| 1 | Simple Past | 192 | 71.1 | 78 | 28.9 | 186 | 68.9 | 2 | .7 |
| 2 | Present Perfect | 149 | 55.2 | 121 | 44.8 | 45 | 16.7 | 94 | 34.8 |
| 3 | Simple Present | 68 | 25.2 | 201 | 74.4 | 64 | 23.7 | 2 | .7 |
| 4 | Simple Present | 26 | 9.6 | 244 | 90.4 | 22 | 8.1 | 4 | 1.5 |
| 5 | Simple Present | 22 | 8.1 | 248 | 91.9 | 21 | 7.8 | 1 | .4 |
| 6 | Present Perfect | 94 | 34.8 | 176 | 65.2 | 25 | 9.3 | 60 | 22.2 |
| 7 | Simple Present | 67 | 24.8 | 203 | 75.2 | 53 | 19.6 | 7 | 2.6 |
| 8 | Present Perfect | 90 | 33.3 | 180 | 66.7 | 24 | 8.9 | 53 | 19.6 |
| 9 | Simple Present | 41 | 15.2 | 229 | 84.8 | 35 | 13.0 | 4 | 1.5 |
| 10 | Simple Present | 13 | 4.8 | 257 | 95.2 | 10 | 3.7 | 2 | .7 |
| 11 | Simple Present | 116 | 43.0 | 154 | 57.0 | 79 | 29.3 | 19 | 7.0 |
| 12 | Simple Past | 143 | 53.0 | 126 | 46.7 | 99 | 36.7 | 40 | 14.8 |
| 13 | Present Perfect | 116 | 43.0 | 154 | 57.0 | 19 | 7.0 | 86 | 31.9 |
| 14 | Simple Past | 148 | 54.8 | 122 | 45.2 | 117 | 43.3 | 29 | 10.7 |
| 15 | Past Perfect | 105 | 38.9 | 165 | 61.1 | 57 | 21.1 | 46 | 17.0 |
| 16 | Present Perfect | 105 | 38.9 | 165 | 61.1 | 18 | 6.7 | 75 | 27.8 |
| 17 | Present Perfect | 102 | 37.8 | 168 | 62.2 | 49 | 18.1 | 77 | 17.4 |
| 18 | Past Perfect | 172 | 63.7 | 98 | 36.3 | 51 | 18.9 | 113 | 41.9 |
| 19 | Past Perfect | 111 | 41.1 | 159 | 58.9 | 17 | 6.3 | 91 | 33.7 |
| 20 | Past Perfect | 128 | 47.4 | 142 | 52.6 | 35 | 13.0 | 89 | 33.0 |
| 21 | Past Perfect | 125 | 46.3 | 143 | 53.0 | 38 | 14.1 | 84 | 31.1 |
| 22 | Past Perfect | 142 | 52.6 | 127 | 47.0 | 40 | 14.8 | 100 | 37.0 |
| 23 | Simple Past | 80 | 29.6 | 189 | 70.0 | 53 | 19.6 | 26 | 9.6 |
| 24 | Simple Past | 187 | 69.8 | 81 | 30.0 | 174 | 64.4 | 6 | 2.2 |

The Impact of Demographics

A. Academic Level

To see whether students' responses on error detection and error correction differed statistically according to their academic year, On-Way ANOVA was used. The results (Table 5) indicate significant differences on both: error detection and error correction.

TABLE 5.
ANOVA RESULTS FOR PERFORMANCE ON ERROR DETECTION AND ERROR CORRECTION BY THE ACADEMIC YEAR

| | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Error Detection | Between Groups | 569.52 | 3 | 189.84 | 11.65 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 4336.02 | 266 | 16.30 | | |
| | Total | 4905.541 | 269 | | | |
| Error Correction | Between Groups | 286.52 | 3 | 95.51 | 7.98 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 3159.35 | 264 | 11.97 | | |
| | Total | 3445.87 | 267 | | | |

Post-hoc analyses, using Scheffe, indicated that pertinent to error detection, fourth-year students ($M=11.32$, $SD= 4.25$) outperformed first-year students ($M= 8.00$, $SD= 4.03$). Third-year ($M=9.79$, $SD= 4.41$) and fourth-year students also outperformed second-year students ($M= 7.81$, $SD=3.45$). As for error correction, post-hoc comparisons indicated that fourth-year students ($M= 6.42$, $SD= 4.27$) outperformed first ($M= 3.92$, $SD= 3.05$) and second-year students ($M=3.91$, $SD= 2.31$), but not third-year students ($M=5.08$, $SD=3.74$). These results indicate that despite the gap in students' ability in error detection, the differences among first, second, and third-year students are less clear when it comes to error correction. This is evident since the difference in performance on error correction was limited to the performance of fourth-year students compared to each of the other three.

B. Academic Performance

ANOVA results indicated statistically significant differences between the three groups ($P<.01$). This was the case for both detection and correction.

TABLE 6.
ANOVA RESULTS FOR ERROR DETECTION AND CORRECTION BY GPA

| | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Error Detection | Between Groups | 426.87 | 2 | 213.43 | 12.72 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 4478.67 | 267 | 16.77 | | |
| | Total | 4905.54 | 269 | | | |
| Error Correction | Between Groups | 439.44 | 2 | 219.72 | 19.37 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 3006.43 | 265 | 11.35 | | |
| | Total | 3445.87 | 267 | | | |

Post-hoc comparisons, using Scheffe, revealed that in terms of detection, high-achievers ($M=12.35$, $SD=5.16$) outperformed both low ($M=6.95$, $SD=2.82$) and intermediate ($M=9.18$, $SD=4.00$) achievers. However, the mean difference between low and intermediate-achievers was not significant. As for correction, there were statistically significant differences between all pairs of groups. The mean responses followed a pattern; the higher the GPA, the higher the ability in error correction (Means of 2.53, 4.72, and 8.00 for the low, intermediate, and high-achievement groups respectively).

C. Perceived Grammatical Competence

Classified according to their reported grammatical competence, the students were classified into four groups: poor, good, very good, and excellent. Possible significant differences among these groups according to their perceived grammatical competence were carried out using One-Way ANOVA. The results (Table 7) indicated there were significant differences.

TABLE 7.
STUDENTS' ABILITY IN ERROR DETECTION AND ERROR CORRECTION BY PERCEIVED GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE

| | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| Error Detection | Between Groups | 321.70 | 3 | 107.23 | 6.22 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 4583.84 | 266 | 17.23 | | |
| | Total | 4905.54 | 269 | | | |
| Error Correction | Between Groups | 314.90 | 3 | 104.97 | 8.85 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 3130.97 | 264 | 11.86 | | |
| | Total | 3445.87 | 267 | | | |

Post-hoc comparisons revealed that pertinent to error detection, both excellent ($M=12.45$, $SD=2.54$) and very good ($M= 10.50$, $SD=4.53$) students outperformed good ($M=8.67$, $SD=4.08$) students). As for correction, more groups were involved in the significant difference. Excellent ($M=7.64$, $SD= 2.98$) and very good ($M= 6.07$, $SD=4.07$) students outperformed each of the good ($M=4.31$, $SD=3.12$) and poor ($M=2.75$, $SD=2.18$) groups.

V. DISCUSSION

The present study aimed at assessing Jordanian EFL learners' ability to detect and correct unmotivated tense shifts. Students were able to detect a total of 2542 out of 6480. Compared to the total number of errors on the test for all participants (6480), students managed to detect a ratio as low as 39%, which means they detected almost one third of the entire set of errors they were presented with. Based on the mean values, the easiest error tense type to detect was simple past, followed by past perfect whereas the most difficult was simple present, followed by present perfect. The results pertinent to error correction indicated that the percentage of the errors properly corrected (1326) to those detected (2542) was almost 52%. Based on the mean values, the easiest error tense type to correct was the simple past, followed by simple present and past perfect, whereas the most difficult was present perfect. These results go in line with the researchers' pre assumptions that mastering English tense system is both challenging and problematic. They also make it clear that when certain forms cluster together, it becomes difficult for learners to choose the most appropriate verb tense. One possible reason behind students' difficulty in detecting and correcting errors pertinent to tense is lack of focus on the form-meaning relationships at the text level. In other words, the treatment of the form-meaning

combinations at the level of the sentence is insufficient. Dealing with these associations at the text level adds to students' understanding of the value of these meanings and the contexts in which they are used. (Larsen-Freeman et al 2002). Therefore, the best approach to grammar teaching must be viewed as one that focuses on an integration of form, meaning and use. The findings of the study go in line with the conclusions of Mattar (2001) that the tendency to miss the appropriate tense in question is due the lack of focus on the tense-aspect associations in teaching grammar on the part of EFL instructors.

The second question addressed by the present study was whether there is a relationship between students' performance and their GPA, academic level and perceived grammatical knowledge. The results indicated that there is a significant relationship between students' ability to detect and correct tense shift errors and their GPA. The results pertinent to error detection showed that a border line can be drawn between high achievers and both intermediate and low achievers. As for correction, all pairs of groups demonstrated statistically significant differences. Students with high GPA were found to be more inclined to do well than those with lower GPA. This suggests that students may register very poor performance when they show weak commitment to their academics. Additionally, academic level was found to impact students' performance. The findings showed that fourth year students did better than first year students. Together with third year students, fourth year students outperformed second year students in error detection. In terms of error correction, fourth year students outperformed all levels but third year students. The difference in performance between the first, second, and third year students was not significant. This suggests that length of language study is positively related to good academic performance.

The results also revealed that students' ability to detect and correct error is inseparable from their perceived grammatical competence. Excellent and very good students outperformed good students with regard to error detection. In terms of correction, excellent and very good students outperformed good and poor students. That is, the significant difference in both error detection and correction sets excellent and very good students apart from good and low students. This finding is plausible since advanced students are assumed to be more able to identify errors as they possess more advanced grammatical knowledge.

It is of equal importance to mention that there are cases in which students detected errors but never attempted to correct them. The worst-case scenario is that students' detection of tense shifts was done by chance and not by full awareness. The best-case scenario is that students were fully aware of the errors but never attempted to correct them because they thought that error detection revealed more about their grammatical competence than would error correction. Choosing either scenario would entail risk in absence of evidence.

VI. CONCLUSION

Appropriate use of tenses is the most frequently reported linguistic problem faced by Arabic learners of English. The present study aimed at assessing Jordanian EFL learners' ability to detect and correct unmotivated tense shifts. The results of the study revealed that the most difficult errors to detect were pertinent to simple present and present perfect. Strangely enough, the results also demonstrated that students were able to correct errors pertinent to simple present. Though it was not easy to detect for most students, it was the easiest to correct, compared to past perfect and present perfect. One important implication of the present study is that EFL instructors should be aware of the fact that making mistakes on the part of EFL learners is inevitable. However, their role becomes more crucial in raising students' awareness to those aspects of the target language in which they face problems. They need to provide their students with extensive practice in authentic contexts to help them overcome their difficulties. The results of this study are expected to help teachers as well as materials designers in recognizing the most challenging and problematic areas of English grammar faced by students.

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An Investigation of Formulaic Sequences in Multi-modal Chinese College English Textbooks

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Abstract—The paper explores the distributional and acquisitional characteristics of formulaic sequences in typically multi-modal textbooks most popularly used in English teaching in China. Research results indicate that the frequency of formulaic sequences in the listening-speaking textbook is significantly higher than that of the reading-writing textbook. Furthermore, the two different modal textbooks differ in both the categories and the functions of formulaic sequences. However, Chinese English learners are generally not sensitive to these differences. In addition, there exists a plateau effect in their acquisition of textbook formulaic sequences, as there is no significant difference between learners of different proficiency levels. These findings reveal the significance of highlighting register differences between reading-writing and listening-speaking, thus shedding light on the input and output problems in college English teaching and learning.

Index Terms—reading-writing textbook, listening-speaking textbook, chunk, frequency

I. INTRODUCTION

Formulaic sequences are pre-fabricated language that can be stored, retrieved and used as a whole without the need to compose them on-line through much consideration of word choice and grammar. In recent years, the role of formulaic sequences has been highlighted by many scholars and researchers, because possibly as much as 70% of the adult native language may be formulaic sequences (c.f. Wray & Perkins, 2000), and much of lexis consists of sequences of words operating as single units (Schmitt, 2000).

Great importance has been attached to formulaic sequences in Chinese English textbooks. Yang (2012), editor-in-chief of a series of popular English textbooks, points out that textbook compilation and learning should emphasize the significance of formulaic sequences which pave the way for idiomatic expression and native-like choices. In China, one of the most important aims of college English learning is to foster competence in different registers like reading-writing and listening-speaking. It follows that college English learning is usually divided into two sections, that is, the teaching of reading-writing and the teaching of listening-speaking, which require then different modal textbooks in classrooms. Since textbooks are the most straight and important source of language input, study of formulaic sequences in textbooks would provide insights into the pedagogical values of formulaic sequences, and the specific requirements of different registers, so that implications can be revealed for the learning and teaching of English as a foreign language in China.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Miller (1956) introduces the “magic number” 7 ± 2 , namely the number of formulaic sequences that can be held in STM for immediate recall. Following Miller’s work, many psychologists have approached the importance of chunk in memory through the differences between LTM and STM, and it is becoming a trend to introduce formulaic sequences into the areas of language learning and vocabulary acquisition. Since the flooding research in formulaic sequences from 1970s, more recent researches are focusing on the characteristics of formulaic sequences and the related pedagogical values with the help of corpus technology.

Koprowski (2005) explores the practicality of formulaic sequences in three contemporary main stream English textbooks, but finds that these three textbooks are very limited in pedagogical values of formulaic sequences. With pedagogical values in mind, Koprowski then tries to offer suggestions for each textbook about the chunk distribution and constructing. Biber (2006) systematically studies register differences between formulaic sequences in oral and written productions, by comparing the category and function distributions in college textbooks and the college teaching process. Simpson-Vlach & Ellis (2010), adopting the standards of frequency and distribution range, proposes an academic chunk list which is both pedagogically valuable and meaningful for academic English teaching. Martinez & Schmitt (2012), in accordance with high frequency and pedagogical value, discusses receptive chunk list construction in the hope of providing insights for textbook compilation and chunk teaching in general language teaching. Gray & Biber (2013) uses corpus technology to study continuous and discontinuous formulaic sequences in oral and written productions with a focus on different register functions of formulaic sequences.

Study on formulaic sequences in China has also witnessed an increasing tendency in the following three areas. First is the categorization and introduction of formulaic sequences (Ma, 2011; Huang & Wang, 2011). Then is the descriptive

study of the characteristics of chunk usage in Chinese EFL learners' interlanguage (Ding & Qi, 2005; Ma, 2009), as well as exploration of their chunk acquisition model (Qu & Deng, 2010). Chunk research in ESP also attracts attention from Chinese scholars (Wang & Liu, 2013). As for formulaic sequences in textbooks and their pedagogical values, little research has been conducted in mainland China, which is evidenced by the fact that only one article has been published in one of the most distinguished foreign language journals (Chen & Chen, 2011). Chen & Chen (2011), from the perspective of EAP, compare chunk distribution between EAP textbooks and general English language textbooks. Therefore, it seems that more research into textbook formulaic sequences is urgently needed for suggestions of the organization and reconstructing of language teaching and learning. In this paper, we will explore formulaic sequences in general English textbooks in order to see whether there are register differences in different modal Chinese English textbooks. Our research questions are:

- (1) What are the characteristics of formulaic sequences' distribution in multi-modal Chinese English textbooks?
- (2) Are there any differences in the categories and functions of formulaic sequences in multi-modal Chinese English textbooks?
- (3) Can Chinese well distinguish the above differences if any in formulaic sequences in their language output?

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

A. Research Corpus

Since EFL in the Chinese setting is skill-oriented, learners have two different modal English textbooks for the first two years in college when English is the compulsory course. One mode is the integrated textbook which aims mainly at promoting learners' reading and writing abilities. The other mode is the listening-speaking textbook which focuses on the fostering of listening and speaking abilities. The college English textbooks in contemporary use are chosen as the subjects of investigation. The integrated textbook is *New College English* (Second Edition), while the listening-speaking textbook is *Learning to Speak: An English Video Course* (Third Edition). Both of these textbooks are published by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press. For the integrated course, there are four books for the four semesters respectively in the first two years in college. Each book contains 8 units, with 2 texts per unit and thus altogether 64 texts (73887 tokens) for four books. Similarly, the listening-speaking course encompasses 4 books, with each book containing 8 units. In each unit, there are two lessons, namely Lesson A and Lesson B, thus altogether 64 lessons of 97766 tokens.

B. Research Procedures

Through concordances of 3-word cluster formulaic sequences by AntConc3.2.4, the present study lists the top 100 formulaic sequences in the integrated and listening-speaking textbooks respectively. Methods such as means comparisons and independent T tests are then used to analyze the distributional characteristics of formulaic sequences in the two modal textbooks. Based on Hyland (2008), analysis is conducted as for the categories and functions of formulaic sequences in the two different textbooks. Then learners' acquisition of formulaic sequences from the two different modal textbooks is evidenced by concordances of the college English sub-corpus of the Chinese Learners English Corpus (CLEC), which consists of compositions from EFL learners of various proficiency levels. What follows next is the possible pedagogical implication for language input and output in EFL in the Chinese setting.

IV. RESULTS

A. Distribution of Formulaic Sequences

With cluster size set at 3, the program AntConc works out all the related formulaic sequences in the integrated and listening-speaking textbooks from the most frequent to the least frequent ones. However, due to limitations in space, Table 1 and Table 2 only present the top 30 formulaic sequences in the two modal textbooks respectively. By comparing Table 1 and Table 2, it can be seen that these two modal textbooks differ in three aspects. First is frequency. Formulaic sequences occur in the listening-speaking textbook far more frequently than in the integrated textbook. The most frequent formulaic sequence in the integrated textbook is 30, the least frequent 8. On the other hand, the most frequent formulaic sequence in the listening-speaking textbook is 187, the least frequent is 33. Besides, there are overlapping formulaic sequences that occur both in the integrated and listening-speaking textbooks, but with different frequencies. For instance, *I don't* ranks highest in both textbooks, with 30 in the integrated textbook and 187 in the listening-speaking textbook. *One of the* is the second most frequent in the integrated textbook but 22 most frequent in the listening-speaking textbook. Last but not least, prepositional and noun formulaic sequences tend to occur in the integrated textbook, for example, *out of the*, *in front of* and *the rest of*. Verb formulaic sequences, such as *am going to* and *go to the*, appear more in the listening-speaking textbook.

Table 3 and Table 4 show the means of formulaic sequences' frequency and the result of the Independent T test respectively. From Table 3, it can be seen that there is difference in the means of formulaic sequences' frequency, as the frequency means for the integrated textbook is 8.67 and 35.5 for the listening-speaking textbook. Independent T test (Table 4) results prove the above difference is statistically significant ($F=35.114$, $Sig.= 0.000$), which means that formulaic sequences occur significantly more frequent in the listening-speaking textbook than in the integrated

textbook.

TABLE 1.
TOP 30 FORMULAIC SEQUENCES IN THE INTEGRATED TEXTBOOK

| | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| I don't (30) | Seemed to be (11) | I'm not (9) |
| One of the (22) | In the United (10) | I told him (9) |
| The United States (16) | Of the world (10) | I wanted to (9) |
| A lot of (15) | The rest of (10) | That he had (9) |
| I didn't (15) | To be a (10) | The end of (9) |
| Out of the (15) | Back to the (9) | The University of (9) |
| I couldn't (12) | Be able to (9) | To make a (9) |
| I had to (11) | End of the (9) | A man who (8) |
| In the world | For me to (9) | As well as (8) |
| It's a (11) | He didn't (9) | In front of (8) |

TABLE 2.
TOP 30 FORMULAIC SEQUENCES IN THE LISTENING-SPEAKING TEXTBOOK

| | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| I don't (187) | The blanks with (49) | Fill in the (36) |
| A lot of (137) | I'm not (48) | I think it (36) |
| Listen to the (108) | It's a (47) | Blanks with what (35) |
| I'm going (66) | I didn't (45) | Don't have (35) |
| I can't (65) | I have a (44) | It's a (35) |
| In the blanks (62) | What do you (41) | Is going to (35) |
| Don't know (61) | Go to the (40) | With what you (35) |
| Am going to (57) | Fill in the (37) | Don't like (34) |
| I'm a (50) | What you hear (37) | Now listen to (34) |
| I want to (50) | would like to (36) | One of the (33) |

TABLE 3.
MEANS COMPARISON OF FORMULAIC SEQUENCES' FREQUENCY IN TEXTBOOKS

| group | Number | Means | St. Dev. | SE Mean |
|--------------------|--------|---------|----------|---------|
| x1 Reading-writing | 100 | 8.6700 | 3.54211 | .35421 |
| Listening-speaking | 100 | 35.5000 | 25.13981 | 2.51398 |

TABLE 4.
INDEPENDENT T TEST OF FORMULAIC SEQUENCES' FREQUENCY IN TEXTBOOKS

| | Levene's test for Equality of variance | | T test of mean equation | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|------|-------------------------|---------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| | | | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval | |
| | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig.(2-tailed) | Mean difference | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| Equal variances assumed | 35.114 | .000 | -10.568 | 198 | .000 | -26.83000 | -31.83658 | -21.82342 |
| Equal variances not assumed | | | -10.568 | 102.929 | .000 | -26.83000 | -31.86518 | -21.79482 |

B. Functions of Formulaic Sequences

It is also necessary to study the functions of formulaic sequences, because different modalities may indicate various registers and functional categorizations. According to Hyland (2008), formulaic sequences fall into three brackets: ideational, textual and interpersonal. Ideational formulaic sequences are research-oriented, helping to structure experience and activity of the real world. Textual formulaic sequences deal more with the meaning of text and its organization. Interpersonal formulaic sequences are participant-oriented, focusing on the writer or the reader. Following in this vein, Fig. 1 outlines the percentages of formulaic sequences in integrated and listening-speaking textbooks. From Fig. 1, two features of the functions of formulaic sequences in the two textbooks can be captured. First, the distribution over different types of functional formulaic sequences tends to converge. In both the integrated and the listening-speaking textbooks, interpersonal formulaic sequences occur the most (62% for the integrated textbook, and 69% for the listening-speaking textbook). What follows is ideational formulaic sequences (33% for the integrated textbook and 31% for the listening-speaking textbook). However, differences exist in the number of formulaic sequences between the integrated and the listening-speaking textbooks. As can be seen from Fig. 1, ideational and textual formulaic sequences occur slightly more in the integrated textbook than in the listening-speaking textbook, while interpersonal formulaic sequences in the listening-speaking textbook outnumber those in the integrated textbook.

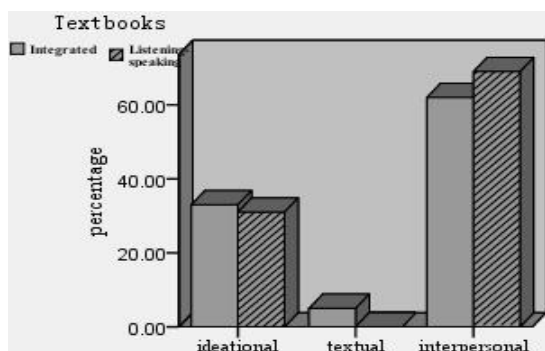


Fig 1. Percentages of Formulaic Sequences Types in Integrated and Listening-speaking Textbooks

According to Hyland (2008), the above ideational, textual and interpersonal formulaic sequences can all be further categorized, as is shown in Table 5. Based on this sub-categorization, the meta-functional formulaic sequences are explored in detail, the results of which are listed in Table 6. For ideational formulaic sequences, more location, quantification and description formulaic sequences occur in the integrated textbook, for instance, *out of the, in the world*. Procedure and topic formulaic sequences are more likely to be found in the listening-speaking textbook, for example, *is going to, the story summary, in the city*. There are also a few textual formulaic sequences in the integrated textbook, but none in the listening-speaking textbook. Examples of textual formulaic sequences are *as well as, as a result* in the integrated textbook. It is worth pointing out that the two textbooks have almost the same amount of interpersonal formulaic sequences. Formulaic sequences like *there is no, it was time* come from the integrated textbook, while *do you think, how would you* from the listening-speaking textbook.

TABLE 5. META-FUNCTIONAL CATEGORIZATION OF FORMULAIC SEQUENCES

| Functions | Sub-categorization | Examples |
|---------------|---------------------|---|
| Ideational | Location | at the same time, at the beginning of |
| | Procedure | the use of the, the purpose of the |
| | Quantification | a wide range of, one of the most |
| | Description | the structure of the, the size of the |
| Textual | Topic | in the United States, the currency board system |
| | Transition signals | on the other hand, in addition to the |
| | Resultative signals | as a result of, it was found that |
| | Structuring signals | in the present study, in the next section |
| Interpersonal | Framing signals | in the case of, on the basis of |
| | Stance feature | may be due to, it is possible |
| | Engagement features | as can be seen |

TABLE 6. META-FUNCTIONAL FORMULAIC SEQUENCES IN INTEGRATED AND LISTENING-SPEAKING TEXTBOOKS

| Textbooks | | Integrated Reading-writing Textbook | Listening-speaking Textbook |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Ideational | Location | 10 | 2 |
| | Procedure | 4 | 15 |
| | Quantification | 6 | 3 |
| | Description | 10 | 1 |
| | Topic | 3 | 10 |
| Textual | Transition Signals | 2 | 0 |
| | Resultative signals | 2 | 0 |
| | Structuring signals | 0 | 0 |
| | Framing signals | 1 | 0 |
| Interpersonal | Stance feature | 56 | 54 |
| | Engagement features | 13 | 15 |

C. Chinese EFL Learners Acquisition of Multi-modal Formulaic Sequences

In the above sections, attempts have been made to explore the distribution features and functions of formulaic sequences in different modal English textbooks. Differences, sometimes significant differences are found to exist in distribution and function of formulaic sequences between the two textbooks. Then are these input differences in register effective for EFL learners, making them more aware of the differences and choosing appropriate formulaic sequences in different registers. Table 7 lists means of formulaic sequences by Chinese EFL learners at different proficiency levels indicated by the College English Test (the lower CET4 and the higher CET6) in their composition output. The formulaic sequences compared are the top 10 formulaic sequences presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

TABLE 7.
LEARNERS' ACQUISITION OF FORMULAIC SEQUENCES IN TEXTBOOKS

| | Group | Number | Means | St. D |
|--|--------------------|--------|----------|-----------|
| Formulaic Sequences in Textbooks | Listening-speaking | 20 | 78.0000 | 117.69139 |
| | Integrated | 20 | 138.3500 | 230.21644 |
| Formulaic Sequences in Integrated Textbook | CET4-passers | 10 | 152.4000 | 306.36949 |
| | CET6-passers | 10 | 124.3000 | 132.61645 |
| Formulaic Sequences in Listening-Speaking Textbook | CET4-passers | 10 | 69.5000 | 108.08253 |
| | CET6-passers | 10 | 86.5000 | 131.90590 |

The purpose is to see how learners at different proficiency levels use the formulaic sequences learned in the integrated and listening-speaking textbooks. Results (Table 7) indicate that the means of formulaic sequences is higher in the integrated textbook than in the listening-speaking textbook. However, the means of CET4 learners is higher than CET6 learners in the integrated textbook, while the means of CET6 learners is higher than CET 4 in the listening-speaking textbook. In order to test whether there are significant differences between these means, independent T tests are conducted. Results show that at the level of $P < 0.05$, there is no significant difference in the usage of formulaic sequences between the integrated and the listening-speaking textbooks ($F = 1.565$, $Sig. = 0.219$), between CET4 learners and CET6 learners in their usage of formulaic sequences both in the integrated textbook ($F = 0.924$, $Sig. = 0.349$) and in the listening-speaking textbook ($F = 0.369$, $Sig. = 0.551$). It then suggests that Chinese EFL learners are not sensitive to the register differences despite the input emphasis in multi-modal textbooks in their process of EFL learning.

V. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Based on the comparisons of distributional features and functions of formulaic sequences in multi-modal EFL textbooks, the present study finds that the listening-speaking textbook has a much higher frequency than the integrated textbook and these two textbooks highlight different sets of formulaic sequences with distinct meta-language functions. In spite of the prominence in EFL textbooks, Chinese EFL learners seem not to have acquired the register differences, subtle or obvious, in their language output. These research findings have great implications for Chinese college learners' EFL. By drawing on our research findings and the usage-based language theory (Tomasello, 2008), we proposed a model for the acquisition of formulaic sequences (Fig. 2), with the hope of reveal implications for college EFL in the Chinese setting.

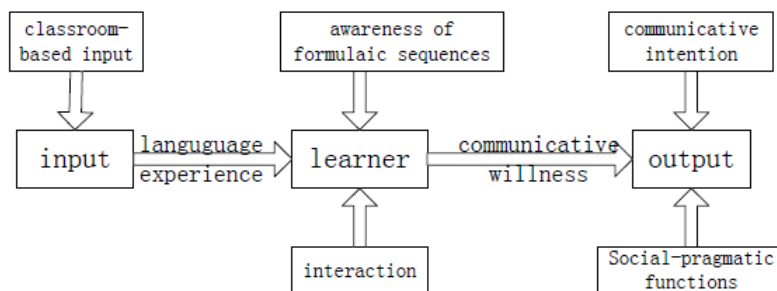


Fig. 2. Model for the Acquisition of Formulaic Sequences

First, great importance should be attached to the high-frequency input of formulaic sequences, which should be classroom-based and of maximum quantity in order to ensure enough language experience. Frequency is a critical factor in deciding whether language input can become intake. It is estimated that a frequency of 8 to 12 per hundred words is needed of a novel word in text before its meaning can be comprehended from inference and its form and meaning retained (c.f. Ellis, 2009). Additionally, high-frequency formulaic sequences are not only more productive but also processed more quickly than low-frequency ones (Ellis, 2009). Reading and writing is different from listening and speaking, because they require very different language skills. Generally, listening and speaking demands a smaller vocabulary which tends to re-occur very often (Saville-Troike, 2006). It is no doubt then that formulaic sequences enjoy a much higher frequency in the listening-speaking textbook than in the integrated reading-writing textbook. In this way, differences in registers are well delineated in textbooks. However, this does not mean that formulaic sequences are less important in reading and writing. On the contrary, learners have to get information and communicate through the means of reading and writing. Therefore, it is of importance to well consider the input frequency of formulaic sequences in multi-modal textbooks, in order to enhance language input and intake. For college learners in China, language input both in and outside the classroom is one of the most efficient and important sources that provide learners with input. Thus, teachers and textbook compilers have to have in mind the way and the order formulaic sequences are presented, and the percentage of formulaic sequences in textbooks.

Reading and writing, and listening and speaking fall into different motor skills with distinct register characteristics.

As the main language input sources, the respective textbooks include formulaic sequences of varying functions, which is aimed at fostering EFL learners' awareness of register and pragmatics. However, input alone cannot guarantee acquisition. Many Chinese college learners have passed popular authorized English tests like CET4, CET6, but it does not necessarily mean that their language proficiency has been increased. Miao & Sun (2006) find a plateau effect in beginning and intermediate Chinese learners' acquisition of formulaic sequences. It follows that more attention is paid to the awareness-raising of formulaic sequences in daily EFL learning and teaching process, so that learners can understand the importance of formulaic sequences in their language learning and consciously notice, learn and use them. It should be noted that acquisition of formulaic sequences should be driven by interaction, because any language learning needs concrete language experience and usage (Tomasello, 2008). One or two experiences cannot lead to acquisition, for language experience needs repetition, which suggests that interaction might provide learners with the most effective language experience with formulaic sequences. A series of activities and tasks can be designed and carried out in the process of EFL learning and teaching to promote interaction that may lead to the acquisition of formulaic sequences. It is well-worth mentioning that these activities as well as tasks should be well designed in structure and encourage meaning-negotiated interactions.

With high-frequent and register-oriented language input, opportunities to practice language output are also essential. Wen (2006) points out that Chinese EFL learners are not sensitive to oral and written differences in their output, which usually takes the form of mixed styles with no clear-cut register differences. This is the reason why learners cannot always distinguish the functions and pragmatic usages of formulaic sequences despite the register-oriented language input in EFL textbooks. Under this circumstance, language output many come into play, because it helps develop automaticity through practice and because it helps learners notice gaps in their own knowledge (c.f. Saville-Troike, 2006). Language output may serve four functions in EFL learning and teaching (Gass & Selinker, 2008): receiving crucial feedback for the verification of hypotheses; testing hypotheses about the structures and meanings of the target language; developing automaticity in interlanguage production; and forcing a shift from more meaning-based processing to a more syntactic mode. Formulaic sequences are pre-fabricated language that can be stored, retrieved and used as a whole without the need to compose them on-line through much consideration of word choice and grammar. The ability to use formulaic sequences can not only enhance language fluency, but also contribute to the appropriateness and idiomaticity of language use as well. Therefore, the output of formulaic sequence is crucial to EFL learners. Driven by the learners' intention to communicate, the output can be either student-student or student-teacher interactions. In this process, appropriate feedback should be provided to make it possible for learners to modify and reconstruct their input-based hypotheses about formulaic sequences, and thus thoroughly understand the social-pragmatic functions of formulaic sequences.

VI. CONCLUSION

Since Lewis' lexical approach in the 1990s, research on the teaching and learning of formulaic sequences has been under way. Yet with different working theories, scholars have adopted a variety of research methods. As a tentative study, we have explored the popular EFL textbooks in China by comparing the distributions, functions and learners' acquisition of formulaic sequences. It is found that multi-modal textbooks differ in the frequency distribution, categories and functions of formulaic sequences. Relevant suggestions have been made for the language input and output in EFL. Future research may focus on the interaction between frequency and saliency of formulaic sequences in EFL and textbook compilations, and the comparison of register differences in the usage or output of oral and written formulaic sequences.

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The Effectiveness of Stimulus to the Language Acquisition of Early Age Child

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Abstract—The present study was triggered by a variety of aspects in language education which need our urgent attention. One of these aspects is language acquisition that is related to the developmental stages of children. The early age child phase is a critical period for the development of children. This study aims to determine: (1) Significant effects before and after the stimulus to language vocabulary acquisition early childhood; (2) Knowing the development of child language acquisition at age four when viewed from the aspect of vocabulary acquisition, and (3) Knowing whether the respondent is still to generalize the meaning of objects that have the same characteristics. The theory underlying the research is based on B.F. Skinner's theory of behaviorism.

Index Terms—stimulus, language acquisition, pre-schoolchildren, behaviorism

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *The Urgency of Language Acquisition Research*

One of of education language aspect that need attention is language acquisition. However, research on early childhood language acquisition, especially in Indonesia is still very rarely done, so until the current theories relating to language acquisition are still using the theories presented by experts coming from the west.

The development of child language acquisition begins from the development of comprehension; phonological development; syntactic development; morphology development; and vocabulary development (Goodluck, 1996). Based on the opinion above it can be said that the scope of the child language acquisition research is a developmental stage of comprehension; phonological development; syntactic development; morphology developmental; and vocabulary development.

Growth and early development of children is a phase that need attention. Phase of early childhood is a critical period for a child. If this critical period given stimulus intensive input form of intelligence, aspects of language and other aspects, is likely to be obtained very great human quality when compared with no stimulus intensive.

B. *The Views of Nativism and Behaviorism in Language Acquisition*

In theory there are two views of language acquisition is very popular, that is Nativism view and the view of Behaviorism. According to the views of nativism, the language is too complex and impossible to learn in a short time through methods such as *imitation*. Thus, some important aspects regarding the language system in humans would have no natural. Chomsky (1965) was not only impressed by the complexity of the language, but also by some of the many errors and irregularities in the rules of pronunciation (performance). Thus it is possible that human language learning (first) of another human being, during which they learn to use the principles that guide him compile grammar. Learning a language is just fill in the details in the existing structures in nature (Purwo, 1993, p.97).

Nativism view assumes that language behavior is innate. Thus, children in acquiring language is not influenced by the stimulus from outside of the child. They say that every child who has a three-year-old has been able to speak as adults do. Furthermore, Chomsky (1969) states that every child has been equipped with language acquisition device (LAD). This tool is an administration that has biological features of a grammar program. Language acquisition device is a special physiological brain to process language. This tool enables the child to acquire language without obtaining input from the surrounding nature. Based on the above, it means that every child is born with the universality of linguistic structures 'that have been fused'. That is, the child does not have to learn the common characteristics of the

structure of all human languages, as a child born with a framework of linguistic structure (semantic, syntactic, and phonological) in born.

The Saxon behaviorism found that child language acquisition is not an innate as indicated by the nativism. Behaviorism view emphasized that the process of language acquisition (first) controlled from outside, that is by stimuli presented via the environment. Language is one of the other behaviors. Thus, according to the behaviorism language terms is less precise because conotate the entities, something that is owned or used and not something that is done. For the term of language they prefer to use the term verbal behavior (Purwo, 1993, p.97).

When observed both views on child language acquisition is mutually supportive. The opinion must be integrated, because without the LAD or language acquisition device, then the child will not be able to process the input elements of the language environment. Conversely, if the inputs in the form of the language elements are not derived from the child's environment, then the child will not be able to speak automatically.

C. *Vocabulary of Four-year-olds*

When referring to the behaviorism approach, the development of the child's vocabulary acquisition depends on the inputs it receives. This is also confirmed Dardjowidjojo for researching grandson named Echa. The number and kind of controlled vocabulary Echa really depends on the input he received the research results as well as "guestimate" the number of words in the child mastered certain ages vary widely. Lock (1995) states that at the age of 1.6 years up to 1.8 years of a child control about 50 words (p.361). Instead, Benedict (1979) and Corrigan (1978) (in Garman 1981, p.183) states that this number has been reached at the age of approximately 1.2 years and 1.3 years. In the graph, Moskowitz (1981, p.124) shows that at the age of 1.6 years the child has mastered about 100 words, and this number rose to about 275 by the age of 2.0 years. Dromi, which examines the development of their children, Keren, mastering Hebrew (1987, p.110), reported that Keren has mastered 337 words at the time she was 1.5. Smith's research (in Garman, 1981, p.196) shows the number a little under 500 words by the age of 2.6 (Dardjowidjojo, 1997, p.27). Thus, it can be seen that the mastery of vocabulary of children varies. This is due to the inputs received by children of different frequencies, and the situation was different.

According to Clark (1995, p.13) vocabulary productive adults is approximately 20,000 - 50000 word forms, while komprehensinya much greater than that amount. For children aged 6.0 years has mastered the vocabulary of approximately 14,000. Since the age of 2.0 years, a child's vocabulary will grow by 10 vocabulary every day. Thus, it is known that the child will master a vocabulary of 3,650 per year. So the our-year-olds have mastered a vocabulary of 7300. Dardjowidjoyo (2000, p.262) found language acquisition grandchildren Echa 328 nouns, 215 verbs, 106 adjectives and 85 function words. Furthermore, he stated that the child's vocabulary development is influenced by many external factors. He believes that the procurement of the word 'computer' by Echa, and not controlled by Teguh, their attendants children aged 3.8 years, is solely due to environmental factors.

D. *Stimulus – Response*

Since human is born into the world is not necessarily being smart. Humans still need to learn in order to be smart. In achieving an intelligence the human requires a stimulus from the environment. So is the ability to speak of a human child is not an innate. Although the potential to speak is already exists in human, but in the absence of social interaction or stimulus from the environment, then people will not be able to develop the potential of the talk that he already has. The ability to speak is not only a generation of something that has been present in the original nature, but also a social phenomenon. Even if there is a predisposition in humans similar structurally to speak, but the language or words specifically controlled by a person depends on the social opportunity to learn (Whitherington 1984, p.130).

The stimulus is an important factor in learning. Similarly, in early childhood language acquisition. With a stimulus to children who are learning the language, the child's language development can be controlled. Soemanto (1998, p. 126) states that if the student does not show any reaction to the stimulus, the teacher may not be able to guide his behavior toward behavior. Based on the above, it can be said that the stimulus is an important factor that can assist children in learning. Similarly, early childhood who are learning the language, of course, need to get the stimulus, so that language development is increasing rapidly. Without intensive stimulus to children who are learning language, the development of children's vocabulary acquired will evolve as it is, and it is difficult to control.

E. *Related Research*

Andriyani (2009), with the finding that the more intensive environment gives the stimuli, the more rapid development of the preschool child language acquisition.

Samaah (2008), concluded that the sentence aspect plays an important role in childhood language to the language skills in adults.

Hairuddin (2007), with findings of (1) there is a general sequence in Indonesian sentence acquisition by the four groups of the study sample and (2) there was no difference in the order of acquisition of significant Indonesian sentence among the four groups.

Yulianto (2001), found the characteristic sounds of language children aged 0; 1-2; 6 years and type of phonological sequence in three stages of development.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

A. *Types and Research Approach*

This research is a kind of exploratory research using qualitative approaches in analytic - synthetic.

B. *Focus Research*

The focus of this research is early childhood language acquisition. This study examines the acquisition of vocabulary and semantic four years of age enrolled in group play of TK Aisyiah Kadidi Village, District Pancarijang Sidenreng Rappang.

C. *Data and Data Sources*

The data in the study is vocabulary acquisition and mastery of semantic in early childhood. The data in question will be obtained / or sourced from 15 four -year olds who actively follow the education in group play of TK Aisyiah Kadidi Village, District Pancarijang Sidenreng Rappang.

D. *Overview of Respondents*

The respondents of this study are listed early childhood kindergarten play groups Aisyiah Kadidi Village, District Pancarijang Sidenreng Rappang. Age of the respondents an average of four years. Age their children have started to learn the language intensively, so that the development of their vocabulary develops rapidly when compared with younger children in under four years.

Based on observations and interviews with parents of respondents, obtained information that the majority of respondents have introduced or taught letter names. So, there has been among the respondents who knew some of the letters, although still not really speak it fluently and has not been able to recognize the letters correctly.

The environment in which they play on a daily basis is not much different. That is why, vocabulary inputs they receive relatively the same. As far as the authors, their ability to recite vocabulary they produce are not much different from one another. This indicates that respondents of this study did not have significant differences in pronouncing vocabulary, so that their vocabulary acquisition in the process of receiving stimulus provided is not much different.

E. *Data Collection Methods and Research Instrument*

To obtain the data of this study, used data collection methods include questionnaire (in the form of picture) and interview. The picture were designed in such a way that appeals to the respondent. The selection of picture as the study data collection instrument is passed, due to the early childhood objects in the pictures will always be worth a look. The use of these pictures will stimulate young children to respond. To determine whether the respondent is to generalize the objects that have the same characteristics, then designed a number of object picture that have the same characteristics as a means of collecting data.

F. *Data Collection Procedures*

There are several steps taken in this study the data collection efforts. These steps are the pre-test, reinforcement, and final test. Pre-tests intended to determine the acquisition of vocabulary and understanding of the meaning of the objects become instruments for collecting data by respondents. In this pre-test, asked what the names of objects contained in the pictures of this research instrument as a picture of the beginning of early childhood language acquisition. Reinforcement is the process of providing stimulus to the respondent to show pictures into the instrument. The stimulus lasted for three times. Allocation of time each stimulus was 120 minutes. The study was conducted in the morning between the hours of 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. After completion of the stimulus, the next step the final test. The final test aims to determine the progress of the development of vocabulary and language acquisition respondents. Giving the final test at the same time is the final step for data collection of this study.

G. *Data Analysis Techniques*

In analyzing the data, researchers used an inductive method. In this case, researchers still adhere to the information that has been obtained from the field, and then analyzed based on the theory and framework as described earlier. Analysis of these data include respondents' language acquisition in terms of the development of semantics and vocabulary development.

Sebelum pemberian stimulus kepada responden terlebih dahulu diberikan tes awal untuk mengetahui pemerolehan kosakata dan pemerolehan semantik responden. Setelah itu barulah diberikan stimulus kepada responden. Sedangkan untuk mengetahui pemerolehan kosakata dan pemerolehan semantik responden setelah pemberian stimulus, maka dilakukan tes akhir.

Before giving a stimulus to respondent the first granted pre-tests to determine the acquisition of vocabulary and semantic acquisition respondents. Afterwards, the stimulus given to the respondent. Whereas for knowing the vocabulary acquisition and the acquisition of semantic respondents after the stimulus, then the final test given.

As a guideline scoring against the respondents' answers, then made the following guidelines:

- a. Respondents guess picture research data collection instruments correctly and smoothly (Smt), the score is 5.
- b. Respondents guessed correctly picture research instruments but substandard (G.S.), the score is 4.

- c. Respondents guess instruments picture mentioned research by syllable only (Slbl), the score is 3.
- d. Respondents guess image research instruments with another name (A.N.), the score is 2.
- e. Respondents did not respond or said do not know (N.R.), the score is 1.

H. Problem Statements

The question in this study is as follows.

- 1. Are there any significant effect before and after the stimulus to language vocabulary acquisition of early childhood?
- 2. How is the development of child language acquisition at age four when viewed from the aspect of vocabulary acquisition?
- 3. Whether the respondent was to generalize the meaning of objects that have the same characteristics?

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data processing research started from the pre-test data processing. Respondents are given a score as pointed out above. The scoring is intended to obtain quantitative data analysis. Processing of data is grouped into two, namely the processing of data vocabulary acquisition and processing semantics acquisition.

Vocabulary Acquisition in Early Childhood

Vocabulary tested include ten groups, namely (1) the picture of animals which comprised over cows, ducks, goats, sheep, dogs, cats, chickens, horses, and rabbits; (2) the picture of wild animals, including lions, wolves, tigers, elephants, chimpanzees, zebras, giraffes, snakes, kangaroos, crocodiles, (3) the picture of fish and insects, namely fish, shrimp, squid, crabs, dragonflies, flies, ants, mosquitoes, caterpillars, (4) the picture of fruits, including watermelon, papaya, oranges, strawberries, mango, banana, coconut, apple, and durian; (5) the picture of vegetables and spices include string beans, eggplant, carrots, cabbage, corn, kale, chilli, pepper, garlic, onion, and tomatoes; (6) the picture of stationery and school supplies consisting of books, pens, pencils, rulers, printer, handbags, shoes, shirts, and clothing; (7) the picture of electronic equipment / technology ie television, radio, refrigerator, strika, computers, laptops, tablets, dispensers, play station, (8) the picture of the term telecommunication covers online, loading, internet, games, movies, soap operas, access, (9) the relative term consisting of father, mother, brother, sister, grandmother, Kakae, uncle, aunt, cousin; (10) transportation picture consist of aircraft, buses, trains, marine vessels, buggy, tricycle, helicopter, motorcycle; (11) professions picture include teachers, police, soldiers, doctors, nurses, drivers, pilots, and lecturer.

1. Vocabulary Acquisition in Pre-tests

Results of pre-test data is shown in the table below.

TABLE 4.1:
ACQUISITION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD VOCABULARY AT THE PRE-TEST

| The Answers Alternative | Vocabulary group | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|------|----------|-------|-----|-----|------|------|-----|------|------|
| | W.A. | F.A. | Fs. & In | V. S. | Frt | St | Elc. | I.T. | | trns | Prfs |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| a. W.S. | 10 | 13 | 24 | 10 | 23 | 15 | 12 | 13 | 25 | 20 | 20 |
| b. G&S | 45 | 28 | 24 | 25 | 30 | 26 | 22 | 26 | 25 | 26 | 23 |
| c. Slb | 5 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 3 |
| d. A.N | 20 | 44 | 15 | 27 | 14 | 22 | 27 | 22 | 22 | 24 | 24 |
| e. N.R. | 20 | 12 | 35 | 36 | 28 | 33 | 35 | 36 | 24 | 24 | 30 |
| Jumlah | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

The description of abbreviations in the table:

- W.A.: wild animals
- F. I.: fish and insect
- F.: fruits
- Elc.: electronic equipment
- Rltv: relative
- Prfs: profession
- G & S: good and substandard
- A.N.: another name
- F.A.: farm animal
- V.S: vegetables & spices
- St: stationary
- I.T.: telecommunication equipment
- Trns: transportation equipment
- W.S: smoothly
- Slb: syllables
- N.R.: no response

The data in Table 4.1 shows that in guessing the farm animal picture at pre-test (before the stimulus) only 10% of respondents who guessed well and smoothly, 45% who responded well and less well, 5% answered with syllables alone, 20% answered another name, and 20% do not know. Furthermore, in guessing the wild animal picture there were 13% respondents who answered smoothly, 18% good and substandard, 3% answered with syllables alone, 44% answered another name, and 12% do not know. Furthermore, in guessing the picture of fish and insects there were 24% respondents who answered smoothly, 24% good and substandard, 2% answered with syllables alone, 15% answered another name, and 35% do not know. Furthermore, in guessing the picture of vegetables and spices there are 10% of respondents who answered smoothly, 25% good and substandard, 5% answered with syllables alone, 25% answered another name, and 47% do not know. Furthermore, the images of fruits guess there are 25% of respondents who

answered smoothly, 30% good and substandard, 5% responded with syllables alone, 14% answered another name, and 28% do not know. Furthermore, the image of stationery guess there are 15% of respondents who answered smoothly, 26% good and substandard, 4% answered with syllables alone, 22% answered another name, and 33% do not know. Furthermore, the electronic appliance image guessing there are 12% of respondents who answered smoothly, 22% good and substandard, 4% answered with syllables alone, 27% answered another name, and 35% do not know. Furthermore, the guess image information and telecommunication apparatus, there were 13 respondents who answered smoothly, 26% good and substandard, 3% answered with syllables alone, 22% answered another name, and 36% do not know. Furthermore, in terms of kinship picture guessing there are 25% respondents who answered smoothly, 25% good and substandard, 0.3% answered with syllables only, 2% answered another name, and 1.23% who do not know. Furthermore, the transportation picture guessing there are 3.2% of respondents who answered smoothly, 2% well and less well, 2% answered with syllables alone, 40% answered another name, and 2% who do not know. Furthermore, in terms of kinship picture guessing there are 25% of respondents who answered smoothly, 25% good and substandard, 4% answered the first syllable, 22% answered another name, and 24% do not know. Furthermore, the image profession professions guess there are 20% who responded well and smoothly, 23% who responded well and less well, 3% answered with syllables alone, 24% answered another name, and 30% do not know.

2. Vocabulary Acquisition in Final Test

Data acquisition early childhood vocabulary at the end of the test. Meant the end of the test data can be seen in the following table.

TABLE 4.2
ACQUISITION VOCABULARY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AT THE END OF THE POS-TEST

| The Answer Alternative | Vocabulary group | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|------------------|-------|----------|--------|------|-------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| | W.A. | F.A. | Fs. & In | V. S. | Fr | St | Elc. | I.T. | | trns | Prfs |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| a. Smt | 74,28 | 74,28 | 75,24 | 76,27 | 80,0 | 80,14 | 78 | 78 | 98,81 | 98,81 | 96,93 |
| b. G&S | 0,14 | 0,14 | 24,76 | 23, 73 | 20 | 12 | 12 | 0 | 1,12 | 1,12 | 0 |
| c. Slb | 0,07 | 0,07 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0,07 | 0,07 | 0,07 |
| d. A.N | 25 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7,86 | 7,86 | 22 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| e. N.R. | 0,07 | 0,07 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

The data in Table 4.1 shows that the picture of farm animal guess at the post-test there were 74.28% of respondents who guessed well and smoothly, 0.14% who responded well and substandard, 0.07% answered with syllables alone, 25% menawab another name, and 0.07% who do not know. Furthermore, the picture of wild animals are guessing 74.28% of respondents who answered smoothly, both 0.14% and less smoothly, 0.07% answered with syllables alone, 25% answered another name, and 0.07% were do not know. Furthermore, the fish picture and insects guess there are 75.24% of respondents who answered smoothly, 24.76% good and substandard, 0% answered with syllables only, 0% answered another name, and 0% who do not know. Furthermore, the picture of vegetables and spices guess there are 76.27% of respondents who answered smoothly, 23.73% good and substandard, 0% answered with syllables only, 0% answered another name, and 0% who do not know. Furthermore, the picture of fruits guess there are 80.0% of respondents who answered smoothly, 20% good and substandard, 0% answered with syllables only, 0% answered another name, and 0% who do not know. Furthermore, the picture of stationery guess there are 80.14% of respondents who answered smoothly, 12% good and substandard, 0% answered with syllables alone, 7.86% answered another name, and 0% who do not know. Furthermore, the electronic picture guessing there are 78% of respondents who answered smoothly, 12% good and substandard, 0% answered with syllables alone, 7.86% answered another name, and 0% who do not know. Furthermore, the guess image information and telecommunication apparatus contained 78% of respondents who answered smoothly, 0% good and substandard, 0% answered with the first syllable, 22% answered another name, and 0% who do not know. Furthermore, in guessing the picture there is a kinship term 98.81 respondents who answered smoothly, both 1.12% and less smoothly, 0.07% answered with syllables only, 0% answered another name, and 0% who do not know. Furthermore, the transportation picture guessing there are 98.81% of respondents who answered smoothly, both 1.12% and less smoothly, 0.07% answered with syllables only, 0% answered another name, and 0% who do not know. Furthermore, in guessing the picture there is a kinship term 96.93% of respondents who answered smoothly, 0% good and substandard, 0.07% answered with syllables only, 0% answered another name, and 0% who do not know.

3. Semantics Acquisition in Early Childhood

Based on the data obtained the picture of objects which turned out to have similar characteristics of respondents always generalizable. When pre-tests to the respondents with the material 'group animals' apparently they do generalize to mention 'geese' and 'grouse' as a picture of 'duck'; 'buffalo' hypothesized the same with 'cow'. This shows that they have not been able to distinguish the types of 'animals'. Based on these data, it can be said that the four years children are still not able to distinguish objects that are almost similar in shape. Likewise, when some kind of plane picture that is 'plane', 'helicopter', 'fighter'. According to the respondents were asked the third picture is a picture of 'helicopter'. Although the stimulus has been awarded three times, but they still say that the picture is a picture of 'helicopter'. They really generalize. Why are they difficult to understand the picture? The answer is, first, the pictures are very similar,

both, the people who were in the neighborhood they almost never mention the name of the object. Referring to the data, if the respondents have incorporated the word to the lexicon, it is necessary to more intensive stimulus to change their opinion about the object. Furthermore, when shown wild animals picture that is 'lion' and 'wolf'. They guess the pictures by 'tiger'; 'giraffe' and 'zebra' they call 'horse'. They also do the same hypothesis for the picture of 'rhinos' and 'bull'. Similarly, the picture of insects that 'ant', 'mosquito', and 'flies'. They generalize the three picture with the name 'mosquito'. While the name of the fish 'whales, sharks, dolphins, and the fish they call 'dolphin'. Subsequently, the name of the vegetables they know just 'bean', 'maize', 'swamp', 'cabbage', and 'carrots'. To spice the image name, the respondent only knows chilli, garlic, and onion. Furthermore, picture of fruit they hypothesize that the same is 'papaya' and 'watermelon', 'pear' and 'nuts'. For pictures of stationery, respondents hypothesized pencil, pen, and boardmarker and call them 'pen'. Furthermore, for electronic equipment, computer hypothesized respondents with a television, a 'fridge' with 'dispenser'. Furthermore, the picture of tools and telecommunications terms of respondents are familiar with the term online, loading, internet, but they have not been able to explain its meaning. For images showing kinship respondents already know and understand well the term 'father', 'mother', 'brother', 'sister', 'grandfather', 'grandmother', 'uncle', and 'aunt' but they are not familiar with the term brother-in-law, and grandchildren. Furthermore, for the term profession, respondents have understood the meaning of teachers, policemen, soldiers, pilots, and a driver.

Based on the observations made, it turns out the characteristics of the respondents saw the object possessed almost the same. Therefore, they have not been able to distinguish the image correctly. In addition to the characteristics of generalized objects are very similar, another factor that makes the respondents do not know the actual name of the image of sheep, geese, grouse, buffalo, watermelon, pear, sharks, whales, they have received no feedback about the vocabulary. Meanwhile, the other pictures they have often seen either on television or in books.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis of research data and in response to the formulation of research problems, it can be concluded as follows.

1. There is a significant effect of stimulus before and after administration of the early childhood vocabulary acquisition, amounting to an average of 50 % in each group were tested vocabulary. That means stimulus is accompanied by a positive reinforcement effect in early childhood language acquisition.
2. Vocabulary development of early childhood at the age of four years to reach 7000 words.
3. In terms of semantics acquisition, early childhood is to generalize to objects that have the same characteristics.
4. The more intensive environmental stimulus, the more rapid development of early childhood language acquisition, both in terms of vocabulary and semantic terms.

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Moving forward to Communicative Proficiency: A Comparison between CET-4 Listening Comprehension Tests and IELTS Listening Subtest*

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Abstract—The current research attempts to compare the specific degrees of communicative properties of two types of College English Test Band 4 (CET-4) listening comprehension (before and after 2006 reform) in the light of IELTS (International English Language Test System) listening subtest, to know how well each of these three tests matches student's learning expectation and requirements, and to investigate student's psychological perception on them. This paper also tries to explore to what extent that 2006 reform has improved the communicative proficiency of CET-4, in terms of listening test. Based on quantitative and qualitative methods, it makes a comparative analysis between three listening subtests: old CET-4, new CET-4 and IELTS. Research subjects are 121 students from an international joint education program in a university in Beijing. Investigations into their performances are recorded and analyzed, together with a questionnaire survey. The present research finds that listening comprehension in new CET-4 has high degree of similarity with that in IELTS, particularly in testing of English communicative competence. With substantial amount of communicative properties, new CET-4 is a valid tool to measure student's listening proficiency.

Index Terms—CET-4, IELTS listening, comparison, communicative proficiency

I. INTRODUCTION

College English Test (band 4), issued by the Ministry of Education in 1985 in mainland China, has gradually become a large-scale national examination, and is commonly recognized as one of the standardized English examinations. Every year, CET-4 is held twice in June and December respectively, and millions of college students have been involved in this large-scale language test. A CET-4 certificate or grade report is critical for most college graduate, for many companies or business demand good CET-4 record when recruiting new employees. In 1990s and the early periods of 21 century, some colleges and universities even made it a regulation that graduate cannot be granted a diploma if he fails to pass CET-4 after four-year college study. Therefore, as the most massive and influential standardized national English test, CET-4 has deep positive influence on student's English learning, yet at the same time it has been criticized for its negative back-wash effect on college English teaching and learning. Arguments on its back wash effects, both positive and negative, have never ceased. A large number of researchers strongly attacked its glaring inability in assessing students' real communicative proficiency and even demand total abolishment. In 2006, the Ministry of Education in China launched a racial reform to this traditional test, aiming at developing an effective assessing instrument with relatively high reliability and validity, to test student's real language proficiency. Therefore, there are old CET4 (before December 2006) and new CET-4 (from December 2006 on). Is this reform successful? Is the new CET-4 more communicative than the old one? What is student's response to the new CET-4? The present study starts with the CET-4 listening comprehension, making a comparison between three listening subtests, intending to explore answers to these research questions.

The present writer chooses IELTS listening subtest as the frame of reference, for IELTS is widely recognized as a large-scale ESL test that offers comprehensive examination for candidates, concerning reading, writing, listening and speaking components. In 2011, over 150 million candidates around the world have taken IELTS, and among them over 300,000 Chinese test-takers have received this international test in 48 test centers. China takes up around 50% of IELTS candidates in Asian area and applicants even have to wait in long lines to register.

In China, as the result of economic development and globalization, more than 1000 international joint education programs like "2+2" program or "3+1" program have been gaining increasing popularity. Programs like this will

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generally provide IELTS preparation course, consulting service for school application and visa application, guidance on security principles in the target traveling country, etc. The subjects of this study are just from one of these international joint education programs. They are 121 students from the International School of North China Electric Power University. They will work under a “2+2” program, that is, 2-years' preliminary study in China, and two-years' follow-up study in some prestigious British universities, like Cardiff University, University of Bath, University of Manchester, University of Edinburgh, or in some American universities, like Purdue University, Illinois Institute of Technology etc. They are supposed to take IELTS, and they should meet the corresponding requirements and get satisfactory score in overall language ability and in each of the four subtests. What the stakeholders expect to gain from specific score is reliable assessment of the applicant's academic competence in their forthcoming study abroad. They are required to pass CET-4 in the first semester, and IELTS in the third semester. Compared with undergraduates in other departments, they are among those few people who are familiar with all these three tests and feel more naturally when asked to answer questions from the questionnaire.

According to Dunkel (1986), this goal (the development of communicative competence and oral fluency) is achieved by putting the horse (listening comprehension) before the cart (oral production). In other words, the key to achieving proficiency in speaking is developing proficiency in listening comprehension. However, among the four language competence (listening, speaking, reading and writing), listening is very hard to be assessed and has long been neglected. The easiest way of assessing a student's listening competence is a comprehension test. Therefore, the reliability and validity of listening test, especially validity, are critical in accurately measuring a student's listening competence.

In terms of listening test, a lot of academic research has focused on the theoretical construction and micro issues, including textual features, accents, varieties of examination questions, etc. In mainland China, researchers have great concern on CET-4, but they are most interested in the exploration of effective ways of improving college English teaching and test skills. Most researches are theoretical assumptions or field investigation for the whole test, far from focusing on listening comprehension section. Researches specifically focusing on listening section are very rare, especially those on the communicative properties of listening section. However, with the unprecedented trend of economic, political and cultural globalization, communicative properties of a test serve as important criteria of assessment in a lot of teaching institutions and organizations.

Therefore, this research attempts to explore: 1) if subject's listening performance in new CET-4 closer to that in old CET-4, or closer to that in IELTS; 2) what kind of expectation most students have for listening proficiency test. This research is assumed to answer these questions and provide reference framework for the CET-4 reform.

1. The classification of listening test and basic concepts of communicative listening proficiency test

The classification of listening test is based on that of language test classification. According to Buck (2001), there are three types of language tests: discrete-point approach test, integrative approach test and communicative approach test. In discrete-point approach, language competence is tested by individual items or questions. Generally, each question or item focuses on one individual language point. The multiple choice question is the most-frequently used testing instrument. Integrative approach test, on the contrary, is the measurement of test-takers' overall competence in combining all language units and functions, and the typical form include dictation and cloze. These two are exactly opposite ways of testing, both with their strengths and weaknesses, among which the most obvious limitation lies in lack of authenticity. And there is no interaction between test-takers and test. Consequently, these tests cannot objectively reflect student's real language proficiency and communicative competence. Communicative approach test aims at testing student's language competence in various events and their ability to use the target language effectively. Bachman (1990) developed the concept “communicative language ability” and later constructed a whole systematic framework for communicative approach test. With the development of social economy and technology, communicative approach test has been the most popular way of language ability assessment.

In terms of communicative listening ability test, reliability and validity should be first guaranteed, at the same time, authenticity, interaction and backwash effect to practical teaching cannot be neglected. Some believe it is not hard to keep a communicative test valid, but that is far from the case of reliability. In fact, if test designers keep strict limitation to the sentence length or word limit of reference answer, for example, to set the word limit for answer to subjective questions, the reliability of test will be greatly improved. The theoretical construction determines the form of listening test. In test designs, equal weight may be placed on knowledge (understanding how the language works theoretically) and proficiency (ability to use the language practically), or greater weight may be given to one aspect or the other. According to Buck (2001), equal weights should be placed on test-takers' knowledge and proficiency. In test design, properties including accent, language length and speed should be governed by the principle of authenticity and interaction. Where do the questions should be put (before listening or after listening)? How to introduce the listening passage in a brief way? What font or size is appropriate? Minor properties like these seem unimportant, actually, they are very influential in the real event. Successful communicative testing could trigger high motivational learning behavior and positive backwash effect.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. *Subjects*

143 first year students from the International School of North China Electric Power University in Beijing are chosen

to participate in this research. They are from four classes, and working for the coming CET-4 in June 2013. However, 9 of them had access to the testing material in high school, 13 of them fail to attend all the three tests for field trip or sickness leave. Consequently, 121 students come out to be the subjects of present study.

B. Research Methods

The main tools include listening comprehension test (one old CET-4 test paper, one new CET-4 test paper and one IELTS test paper), a questionnaire (subjects' view about old CET-4, new CET-4, IELTS and their learning expectation)

1) Listening tests: the testing materials include one old CET-4 test paper (June 2006), one new CET-4 test paper (June 2012), and Cambridge IELTS 4 test paper. The chosen test papers have been carefully examined to meet the need of being examination tools. The purpose of listening test is to compare subjects' language competence reflected in each test.

2) Questionnaire: the questionnaire focuses on subject's view on CET-4 (old and new) and IELTS, their realistic requirement for English listening before and after 4 years' under-graduate study, subjects' after-class listening practice, subject's suggestion for listening class and CET-4. The purpose of the questionnaire is to know how well each of the tests matches subjects' learning expectation and requirements, and to know subject's view on CET-4 reform.

C. Data Analysis

Three separate listening tests were processed within two weeks (from May 25th, 2013 to June 19th, 2013), then each subject completed the designed questionnaire.

1. Correlations

Subjects' scores in these three tests are firstly collected and analyzed in terms of correlation coefficient, together with theoretical analysis of these three test papers. As internationally acknowledged, correlation coefficient from 0.9 to 1 means very high correlation; from 0.7 to 0.9 means rather high correlation; from 0.4 to 0.7 means medium correlation, from 0.2 to 0.4 means low correlation; 0.39 and below means negligible correlation. Because these three test papers are scored in different ways, the Z value should be calculated. The correlation coefficients of these test papers are like follows:

R (between new CET-4 and IELTS) = 0.46

R (between new CET-4 and old CET-4) = 0.21

R (between IELTS and old CET-4) = 0.17

Therefore, it is obvious that the New CET-4 has medium correlation with IELTS, old CET-4 nearly has negligible correlation with IELTS. What might be surprising is the low correlation between old CET-4 and new CET-4, although they have much similar level of difficulty. One thing that cannot be denied is the correlation between new CET-4 and IELTS is at medium level. A possible reason for this is the huge gap of difficulty level between them: CET-4 is much easier than IELTS.

2. Theoretical analysis of test papers

The comparison of physical properties of these three test papers can be shown in Table 1:

TABLE 1:
COMPARISON BETWEEN CET-4 TEST PAPERS AND CAMBRIDGE IELTS TEST PAPER

| | Theoretical Basis | Accent | Mean length | Discourse features | Question and task |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------|--|--------------------------------|--|
| Old CET-4 listening comprehension (June 2012) | Structuralism | American Accent | 235 words(the mean of all passages) | Written English | Multiple choice |
| New CET-4 listening comprehension(June 2012) | Structuralism+Communicativeness | American Accent | 241 words(the mean of long conversation, passage and compound dictation) | Written English+Spoken English | Multiple choice+blank filling |
| Cambridge IELTS 4 listening subtest | Communicativeness | Diverse Accents | 365 words(the mean of four listening sections) | Written English+Spoken English | Blank Filling, Chart, Table, Multiple Choice |

According to Table 1, the new CET-4 test paper works as a transition between old CET-4 and IELTS. The new CET-4 features a great majority of multiple choice questions, inheriting the tradition of the old CET-4. Both of them prefer after-listening questions to before-listening questions, no background noise or visual hints. The typing and layout of letters is uniform, no changes in color or size. In terms of content, new CET-4 is much closer to IELTS, particularly in the long conversation, which renders comparatively more authentic dialogues in real events. There is an increasing tendency of question-answers (30%), which would to some extent trigger psychological interaction from the test-takers, indicating benign back wash effect in test design and English language teaching.

To sum up, the new CET-4 has shown great distinction from the old CET-4 in listening comprehension, and it is also evident theoretically that new CET-4 has much greater similarity with IELTS in communicative properties.

Secondly, in listening test, the level of difficulty could be determined by various factors, like accent, length of the passage, speed, and question types. A strange result from the questionnaire is that over half of the subjects (54%) think

that it is the new CET-4 that presents the most difficult listening test, not IELTS, although their perception is contradictory to their performance in specific test. With face to face interview with some subjects, the real reason comes out. It is firstly due to the uncertainty and ambiguity of human psychology, and also caused by the different test form: IETLS test-takers have after-reading listening task (for example, test-takers are given 40 seconds to read the introduction or background of a listening task before the listening begins), new CET-4 has before-reading listening task (test-takers listen to the passage or conversation before they move on to the questions). Therefore, some test-takers bear lower anxiety when dealing with IELS listening task, compared with that in dealing with new CET-4 listening tasks. These findings would be definitely meaningful in guiding listening test design.

III. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A. Needs Analysis

In this survey, needs analysis is realized in the questionnaire where students answer relevant questions about their intention and purpose of English learning, as well as their perception and suggestions to CET-4.

The questionnaire is composed on the basis of Richards' (1983) classification of listening purposes: in terms of purpose, listening could be classified into social interaction listening, informative listening, academic listening and entertainment listening. Learner's daily practice of English listening is closely related to the content and form of listening task. At the same time, subject's English listening practice might not definitely match their original listening purpose. Therefore, survey questions on listening practice are presented in this questionnaire, together with open-ended questions for students' listing of alternative choices. All 121 subjects attended this survey, with 9 of them not returning their response, and 6 of them not finishing all the questions. Finally, 106 pieces of valid questionnaires are collected and analyzed, and the results (how many times that all respondents make a certain choice) are as shown in Table 2:

TABLE 2:
PRACTICE AND PURPOSES OF ENGLISH LISTENING

| Practice of English listening | Times of Choice | Purpose of English listening | Times of Choice |
|---|-----------------|---|-----------------|
| A. English tests | 79 | A. To pass CET-4 | 86 |
| B. Listening to English lectures and reports | 44 | B. Be able to understand English lectures and reports | 33 |
| C. Communicate with English native speakers and socialize | 64 | C. Be able to communicate with English native speakers | 79 |
| D. Talk with English speakers in phone, taking notes, listening to English news, announcements at international airports etc. | 66 | D. Be able to understand all kinds of English information(phone talk, English news, English broadcasting or announcements, etc) | 84 |
| E. Entertainment (watch English movies, listening to English songs etc) | 48 | E. Be able to understand English entertainment products. | 35 |
| G. Job interview | 43 | | |

From Table 2, it is obvious that whether in listening practice or in listening purposes, English test is in the most dominant position. That is, most subjects are instrumentally motivated English learners (86 times), naturally, their listening practice is for CET-4 certificate. Therefore, for test designers, they should bear in mind that CET-4 has powerful impact on student's learning, then they should always adjust their test design to elicit positive backwash effect. Secondly, it is quite surprising that subjects have quite low frequency (44 times) in listening to English lectures and reports, with similar low expectation in understanding English lectures (33 times). Having face-to-face interviews with involved subjects, we get to know that due to subjects' misunderstanding of the word "English lectures", a lot of students do not regard English class as "English lecture", and there is very limited number of English academic lectures in their life, so they do not tick this choice in questionnaire survey. There are also some students who do not render "understanding English lectures and reports" as their listening purpose because in their minds one of the ultimate purpose of English learning is to master communicative proficiency in this language, and understanding English lectures and reports is just one minor part of communicative proficiency. Thirdly, according to Table 2, we can see students almost put equal weights on "understanding all kinds of English information" (84 times) and "passing CET-4"(86 times), and much similar weight has been put to "communicate with English native speakers"(79 times), which indicates that most subjects, though with highly instrumental motivation of getting CET-4 certificate for future career, have very positive expectation of mastering real language competence. Therefore, for test designers, they should give priority to "language competence" or "communicative competence" to design satisfactory English test.

As for teachers and teaching, what stand out are student's criteria in judging if he/she is a qualified teacher. About 46% of respondents think that a qualified teacher should be a CET-4 expert, helping them to get this obligatory certificate; only about 19% of them thinks that a qualified teacher should put emphasis on improving student's real language abilities, not merely on helping them passing CET-4; another 35% of them put equal weights on these two aspects and attempt to achieve a compromise between two contrastive stands. Therefore, we still can conclude that students are under huge pressure to pass CET-4, yet they still hope they could master real language proficiency. That's why IELTS is very popular with Chinese students, for its authenticity in listening task, conversation topic, background knowledge and its scientific design in "after-listening" task and featured visual hints. In one word, IELTS listening

subtest is so close to real life, and it can test student's real language competence in authentic environment.

B. Back Wash Effects

When testing has certain effects on foreign language teaching and learning, they are called wash back (Hughes, 1989). If testing has positive effects on language teaching and learning, it is called positive wash back. Generally speaking, the more influential the testing is, the stronger its back wash effect would be. The huge wash back of CET-4 on language teaching and learning is not negligible. The key is how to promote its positive back wash effects on college English teaching, or how to match CET-4 with students learning needs. New CET-4 has made considerable reform in negotiating student's pressure of getting CET-4 certificate with their needs in improving real language proficiency. From the questionnaire statistics, 79% of subjects strongly prefer new CET-4 listening comprehension, whereas only 17% of them prefer old CET-4 to new CET-4, other 4% of subjects has no definite preference and they think there is not great difference between these two.

IV. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

By comparing 121 students' performance in listening subtests of old CET-4, new CET-4 and IELTS, together with analysis of the questionnaire survey, the present research has findings as follows:

Compared with old CET-4, new CET-4 is closer to IELTS in all aspects. With substantial reform in form and content, its communicative property has been greatly improved to assess students' real language proficiency in authentic event.

From questionnaire survey, we can conclude that students have contradictory learning needs: on the one hand, they have high expectation in improving communicative ability and real language proficiency, as reflected in their admiration of IELTS; on the other hand, bearing the pressure of getting CET-4 certificate for future career, their learning behaviors are driven by strong instrumental motivation and all other learning needs would be second to it.

Compared with old CET-4 listening comprehension, students prefer new CET-4 because it presents much authentic testing tasks with a choice of question forms. Besides, test designers added long conversation to new CET-4, which often focus on real-life situations in English-speaking countries, for example, going to spend winter vacation in Florida, or to book air tickets via Booking.com.

To sum up, the CET-4 reform has increased its communicative attributes and achieved great success, although we still have very large room to make improvement in specific details. Chinese test designers could benefit a lot from IELTS professionals, but it does not mean we just "transfer" IELTS into China without any change. CET-4 and IELTS have their own distinct testing purposes. IELTS aims at testing students' competence when they travel or study in English-speaking countries, while CET-4 is supposed to be a valid assessment of student's comprehensive English ability after two year college English learning. It works as an effective means to guarantee that college English teaching and learning will be always guided by College English Curriculum Requirements (2007). Therefore, CET-4 might keep its distinct content and form, supported by specific theoretical construction and test paper design.

In theoretical construction, the new CET-4 should bear greater communicative properties. In test paper design, we can design more interactive questions, like table filling, note-taking, short answer questions, item matching, short summary writing, and multiple choice questions. We should also limit the length of the answer to ensure the reliability of the test. As it's commonly accepted that the authenticity should never be neglected, therefore, test designers should choose spoken English with background noise and various accents. In test paper layout, some practical skills, like adding brief introduction before students move in real listening, or presenting before-listening questions, would greatly lessen test-takers' tension and anxiety.

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The Color Purple and Women's Time

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Abstract—In *Women's Time*, Julia Kristeva asserts that women have been deprived of linear time for progress and improvement; they have been confined to circular time, which is a vicious circle of repetition; therefore she asked for the existence of a third generation of feminists to focus on linear time and to provide the ground for women's social as well as domestic roles. She mentions that the third feminists' duty is to pay attention to the individuality of each woman. In *The Color Purple*, Alice Walker's female protagonist, Celie, revolts against fixed gender roles. She unites with other female characters and has a sisterhood relationship. This article intends to focus on the effect of patriarchal system on women. Moreover, it will highlight sisterhood and its effect on women's individuality and social roles. As such, this article intends to focus on Julia Kristeva's notion of women's time and the way Celie intends to follow her desires. The attention to Celie's passions and desires in life helps her to know herself better.

Index Terms—Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*, Julia Kristeva, women's time, gender roles

I. INTRODUCTION

Alice Walker wrote *The Color Purple* in 1982 and in 1985, Steven Spielberg made *The Color Purple* into a movie of the same name and this added to Alice Walker's fame. "Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* is one of the most controversial and revolutionary black female authored texts in the American and African-American literary canons" (Taylor, 2007, p. 10). In *The Color Purple*, Walker explores the themes of gender discrimination, racial discrimination, rape and sexism. She displays how gender discrimination can influence black women's subjectivity and lead them into misery. This novel indicates how racism influences black people's social and personal lives. As black men are in the margins of white society, black women are in the margins of the margins, among black men and whites. In fact, black women are like white and black men's slaves. As Cheung observes, "some of these women are, moreover, thrice muted, on account of sexism, racism and a 'tonguelessness' that results from prohibitions or language barriers" (Cheung, 1988, p. 163). In order to fight against barriers, Walker questions the patriarchal system and sexist society; therefore, one can assume that *The Color Purple* is "an ant-story: anti-patriarchal and anti-sexist" (Hall, 1992, p. 90).

One should notice that Alice Walker's grandmother's stories influenced her and she became interested in writing as she grew up with this kind of oral tradition background. Besides, she observed the blacks' condition, especially black women's condition and marginalization, in American society; therefore, she put black characters at the centre of her novels. In the *The Color Purple*, Alice Walker focuses on Celie, who is trapped by racist and sexist oppression and the way she seeks to define herself is through the use of language. Celie "is an 'invisible woman,' a character traditionally silenced and effaced in fiction; and by centering on her, Walker replots the heroine's text" (Abbandonato, 1991, p. 1106). She gives voice to Celie and permits her to express all the miseries she has undergone.

As black women always live under patriarchal rules, they do not regard themselves as free people who can control their own lives. The protagonist of *The Color Purple*, Celie, believes that the only way to survive in her husband's house is to obey his rules, to tolerate the beatings and to remain silent. However, she finds her voice and starts to stand up for her rights. That is the reason why Maples believes that:

Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* is a liberative text that showcases a method by which her character, and ostensibly African-Americans, can situate themselves within the world. It follows that the novel is inherently related to the notion of growth. (Maples, 2007, p. 1)

In fact, Celie's subjectivity develops as she perceives her desires in life and intends to follow them with the help of other characters; she grows through the process of writing and befriending other characters. One should notice that, Celie is a character that Alice Walker brings into fiction from real life, as Walker observed the way her parents were influenced by racism and how they were forced to work as sharecroppers on white men's farms. Moreover, she heard

about racial and sexual discrimination; therefore, she displays all these tensions in her novels. She allowed Celie to come into her consciousness, cope with her life and, moreover, take action against discrimination. In addition, Walker enables her to redefine herself with other female characters' help. *The Color Purple* is representative of "a woman's struggle toward linguistic self-definition in a world of disrupted signs: Celie is imprisoned, alienated, sexually abused and driven into semiotic collapse" (Abbandonato, 1991, p. 1106). Moreover, "Celie is silenced by an external source and experiences the nullification of subjectivity and internal voice" (Cutter, 2000, p. 164), but throughout the novel she starts to find her voice and express herself. Although Celie was not able to communicate with other characters, she vocalizes her miseries as soon as she feels secure within sisterhood bond with other characters; moreover, she starts expressing herself. In a series of letters, Celie starts to express her horrible life, because from the very beginning she is forbidden to talk about her misery to others by her stepfather and as she needs to express it, she uses letters to express herself.

Walker enables the reader to enter into the private thoughts and emotional state of her traumatized, guilt and shame-ridden, and depressed fourteen-year-old protagonist, who has been repeatedly raped and impregnated by the man (Alphonso) who she believes to be her biological father. (Proudfit, 1991, p. 17)

The reader can perceive Celie's private emotions from her tongue and through the letters she addresses to God. As these letters provide a personal diary for the reader, the reader can hear Celie's personal emotions.

Besides, one should notice that Celie, as a fourteen-year-old girl, was raped by her stepfather and Walker emphasizes that she describes:

...the brutal sexual violence done to a nearly illiterate black woman child who then proceeds to write down what has happened to her in her own language from her own point of view. She does not find rape thrilling; she thinks the rapist looks like a frog with a snake between his legs. How could this not be upsetting? Shocking? How could anyone want to hear this? (Hamilton, 1988, p. 382)

As Celie was a child, while she was raped, she hates all men and their sexual member; therefore, she cannot communicate men or enjoy sexual relationship. As the main discussion in *The Color Purple* centres on the war between the sexes, this article will focus on how Celie makes progress in society and gains a social role in addition to her domestic role, which is the main topic of discussion of Julia Kristeva in *Women's Time*.

In addition to focusing on women's time, this article will investigate the way sisterhood helps women to support each other both emotionally and financially. Each woman has her own desires in life, and this study will shed light on how this sisterhood leads to Celie's freedom of choice and attaining a social role. Moreover, this study will indicate how Celie starts to fight against the patriarchal system that has exploited her all these years, either physically, psychologically or both, through sisterhood. "Walker always emphasizes the importance of "sisterhood" in black women's emancipation" (Singh & Gupta, 2010, p. 218). As Alice Walker puts black women at the centre of *The Color Purple*, this study will show how Celie gains self-realization with the help of sisterhood; sisterhood helps her to perceive her desires, respect them, follow them in society, search for a social role and achieve it.

II. DISCUSSION

Based on James Joyce "Father's time and mother's species," Julia Kristeva assumes that women have a cyclical life in which everything is repeated and their life is repetition of repetitions. However, men have a linear time in which they can improve their life and make progress.

Voice without body, body without voice, silent anguish choking on the rhythm of words, the tones of sounds, the colors of images, but without words, without sounds, without images; outside time, outside knowledge, cut off forever from the rhythmic, colorful violent changes that streak sleep, skin, viscera: socialized, even revolutionary, but at the cost of the body; body crying, infatuated, but at the cost of time; cut-off; swallowed up. (Kristeva, 1986, p. 16)

As women are deprived of time, linear time, they could not make progress in their life and society and they cannot express themselves easily. In fact, in the patriarchal society women are scarified as they are considered "the other race" (Kristeva, 1986) as they are considered inferior to men.

As such, Julia Kristeva notices that early feminism highlighted similarities between men and women in order to demand the same rights and privileges that men have. On the other hand the next generation of feminists emphasized the women's uniqueness. Kristeva believes that women are in subordinate position to power and language; therefore, the feminists intend to infiltrate the social order and then challenge it. The first generation of feminists demanded the same time that men inhabited; the time of linear history; the time of progress and accomplishments. Before that, women inhabited the household in which the time was cyclical. The first generation of feminists asked for the linear time; the time of progress, production and creation. The first generation of feminists intended to join the men's linear time rather than overturning this time.

The second generation of feminists focused on the difference between men and women and they applied psychoanalytic theory to express that the symbolic order is founded on castration anxiety. Women suffer from imaginary castration; therefore, they should enter the social symbolic order to fulfill this castration anxiety. The feminists of the second generation claim that in the sexist society the psycho-symbolic structure dominates which asks for separation of the people. Unlike the first generation who emphasized the similarities, the second generation highlighted the differences and they mainly focused on the womanly values which have been rejected throughout years.

The second generation intends to transgress the existing system. Although the first generation attempted to gain linear time, the second generation embraced the cyclical time and women as the producers of species. Besides, unlike the first generation which spurns mothering, the second generation cherishes mothering. The second generation's emphasis on woman as a general notion puts individuality of each woman into danger. As Kristeva states,

To believe that one is a woman is almost as absurd and obscurantist as to believe that one is a man....I therefore understand by woman that which cannot be represented, that which is not spoken, that which remains outside naming and ideologies (Lechte & Margaroni, 2004).

That is the main reason why she is against the second generation of feminists as they highlight woman and forget about the woman as human being.

As neither of these two generations focused on the singularity of each woman, Kristeva mentioned that the third generation of feminists should mainly focus on individuality of each woman. The third generation of feminist will reconcile women's desire for motherhood as well as their desire for linear time. Therefore, the third generation is expected to focus on each woman's multiple desires. Neither of the previous generations considered women both as producers of species and producers of the culture; body and society. This change in thought needs a revolt against previous preconceptions about women as producers of species; however Lechte and Margaroni notice that "revolt becomes the essential gesture in the constitution of individuality" (2004).

In *The Color Purple* Celie intends to attain this linear time of progress and improvement. *The Color Purple* deals with Celie's fight for progress and individuality. She intends to enter society, follow her dreams and achieve them. In Kristeva's words, women should revolt if they intend to have pleasure, as they achieve happiness by "confronting obstacles, prohibitions, authority, or law that allows" them to realize themselves as "autonomous and free" (Kristeva 2000, p. 7). Here, Celie should confront patriarchal system which confined her for long time. Moreover, the revolt transforms invisible Celie into visible one. In fact:

The Color Purple, Alice Walker's novel of black feminist awakening, is a model for the reconstruction of a black feminist literary tradition. If the existence of such a tradition had previously been marked by the "white page" and historical silence, Walker subverts the space by embracing the absence. (Hall, 1992, p. 1)

Alice Walker puts black invisible women, who are absent from classical literature and history, into the spotlight and permits them to speak and take action.

As the novel unfolds, Celie's stepfather, whom Celie considers as her biological father, warns her not to tell anyone about the fact that he rapes her. As a result, Celie is obliged to remain silent, but she needs to tell someone; therefore, she writes letters to God and explains all the misery which has been forced upon her. Language is in the hands of men and they dominate women with it; men decide what, to whom and where women can express themselves, as Kristeva holds, women are "excluded from the single true and legislating principle, from the Words" (Kristeva, 1993, p. 21) because without words, women cannot have independent personality. Men force women not to use language as speaking helps them to gain a sense of identity. In fact, "no person is your friend who demands your silence, or denies your right to grow" (2012, p. 1). Therefore, men intend to silence women as they are afraid of women's progress and improvement. The act of writing is a kind of revolt, as Celie must not tell anyone about the rapes. In fact, Celie experiences male bullying and domination when she is raped at the age of fourteen (Hankinson, 1997, p. 321). Besides, as Kristeva notices, "there is no time without speech"; and in this novel, Celie should start using language to attain linear time (Kristeva, 1993, p. 35), individuality and social role. She intends to write in order to express her desire and ambitions within language and ask for her social rights.

When the stepfather grows tired of Celie, he encourages Mr._ to marry her. After their marriage, one day, Tobias, Mr.'s brother, visits Celie and Mr._, and Shug, Mr.'s former lover. They talk about different women. Shug holds that "all women not alike, Tobias" (Walker, 2004, p. 55). This speech emphasizes the fact that although women may have the same sex, they are different in their thoughts, feelings and desires. Each individual woman has her own desires and fights for them. However, in patriarchal families, women's desires are not respected.

In *The Color Purple*, female characters help each other to live a comfortable life and follow their feminine desires, e.g. as Shug understands that Mr._ beats Celie, she says that she "won't leave" until she knows that "Albert [Mr.] won't even think about beating" her (Walker, 2004, p. 72). The women bond together and ameliorate each other's situations. If men force women to obey them and restrict their freedom, women provide each other with liberty and love. They know how to support, encourage and help each other.

As women have been ignored, misrepresented and mistreated in literature and history, in this novel, Walker intends to highlight women's suffering and show how they can get rid of the misrepresentations by proving their abilities, and how they gain power through relationships with other female characters. For example, Shug realizes that Celie does not have any sexual feelings when she sleeps with Mr._. Moreover, she perceives that Celie does not know her own body; therefore, Shug decides to make Celie familiar with her body.

Listen, she say, right there in your pussy is a little button that gits real hot when do you know what with somebody. It git hotter and hotter and then it melt. That the good part. But other parts good too, she says. Lot of sucking go on there, and there, she says. Lot of finger and tongue work. (Walker, 2004, p. 74)

In order to express her desires, Celie should first know them. One of these desires, which have been silenced for years, is sexual desire, and Shug helps Celie to recognize it in herself. "Here, take this mirror and go look at yourself down there" (Walker, 2004, p. 74). In fact, one can consider:

...the evaluation of the female body as the site of self-awareness and self-esteem. Thus, in *The Color Purple*, a crucial moment in Celie's transformation comes when she perceives the beauty of her genitalia. (Byerman, 1985, p. 321)

Shug teaches Celie to enjoy herself, to know her body and to appreciate her female productive organs. In fact, "with Shug's encouragement, Celie's self reclamation begins as she sees her own genitals for the first time" (Pifer & Slusser, 1998, p. 48). For the first time, she perceives her sexual desires with the help of another woman. As a result of this repossession of her body, Celie is able to gain selfhood through spoken language. In fact, as she was forced to forget about rape, she was ignorant about her sexual organ as well. However, as soon as she knows her productive organs, she becomes able to express her repressed desires as well. Therefore, she informs Mr._ that she is going to join Shug in Memphis. She revolts against Mr._'s patriarchal ideology which restricts her all the time, and follows her dream of freedom with Shug. She enjoys her life as the possibility of revolt gives her happiness of being independent.

Besides helping Celie to get to know her body, Shug encourages Celie to perceive her talent for sewing and improving it. As a result of Shug's encouragement, Celie stands in front of Mr._. She does not intend to have a marginal position in her family. She verbalizes the words which have choked her all these years. She has suffered all these years and now she is ready to fight for her progress. In Kristeva's view, a woman is submitted to "a whole series of authorities: her own mother and father, her husband's mother and father, her husband, and, finally, her son" (Kristeva 1993, p. 194). Here, Celie has been restricted for years, first by her father and then by her husband. Now she feels free as she finds a friend on whom she can rely. She intends to liberate herself from her husband's dominance and follow her dreams. She is skilful at sewing pants and intends to do it when she goes to Memphis with Shug.

In addition to helping Celie recognize her sewing talent, Shug encourages Squeak to sing. As Squeak is supported by Shug, she gains courage and at last Squeak says, "I want to sing ... I need to sing" (Walker, 2004, p. 183). Squeak desperately wants to sing as singing is a way to express herself, her miseries and her problems. Even Shug, as a singer, revolts against people's biased thoughts. Women and men do not approve of her singing career and always belittle and humiliate her, but she does it because it is her personal desire. Kristeva notices that, "indeed, the time has perhaps come to emphasize the multiplicity of female expressions and preoccupations" (Kristeva, 1986, p. 18). Shug and Squeak like singing and Celie likes sewing, and these different desires make them different and unique in person.

Besides being a supportive friend, Shug is like a mother figure who guides women in their lives. All the female characters in this novel bond together and help each other. Squeak decides to sing and Sofia promises to take care of her daughter. Through bonding, women are able to improve their lives and follow their repressed talents and desires. These women "defend themselves with words; they discover their potential – sound themselves out through articulation" (Cheung, 1988, p. 162). Although, at first, Celie's talents and desires were silenced by her father and her husband, she learns to express herself, not only with Shug's help but also by observing Shug's courageous and determined personality.

When Celie sews pants and they become popular with her family and her friends, she becomes financially independent. Shug addresses Celie and says, "you making your living, Celie ... Girl, you on your own way" (Walker, 2004, p. 193). Now Celie stands on her own two feet and is on her way to making progress. She revolts against Mr._'s patriarchal ideology, fights for her freedom, follows her dream of sewing and makes progress through hard work. Through the relationships with other female characters, Celie is able to cast off the patriarchal dominance which silenced her all those years.

In *The Color Purple*, women tolerate racism, sexism and gender discrimination, but they unite with each other. Through sisterhood, women realize their talents, verbalize them and follow them. As they have emotional supporters, they follow their dreams without worrying and then achieve their goals. As Haste asserts, by giving authenticity to female subjectivity there should be some ways to change women's view of themselves and males' view of women (Haste, 1994, p. 204). There should not be any preconception of women's subjectivity.

Men are against women's progress at first and are opposed to it, as they think that with women's power and success their manhood will be under question. As a result of patriarchy, they are blind to women and intend to put barriers in their way. As her sewing improves, Celie becomes wealthy and she returns home to wait for her sister and her children's arrival. At this time, Mr._ recognises his mistake and his mistreatment of her and starts supporting her. Mr._ sews pants with Celie and gives her some ideas about shirts which are suitable to go with Celie's pants. Moreover, Harpo supports Sofia in her job and takes care of their daughter while Sofia is away. In fact, women have had marginal positions, both in their families and in society, and this marginality "allows us to view [the] repression of the feminine in terms of positionality rather than essences" (Johnson, 2002, p. 170); in essence, women are not inferior or weaker, but in society they are considered as such by patriarchal system. However, in *The Color Purple*, women start to bond together and then men join them, and that is the main reason why progress happens. "By thinking and acting women can overcome man-made barriers to their humanity" (Dawson, 1987, p. 132). This novel envisions a better future for black people through union. In fact,

...in "*in Search of Our Mother's Gardens*," Walker speaks about three types of black women: the physically and psychologically abused black women, the black women who are torn by contrary instincts, and the new black woman, who re-creates herself out of the creative legacy of her maternal ancestors. (Dawson, 1987, p. 194)

This novel reflects Walker's new black women who verbalize their needs and go after them. In fact, through sisterhood, female characters get rid of their marginalized positions in the family and recreate their subjectivity through recognizing their needs and talents, expressing them and finding ways to improve them.

III. CONCLUSION

To sum up, Julia Kristeva's notion of women's time highlights women's confinement in house and their deprivation of social roles and their overlooked desires. In *The Color Purple*, Alice Walker provides an opportunity for black female characters to defend themselves in patriarchal system and gain individuality and social role. As a result, Celie is transformed from a timid non-fighter to a courageous fighter who stands up for her rights. As a result of her revolt against patriarchal ideology, she achieves linear time and enters the sewing industry. She does not devote all her time to do household chores, rather she enters the business of sewing and makes financial progress. However, *The Color Purple* does not eliminate men, as it considers their transformation too. The transformation of men and the improvement in women's situations in this novel envision a better future for black people. Women perceive that through sisterhood they can realize their dreams, follow them in society and achieve them. Therefore, the secret to attaining linear time is sisterhood in this novel.

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Translating Intangible Cultural Heritage in an Ethnolinguistic Community: A Case Study of the Site of Xanadu in Inner Mongolia*

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Abstract—Translation of intangible cultural heritage is an important part of translation studies. As one of the intangible cultural heritages in the world, the Site of Xanadu is a typical representative of Mongolian national history and splendid culture. The English translation of Xanadu's history and culture has to be idiomatic to foreign tourists, especially native English speakers. By a close study of English translation of Xanadu resources, this article attempts to discuss the current translation problems arising from application documents, advertisements and websites about Xanadu and reasons behind. Besides, the feasible translation strategies and methods are also suggested for better understanding between different cultures. The two functions of translating intangible cultural heritage, transferring of information and dissemination of culture, are particularly important, which play an important role in making Mongolian culture better understood by foreign visitors.

Index Terms—international publicity of intangible cultural heritage, the Site of Xanadu, translation problems, strategies of translation

I. INTRODUCTION

The intangible cultural heritage of Inner Mongolia incorporates a large number of historical sites and cultural properties, which is the first window for foreign visitors to learn about Mongolian culture. The external publicity of English translation of the intangible cultural heritage is an important means of dissemination of Mongolian history and culture to foreigners, which has the function of information transmission and cultural transmission.

As one of the intangible cultural heritages in the world, the Site of Xanadu is a typical representative of Mongolian national history and splendid culture. It attracts a great number of tourists worldwide annually. So the English translation of Xanadu's history and culture has to be idiomatic to foreign tourists, especially English-spoken ones. In order to achieve better efficiency of translation, translation practice needs more theoretical guidance. By a close study of English translation of Xanadu commentaries, this article attempts to discuss the current translation problems arising from application documents, media, advertisements and websites so on and so forth about the introduction of Xanadu. The reasons behind the problems and feasible translation strategies and methods are also discussed for better understanding between different cultures.

II. A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO XANADU

The Site of Xanadu encompasses the remains of Kublai Khan's legendary capital city, designed by the Mongol ruler's Chinese adviser Liu Bingzhong in 1256. Located on the southeast edge of the Mongolian plateau, it was the first capital (1263-1273) of Kublai Khan and later the summer capital (1274-1364) of the Yuan Dynasty. With a surface area of over 25,000 ha., the Site of Xanadu was a site of a grassland capital, witnessing clashes and mutual assimilation between the nomadic and agrarian civilizations in northern Asia. It was also a unique attempt to assimilate the nomadic Mongolian and Han Chinese cultures. From Xanadu, the mounted warriors of Kublai Khan unified the agrarian civilizations of China, and was partly assimilated by the latter's culture, while extending the Yuan empire right across North Asia. From this base, Kublai Khan established the Yuan dynasty that ruled China over a century.

The site was planned according to traditional Chinese *fengshui* in relation to the nearby mountains and river. It features the remains of the city, including temples, palaces, tombs, nomadic encampments and the Tiefan'gang Canal, along with other infrastructures. Evidence of large water control works instigated to protect the city exists in the form of remains of the Tiefan'gan Canal. The city site and associated tombs are located on the grassland steppe with a north-south axis determined by traditional Chinese *fengshui* principles, backed by mountains to the north and a river to

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the south. The plan of Xanadu, with Palace and Imperial cities enclosed partly by the Outer City containing evidence of the nomadic encampments and royal hunting enclosure, comprises a unique example of cultural fusion.

As the place where Kublai Khan rose to power, entertained foreign travelers' writings gave inspiration down the centuries. The Site has achieved legendary status in the rest of the world and it is the place from where Tibetan Buddhism expanded. The religious disputes that took place here resulted in the dissemination of Tibetan Buddhism over north-east Asia, and a cultural and religious tradition still practiced in many areas even today.

III. TRANSLATION PRACTICE: CURRENT SITUATION

A. *Translation Situation of the Site of Xanadu*

The purpose of translation is to make the readers understand the original message accurately. To achieve this goal, translators should try to resolve the differences between the two languages in the aspects of style and logic. Guided by the target language, it means to make readers understand without meeting any obstacles in the process of getting information. If the language is the carrier of the culture, it seems to be more natural that the form and the content of the language are more anglicized since we are using English (Yuan, 2007). Many related problems are lack of correct understanding of English translation. The translation with Chinese is not for practical purpose, but to follow the fashion. (Lin, 2005, p.224) The current problems include lacking of current foreign consciousness, the readers' habits of thinking, information demand and other factors causing the disapproval of its audience and the failure of translation. Being influenced by the mode of thinking in Chinese, translators translate the surface information and ignore to convey the implicit information. The translation is not concise and translation of the cultural vocabularies of the source language is not good enough. Few translators take the readers' thinking habits, cultural elements and other differences into consideration. Another problem is an overuse of transliteration and non-specific translation.

B. *The Choice of Translation Strategies*

Vermeer, one of the founders of Skopos theory, thinks translation is to achieve the purpose of the recognition of a social activity. It must be put in the social system rather than a simple language processing in the system, where usually exists differences in the cultural environment between the readers and the original readers. Translators have the rights to use all sorts of different translation strategies to make the translation more acceptable. At this point, the original texts are raw materials. The translators can give up, restructure and process the passage according to the situation. Whether the translation can achieve the purpose or not is depending on the target readers' demand and acceptance of the text. In the cultural globalization, in addition to using complete translation strategies, the translators also adopt combination of strategies according to the specific requirements of the specific readers under certain conditions. Complete translation is a kind of thinking activity and interlingual activity in which readers mean to convert the source language culture information into the foreign culture information. Complete translation is to totally convey the content of the original text in the original form. The so-called combination of strategies is the activity of gaining the original content in which the translators adopt various translation methods according to the special needs of specific readers. The description of the translation strategy is not ruling translators to translate in a certain way, but to provide ideas for practitioners.

In this sense, compilation is a common translation strategy and method. The compilation is the combination of compiling and translating. This process is not word-by-word translation. The translators can output irrelevant things, and provide some necessary explanatory background materials for the words with Chinese characteristics. Nord points out that any translation version contains the ingredients of compilation and the compilation is an expression of Skopos theory. Samuel Mark considers compilation belongs to a kind of communicative translation and one of the most liberal translation forms. Its purpose is to make the translation have the same effects on the target readers as the original text on the original readers.

IV. THEORETICAL GUIDANCE

A. *Properties of the Translation of Intangible Cultural Heritage*

Newmark (2001), the contemporary German translator and researcher, once argues that the translation of different texts should adopt different translation strategies. He divides the texts into three types, expressive texts, informative texts and vocative texts. He holds that expressive texts such as novels, poems and other literary works which are to introduce the source language culture, namely to try to convey the original semantic content, and to keep the writers personal emotional color, writing style and structure. Translators should adopt the semantic translation. For informative and expressive texts such as advertising, notices, reports, manual of tourism translation, translators should adopt the communicative translation method and pay necessary attention to readers' understanding and reaction. The translation should be in accordance with the texts in the target language habits as far as possible. The translation of intangible cultural heritage should be as the same as the translation of the world cultural heritage which are both to enhance English readers' understanding, attract the world's attention and gain protection, so the translation of intangible cultural heritage should belong to an informational and induced text, and its main task is to let foreigners understand Chinese intangible cultural heritage.

B. Identification

This article advocates the principle of “identification” which is put forward by the American rhetorician Boke, and which can effectively guide the translation practice when translating the commentary of intangible cultural heritage, because as the creatures who exist independently in the world, in order to overcome isolation, human beings always find common identity in communication. In other words, the demand for identity comes from the opposition and differences. It is because the opposition and differences among people that people need to resolve differences through communication. (Foss, 2002, p.191-193). And the establishment of identification is the effective guarantee in the process of translation to realize the external publicity and achieve final understanding. In addition, the principle of identification is in accordance with the essence of Skopos theory and three closeness principles: close to the practice of Chinese development, close to a foreign audience demand for Chinese information, close to a foreign audience habit of thinking (Huang, 2004). Specifically, this principle refers to the translators who try their best to make the target language audience accept as much information as possible so as to maximize the acceptance of translations under the clear guidance of fundamental purpose.

C. Cultural Property

Culture is the material wealth and spiritual wealth created by human social and historical practice in general term. The unique cultural phenomenon of language is the essence of the national legal and economic matters, not only referring to the nation's contribution to the world, but also the foundation for survival and development of the nation. The fact that translation introduces the essence of the primitive culture into the target language culture will in a certain extent promote the development of the society, the nation's progress and the change of life. As is known to all, language is not only an organic part of culture, but also the important carrier of culture. Each language is the product of the development of national culture, containing its origin of the historical background and rich cultural connotations. Every country, every nation has its unique social system, ecological environment, religious beliefs and customs, etc., so that every language has its corresponding vocabularies, idioms, and allusions, such as “cultures-loaded words” responding to the cultural phenomenon. Culture-loaded words are also called vocabulary vacancy, which means that the cultural information carried by the original words has no corresponding words in the target language. In the process of translation, the translator should be original language-oriented, using literal translation, free translation, transliteration, meaning or supplementation and other flexible ways to keep national cultural characteristics and make every effort to achieve the real cultural facsimile.

V. STRATEGIES OF TRANSLATION OF THE SITE OF XANADU

A. Translation of Vocabularies

1. Translation of Geographical Vocabularies

ST1. 地处蒙古高原的东南边缘，位于中华人民共和国内蒙古自治区锡林郭勒盟的正蓝旗和多伦县境内。

TT1. Situated in the southeast border area of the Mongolian Plateau, it is located in Zhenglan Qi and Duolun County, Xilingol League, Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, P.R.C

According to the common translation of “盟”, “锡林郭勒盟” should be translated as Xilingol Prefecture. Prefecture means an area of local government in some countries such as France. But the translation should conform to the historical background at that time, and the Xilingol league does not have its own government. Its original purpose is that in order to consolidate its rule and regulations, the government held a sovereign meeting calling in all counties every three years. “League” refers to a group of people or nations who have combined for a particular purpose. It fully conforms to the original meaning, but not to the potential readers.

2. Translation of Historical Vocabularies

In the translation of specific historical and cultural words, if there are no corresponding words in the target language, transliteration and semantic translation are commonly used methods to maintain its culture.

ST2. 1260年，忽必烈在开平府登基称汗。

TT2. In 1260, Kublai Khan proclaimed himself Great Khan in Kaiping Fu.

ST3. 可以按照蒙古旧俗举行一系列蒙古宗王和贵族的宴会、狩猎、祭祀等活动。

TT3. To hold various activities according to Mongolian folk-customs, like gatherings of Mongolian kings and nobles, hunting, worship, etc.

These two examples contain some official names of Chinese Mongolian tribes and they have no corresponding words in the target language culture. The translations should reflect the Mongolian history and culture. In ST2. “汗” in Mongolian is Hagan-Haan, corresponding to western word Khaghan-Khan. While the translation of Great Khan without any related knowledge of history and culture, is unfamiliar to foreigners. Adding a note, the superior name of the governor of certain nationalities, such as Mongolian, would become easier for them to understand. In ST3. “宗王” is similar to the “亲王”. And in Qing dynasty, “亲王” is translated into first-grade prince, (qin wang). So translation of kings can't accurately convey the cultural meaning of the word. And it should adopt the method of semantic translation to maintain its culture.

3. Translation of Cultural Vocabularies

Translators should consider whether the translation can be easily understood and accepted from the perspective of the foreigners. In the context of Chinese culture, literal translation sometimes makes foreigners obscure. In this case, the translator can translate by adopting the combination of transliteration and explanation, which can both keep the Chinese characteristics and help foreigners to understand accurately.

ST4. 在城市选址方面既满足了蒙古游牧民族生活方式的要求，又符合中国聚落选址的“风水理论”。

TT4. In respect of city location, Xanadu not only satisfied demands of Mongolian nomadic life means, but also met Geomantic Theory for location selection of China.

When translating “风水”, Youdao (online translation website) just translated as “fengshui” without any further explanation. While the proper translation should be “Fengshui, which refers to the location of a person’s house and ancestral grave supposed to have an influence on the fortune of a family and his off springs” And the “Geomantic” refers to the art of arranging buildings and areas in a good or lucky position. It is also appropriate. Only in this way, the unfamiliar Mongolian information can be fully understood and it is also in accordance with the identification.

B. Translation of Phrases

1. Translation of Geographical Phrases

ST5. “元上都遗址”是在都城规划方面具有蒙汉民族文化融合典范价值的中国北方草原都城遗址。

TT5. The Site of Xanadu is the site of an exemplary Chinese northern prairie capital which integrates the cultures of the Mongolian and Han nationalities in terms of capital planning.

ST6. 元上都城址的分布格局可分为城区（包括宫城、皇城、外城）、关厢和铁幡竿渠。

TT6. Layout pattern of Site of Xanadu contains urban area (Palace City, Imperial and Outer City), neighborhoods outside of city gates and Tiefan’gan Canal.

TT6. The city plan of the Site of Xanadu can be divided into city areas (including royal city, imperial city and outer city), Guanxiang areas and Tiefangan drainage.

“Guangxiang areas” cannot fully demonstrate what it is and what its function is. Target readers may only know the *pinyin*. Actually “关厢” refers to the nearby residents and areas. So it should be translated as “neighborhoods outside of city gates” by adapting the semantic translation method. The “Site of Xanadu” in TT5 is translated according to Mongolian usage.

In the translation of intangible cultural heritage, there are a lot of nationalistic terms which are totally unfamiliar to target readers. At this time, translators can use Chinese *pinyin* corresponding to Mongolian language with annotation to interpret the cultural terms.

ST7. 金莲川草原曾经是辽、金、元三代帝王的避暑胜地。

TT7. Xar Tala used to be the summer resort for the emperors of Liao, Jin (1115–1234), and Yuan dynasties.

ST8. 上都河被当地的牧民视作圣水。

TT8. Xandii Gool was regarded as sacred water by local herdsmen. (In Mongolian, it was called shangduyingaole. Gaole meant “river” in Chinese.)

In ST7, the origin of the Chinese 金莲川草原 has some background information.

Transliteration “Jinlianchuan Grassland” can only pass the literal meaning of the words to the reader, but the background information which it contains has to be lost. By adding the note, target readers will understand why they call this grassland Xar Tala and how beautiful it looks. They may strongly hope to see the grassland when they just read the translation. In ST8, the note gives supplementary information so that foreigners can understand the river in the form of Mongolian expression, and they can also be familiar with the corresponding Chinese *pinyin*.

In Chinese, the same meaning of words or phrases could have different translations in English, especially geographical terms, which requires that the translator in translating process pays attention to the local actual situation to choose the appropriate translation rather than simply giving the corresponding translation word by word.

ST9. 金莲川草原及反应当地地理特征的沙地和湿地等独特的景观。

TT9. Jinlianchuan Grassland and the unique landscapes which reflect the geographic features of the city such as sandy land, wetlands.

TT9. Xar Tala, as well as featured sceneries reflecting geographical features of the city, like sandlot, marsh.

In the two kinds of translated text, “沙地” and “湿地” have two completely different translations. But “sandy land” refers to the surface of the sand covered including desert, basically no vegetation on the land, not including water system of the beach. The surface of the Mongolian sand includes a small part of the wetland. Hunshandake Sandlot is located at an arid and half-arid area; it has very obvious continental climate characteristics. Because of the arid and little rain, there is a strong windy weather. Flowing sand hills, half-fixed sand hills, fixed sand hills, lowland among the sand hills, marshes and Zhaoer exist among each other. This creates an unusual landscape of the sandlot. Marsh grassland mainly refers to Xandii Gool marsh in the south of the Site. It is a narrow area in an east-west direction. And the area of the heritage and buffer area is about 79 square kilometers. The water system of the marsh is composed by Xandii Gool and Grassland Lake. When Chinese globeflowers blossom in summer, the meadow is filled with yellow, white, purple, and pink flowers, presenting a unique grassland landscape of marshes. While if “湿地” is translated into “wetland”, it only refers to the an area of wet land, which means the land is covered with or containing liquid, especially water. So

we should make the translation correctly reflect the message of the original text.

2. Translation of Cultural Phrases

In order to let the translation better understood by readers, the translator needs to consider the reader's background knowledge, by using different methods of translation to deal with a particular cultural phenomenon.

ST10. 随葬品出有灰陶盆、茶釉长瓶、黑釉瓶、双耳瓶、绿釉盖罐、釉陶香炉、白瓷碗、铁锈花罐、影青瓷小碗、龙泉窑大碗、钧窑杯。

TT10. The burial objects were of various types: grey pottery basins, tea-colored glazed bottles with long neck, black glazed bottles, two-handed bottles, green glazed jars with lids, glazed pottery incense burners, white porcelain bowls, jars with rust pattern, small shadowy celadon bowls, big bowls produced by Longquan Kiln, cups produced by Jun Kiln.

In translation, appropriate use of means of appealing plays an important role in improving the rhetorical effect of the translation and it is very important to achieve the intended purpose of the translation (Yuan, 2007). In TT10, “茶釉长瓶和双耳瓶” are translated into tea-colored glazed bottles with long neck, two-handed bottles. These translations are depending on the shape and outlook of the two items. If we just translate them in Chinese pinyin, target readers get no ideas about them, what they are like and why they are so named. “影青瓷小碗” is translated as small shadowy celadon bowls, which is more appropriate than being translated into shadow celadon bowls, because the latter is the combination of two words, shadow and celadon. The original meaning of “影” is shadowy, which is dark and full of shadows. It is somewhat related to the color.

C. Translation of Sentences

In the perspective of the sentence, due to different languages have different syntactic rules, in the process of translation sometimes translators need to rearrange a sentence order to make it more in line with the purposes and habits.

ST16. 自然环境包括与城市选址特征关系紧密的上都河、龙岗山和金莲川草原等自然要素，以及反映城市地理环境特征的沙地、湿地、森林草原和典型草原等特色景观；人文环境包括遗产所在地保存完好的蒙古族传统文化，以及城址周边分布于群山顶部的敖包所体现的草原游牧民族早期的山岳崇拜。

TT16. The natural environment contains natural elements closely related to location features of the city, like Xandii Gool, Longgang Hill and Xar Tala, as well as featured sceneries reflecting geographical features of the city, like sandlot, marsh, forest grassland and typical grassland; and the humanistic environment contains complete Mongolian traditional culture at the heritage site, and early mountain worship of the grassland nomadic nationality reflected by oboos distributed on tops of mountains around the city site.

In Chinese, all the attributives are before the nouns. And there are different processing methods when dealing with attributives more than a single word such as the present participle and the past participle.

In terms of vocabulary, there is the need for transformation of parts of speech, but they are not rigidly carried out in accordance with the original such direct translation.

ST17. 元代，这种聚会成为皇帝赐予的燕飧，凡新皇帝即位，群臣上尊号，册立皇后、太子，以及每年元旦，皇帝过生日，祭祀，春搜、秋狝，诸王朝会等等活动，都要举行宴会。

TT17. In the Yuan Dynasty, this assembly became a feast bestowed by the emperor. It would be held on occasions of most major events, including taking thrones, proposing of honorary titles to emperors by officials, crowning the empress, appointing the crown prince, celebrating New Year's Day and birthday of the emperor, holding sacrificial ceremonies, hunting excursions in the spring and the autumn and gathering of kings.

In these sentences, the verb phrases are all translated into noun phrases, which are more natural and more accustomed to the target readers' reading habits.

When the original information is too dense or difficult to understand, sometimes translators have to adopt the method of omission in the process of translation.

ST18. 宴会进行的时候，宣读成吉思汗祖训，有“喝盏”之礼，设专人高呼“月脱”（意为“请用”），大家敬酒。

TT18. On the banquets, the maxims of Genghis Khan would be read aloud and people would toast to each other.

Translators' subjectivity is that the translators as the subjects change and control the translation in the translation activities and it is also one of the characteristics of the original text's service for the translators (Liu, 2010). Translators can have certain subjectivity; and translation of intangible cultural heritage also has certain advantages. The text is not “the static text” (Chen, 2006). This sentence contains dense culture information. Making it clear to potential readers needs annotations and interpretations. For this kind of dense message, omission may be a more appropriate method. In translation, information about the Mongolian cultural vocabulary (“喝盏”) is omitted.

VI. CONCLUSION

By stimulation of economic globalization, the world has entered into the communication of globalization. The main content of the global communication is the international information dissemination. In the global wave, only by strengthening the publicity and information exporting, one country could let other countries know it so that its own culture can be integrated in cultural exchanges and be promoted to the outside world. This can also make the

information exporting countries better understood so as to reduce or avoid conflicts among countries. The importance of propaganda also highlights the importance of translation. In Inner Mongolia, intangible cultural heritage contains a large number of historical and cultural information which is one of the important ways to understand Mongolian people for foreigners. It is necessary for the local government to strengthen the translation to move towards the world in the fierce competition of the world cultural diversity. Only in this way, the broad and profound Mongolian culture can be recognized by the world. Translation can be defined as a kind of cross-cultural communication activity in a pretty high level. As the intangible cultural heritage protection has a lot of confusion, the translation of the intangible cultural heritage is also a heavy task (Dai, 2005). There are several translation requirements. First of all, historical information should be highlighted. Second, the translation should be accurate and authentic. Of course, translators should choose appropriate translation strategies. Both the interpretations of the translators and the readers are not expected to have any deviation in order to form correct and effective translation and even to help the readers have correct cultural associations. The original purpose of translation is to let foreigners understand. Due to different historical and cultural backgrounds, the translator should bear in mind that in the process of translation, there is a difference between internal propaganda and translation for global purpose. When translating between two languages, the primary task of the translator is to convey information, rather than just a language translation. Translators must seriously consider the characteristics of the two languages, cultural differences, and adopt different translation methods for different problems so that they can achieve the same reading effect.

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The Impact of Immediate and Delayed Written Pushed Output Produced by Pre-intermediate EFL Learners in Iran on Their Acquisition of English Verb Tenses

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Abstract—The present study aimed at investigating the impact of immediate and delayed written Pushed Output on the acquisition of English verb tenses. To this end, 32 freshmen majoring in English translation were selected as the participants of the study. After they were randomly assigned to three groups, i.e. two experimental groups Immediate Written Pushed Output (IWPO) group and Delayed Written Pushed Output (DWPO) group and a control group (CG), a pre-test was administered. Then for eight sessions all three groups received explicit instructions on English verb tenses. Subsequently, the experimental group was assigned to perform some output tasks whereas the control group was given conventional multiple choice tests instead. The EG1 (DWPO) had a 10-minute planning time before performing the tasks, while EG2 (IWPO) had to perform the tasks as soon as they received them. Every week the participants in all three groups received feedback on their performances. Following the treatment sessions, a post-test was run. Finally, the comparison of the three groups' performances on the posttest as well as the comparison of each group's performance on the pretest and posttest supported the facilitative effects of both delayed and immediate written pushed output on the acquisition of English verb tenses.

Index Terms—avoidance strategy, interlanguage development, output hypothesis, pushed output

I. INTRODUCTION

The current perspectives on second language acquisition (SLA) underscore the importance of the target language output produced by language learners in the process of SLA. It is believed that for instructed second language learning the presence of comprehensible input along with active production of linguistic output is indispensable. In other words, for successful SLA, exposure to input is an efficient but not sufficient element specifically for the development of grammatical accuracy.

Unlike Krashen (1982, 1985) who considers comprehensible input as the only factor leading to the acquisition of language and the development of grammatical accuracy, some scholars as Mackey and Oliver (2002); Mackey, Oliver and Leeman (2003); Mackey and Philp, (1998); McDonough (2005); Skehan (1998); and Swain (1985, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1998, 2000, 2001, and 2005) put greater emphasis on target language output produced by language learners.

Swain's (1985) studies of French immersion programs in Canada, which led to her output Hypothesis, reveal that in the settings where L2 learners are exposed to continuous and huge amount of target language input, they may ultimately reach native like comprehension and fluency in the target language, and speak fluently; nevertheless, "their productive skills remain far from native like, particularly with respect to grammatical competence" (Swain, 1991, p. 98). Swain attributes this to the lack of learner "output" in immersion programs. Swain (1995) hypothesizes that learners in immersion situations are not "pushed" to analyze the grammar of the target language because they can communicate their message without such a task. Swain's Output Hypothesis (1985, 1993, 1995, and 2005) holds that "the act of producing language (speaking or writing) constitutes, under certain circumstances, part of the process of second language learning" (Swain, 2005, p. 471). She contends that "output may stimulate learners to move from the semantic, open-ended nondeterministic, strategic processing prevalent in comprehension to the complete grammatical processing needed for accurate production" (Swain, 1995, p. 128). On the basis of Output Hypothesis, language production gives second language learners the opportunity to modify their performances and produce comprehensible output; it also prompts learners to stretch their existing interlanguage capacity to fill the gap in their existing interlanguage, that is to say the gap between what they want to say and what they can say. Swain believes that when learners are pushed to produce language, they are actually forced to think about syntax. According to Swain (1985), the role of output is "to provide opportunities for contextualized, meaningful use, to test out hypothesis about the target language, and to move

the learner from a purely semantic analysis of the language to a syntactic analysis of it" (p. 252). Swain further reiterates that this processing promotes more linguistic accuracy.

The effects of output on SLA have been investigated quite widely. The studies conducted in the realm of output hypothesis have mostly concentrated on the potential functions of pushed output in SLA including noticing (Schmidt, 1990; Schmidt & Frota, 1986; Swain, 1995), hypothesis testing (Swain, 1995), automaticity (Anderson, 1982; DeKeyser, 1997; McLaughlin, 1987), grammatical monitoring (Izumi, 2003), and stimulating syntactic processing (de Bot, 1996). Other studies undertaken by SLA scholars including Mackey and Philp (1998), Mackey and Oliver (2002) Mackey, Oliver, and Leeman (2003), and McDonough (2005), yielded support to Swain’s idea concerning the positive impact of pushed output on the acquisition of grammatical forms, nevertheless it may not be the mere production of output that affects the process of SLA. The channel features of the pushed output, the amount of planning time available before output production, the task types employed for output elicitation and many other factors may also impact the development of learners’ interlanguage towards the target language norms.

The myriad Output studies undertaken in the realm of ELT have examined the effect of L2 learners’ output on their L2 proficiency with regard to the accuracy, complexity, fluency. Some other studies consider the impacts of different intervening variables including proficiency level, task type, planning time, and the context of production. However, the focus of the present study is exclusively on the effects of Immediate and Delayed Written Pushed Output on the development of Iranian ESL learners’ interlanguage in terms of verb tenses. To this end, the researcher addressed the following questions:

1. Does Immediate Written Pushed Output (IWPO) enhance the acquisition of English verb tenses?
2. Does Delayed Written Pushed Output (DWPO) enhance the acquisition of English verb tenses?
3. Does the provision of planning time before performing the output tasks enhance the acquisition of English verb tenses?

II. METHOD

A. Participants

To achieve the objectives of the present study 32 students were selected from among 50 freshmen of Islamic Azad University of Karaj, Iran, majoring in English translation as the participants of the study. The selection was based on their scores on “Oxford Placement Test” (OPT) (Allan, 1992). The 32 participants were the ones whose scores fell within the range of pre- intermediate level.

B. Instrumentation

1. Oxford Placement Test (OPT)

The first instrument used in the course of this study was OPT which was implemented to determine the homogeneity of the participants concerning their English language proficiency. The estimated reliability for the OPT was .87 which is reported in table one.

TABLE 1.
THE ESTIMATED RELIABILITY FOR THE OPT

| | Mean | Variance | Items | K-R21 |
|-----|-------|----------|-------|-------|
| OPT | 51.73 | 183.83 | 100 | .87 |

2. Pretest and posttest

The pre-test and post-test implemented through the course of this study were two parallel grammar tests constructed by the researcher. The time considered for the completion of each test was 90 minutes. Due to their parallel nature, both tests enjoyed an identical structure, including grammaticality judgment, error correction, and Persian to English translation.

The grammaticality judgment and error correction parts of each test included 40 items, with 28 ungrammatical items each of which contained only one tense related mistake. The participants were required to put a tick mark next to the grammatically correct sentences, but underline the ungrammatical parts and write the correct form on top of the erroneous parts. The translation section of each test included a dialog in the participants’ L1 the translation of which into English entailed the use of the instructed verb tenses. In the construction of this section of the tests the utmost caution was exercised to minimize lexical difficulty, and when necessary, the needed lexical items were provided to eliminate possible sources of distraction or anxiety.

The content and item characteristics of the tests were scrupulously checked and compered by the researcher and two other colleagues to make sure that the tests were parallel. Moreover, the Pearson correlations between the OPT and the pretest and posttest of verb tenses were run to probe the empirical validity of the latter tests. Based on the results displayed in Table two it was concluded that both pretest (R = .65, P < .05) and Posttest (R = .68, P < .05) enjoy a significant degree of validity.

TABLE 2:
PEARSON CORRELATIONS OPT WITH PRETEST AND POSTTEST OF VERB TENSES

| | | OPT |
|----------|---------------------|--------|
| Pretest | Pearson Correlation | .652** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 32 |
| Posttest | Pearson Correlation | .683** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 32 |

The pretest and posttest were run prior to the treatment, and one week after the last treatment successively.

The participants' responses to the translation, error identification and error correction items were scored through subtracting the number of the incorrect use, identification or correction of each tense-related structure from the total number of the obligatory contexts for those structures. 1 point for each correct and 0 point for each incorrect use, identification or correction was assigned.

3. Output tasks

Ortega (1999, p. 112) summarizes different types of tasks which can be used for elicitation of output as "story-retelling, picture description, decision-making, personal information exchange, giving instructions, giving directions, telephone answering-machine messages, summary of conversation, general discussion questions, and academic lectures". In this study the researcher implemented structured picture description and Persian to English translation tasks the completion of which entails the intended grammatical structures.

The picture narrative tasks were implemented on the ground that they have been frequently used in output studies (Foster & Skehan, 1996; Shehadeh, 2003; Tavakoli & Skehan, 2005; Gilabert, 2007; Khatib & Bagherkazemi, 2011). Moreover, according to Tavakoli & Skehan (2005), "using narratives is justified in terms of construct validity, reliability and authenticity of the test" (p. 249).

The use of translation tasks, on the other hand, is also justified by their use in output studies (Macaro & Masterman, 2006; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 1992) and their potential ability in preventing language learners from using avoidance strategy. As put by Kormos (2006), when language learners struggle to produce target language that is above their level of proficiency, they may turn to avoidance strategies like message abandonment, message reduction, and message replacement. Kormos (2006) explains that using these strategies "does not actually solve the original problem but rather helps the speaker get over the problem situation and thus avoid a complete communication breakdown" (p. 141). Thus, the researcher decided to employ translation tasks to preclude any possible avoidance based variation in the output of the participants.

In selecting every session's tasks, due caution was exercised to make certain that the needed tense for the completion of the tasks had been instructed. Translation tasks had the same features as the translation section of the pre and post-tests. It should be noted that to examine the tasks in terms of length and difficulty a pilot study was carried out and the needed modifications were incorporated to adjust them to the proficiency level of the participants.

C. Target Forms

The grammatical forms targeted in the present study were English verb tenses. The choice of verb forms was due to the observed grammatical incompetency of EFL learners specifically in the accurate use of verb tenses evidenced in their oral and written output. The importance of the tense-aspect acquisition is also reiterated by other authors such as Shirai, and Kuruno (1998). Asserting the importance of the acquisition of tense and aspect, Shirai and Kuruno point out that "from a functional viewpoint, tense-aspect is an important communicative device to establish time reference as well as to express how the speaker views the temporal contour of a situation" (p. 246). Moreover, as Bardovi-Harlig (2000) mentions, the acquisition of tense and aspect systems has been emphasized in several descriptive and pedagogical accounts of language and has always been an important part of the curricula of many language programs.

III. PROCEDURES

This study was conducted during a whole semester on 32 participants at pre- intermediate level of proficiency who were selected from among fifty freshmen on the basis of their marks on OPT (Allan 1992). The 32 participants were then assigned to three homogeneous groups, namely IWPO, DWPO, and Control on random bases. A week later they were given a pre-test to determine their entry behavior regarding their knowledge of English verb tenses. Over the following eight weeks, all three groups received explicit grammar instructions along with sentence level practice exercises. After the instruction, every session the members of the two experimental groups received some output tasks. Meanwhile, the members of the control group were required to do a conventional multiple choice test covering the newly presented structures. However, the members of (IWPO) group were assigned to start the tasks immediately after receiving them. The same procedure was used with (DWPO) group, but they were given a 10 - minute planning time before they did the output tasks. Finally every session the learners' papers were corrected and the participants of all three groups received explicit teacher feedback together with conference feedback on their performances on the tasks and tests the next week. After eight weeks of treatment, a post -test was run to check the effectiveness of the treatments.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

Incorporating a pretest and post-test design, the present study was undertaken to test the following two null hypotheses:

H01: Immediate Written Pushed Output (IWPO) does not enhance the acquisition of English verb tenses.

H02: Delayed Written Pushed Output (DWPO) does not enhance the acquisition of English verb tenses.

H03: The provision of planning time before performing the output tasks does not enhance the acquisition of English verb tenses.

Statistically, the assumption behind the null hypotheses is that there are no significant differences between the experimental groups' mean scores on the pretest and posttest. In order to compare the experimental groups' performance on the pretest and posttest a repeated measures ANOVA was run, using the 16th version of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), setting the level of significance at 0.05. It should be mentioned that before running the ANOVA necessary caution was exercised to make sure that the main assumptions of repeated measure ANOVA, were met. The present data (OPT, Pretest, Posttest) are measured on an interval scale. The assumption of independence was also met since none of the subjects participated in more than one group. The result of normality check measured through the ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their respective standard errors is displayed in Table three. The ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their standard errors were all within the ranges of plus and minus 1.96 (Field; 2009). Based on these results, it was concluded that the present data enjoyed normal distributions.

TABLE 3:
NORMALITY TESTS

| Group | | N | Skewness | | | Kurtosis | | |
|---------|----------|----|-----------|------------|--------|-----------|------------|--------|
| | | | Statistic | Std. Error | Ratio | Statistic | Std. Error | Ratio |
| DWPO | OPT | 10 | -.355 | .687 | -0.517 | -1.609 | 1.334 | -1.206 |
| | Pretest | 10 | -.326 | .687 | -0.475 | -1.351 | 1.334 | -1.013 |
| | Posttest | 10 | -.292 | .687 | -0.425 | -1.261 | 1.334 | -0.945 |
| IWPO | OPT | 12 | .153 | .637 | 0.240 | -1.308 | 1.232 | -1.062 |
| | Pretest | 12 | -.167 | .637 | -0.262 | -1.208 | 1.232 | -0.981 |
| | Posttest | 12 | -.199 | .637 | -0.312 | -1.038 | 1.232 | -0.843 |
| Control | OPT | 10 | .261 | .687 | 0.380 | -1.909 | 1.334 | -1.431 |
| | Pretest | 10 | -.790 | .687 | -1.150 | -.205 | 1.334 | -0.154 |
| | Posttest | 10 | -.790 | .687 | -1.150 | -.205 | 1.334 | -0.154 |

IWPO = Immediate written pushed output and DWPO = Delayed written pushed output

The assumption of homogeneity of variances will be discussed when reporting the results of the one-way ANOVA.

A. Homogeneity of the Participants

As was mentioned, to select homogeneous groups of the participants, OPT was run and the ones within the range of pre- intermediate were selected as the participants of the study. Moreover, the OPT marks of the selected group were compared. As the results indicate in table four, there were not any significant differences between the mean scores of the groups on OPT ($F(2, 29) = 1.76, p > .05, \omega^2 = .04$). The results represent a weak to moderate effect size. Therefore, the groups enjoyed the same levels of general language proficiency prior to the main study.

TABLE 4:
ONE-WAY ANOVA OPT BY GROUPS

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-----|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|------|
| OPT | Between Groups | 48.969 | 2 | 24.484 | 1.764 | .189 |
| | Within Groups | 402.500 | 29 | 13.879 | | |
| | Total | 451.469 | 31 | | | |

The descriptive statistics for OPT were tabularized in table number five

TABLE 5:
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OPT BY GROUPS

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | Minimum | Maximum | |
|-----|---------|------|----------------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|---------|---------|------|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | | |
| OPT | DWPO | 10 | 56.900 | 4.5080 | 1.4256 | 53.675 | 60.125 | 50.0 | 62.0 |
| | IWPO | 12 | 55.000 | 3.1042 | .8961 | 53.028 | 56.972 | 50.0 | 59.0 |
| | Control | 10 | 53.800 | 3.5528 | 1.1235 | 51.258 | 56.342 | 50.0 | 59.0 |
| | Total | 32 | 55.219 | 3.8162 | .6746 | 53.843 | 56.595 | 50.0 | 62.0 |

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met on OPT (Levene' $F(2, 29) = 2.03, P > .05$).

TABLE 6:
HOMOGENEITY OF VARIANCES OPT BY GROUPS

| | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|-----|------------------|-----|-----|------|
| OPT | 2.035 | 2 | 29 | .149 |

B. Pretest

A week after the selection of the participants of the study a pre-test was administered to determine their entry knowledge of English verb tenses. Later a One-Way ANOVA was run to compare the three groups pretests the results of which indicated no significant differences between the mean scores of the groups on pretest of verb tenses ($F(2, 29) = 1.14, p > .05, \omega^2 = .009$). The result does represent a weak effect size. Therefore, the groups enjoyed the same levels of knowledge on verb tenses prior to the main study. Tables seven, eight, and nine summarize the results of the One-Way ANOVA of the pretest by groups, the descriptive statistics of the pretest by groups, and homogeneity of variances of the pretest by groups respectively.

TABLE 7:
ONE-WAY ANOVA PRETEST OF VERB TENSES BY GROUPS

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---------|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|------|
| Pretest | Between Groups | 52.583 | 2 | 26.292 | 1.142 | .333 |
| | Within Groups | 667.417 | 29 | 23.014 | | |
| | Total | 720.000 | 31 | | | |

TABLE 8:
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS PRETEST OF VERB TENSES BY GROUPS

| | | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | Minimum | Maximum |
|--|---------|----|--------|----------------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|---------|---------|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| | | | | | | Pretest | DWPO | | |
| | IWPO | 12 | 52.417 | 4.6213 | 1.3340 | 49.480 | 55.353 | 45.0 | 59.0 |
| | Control | 10 | 52.300 | 5.7745 | 1.8260 | 48.169 | 56.431 | 41.0 | 59.0 |
| | Total | 32 | 51.500 | 4.8193 | .8519 | 49.762 | 53.238 | 41.0 | 59.0 |

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met on the Pretest (Levene' $F(2, 29) = 1.33, P > .05$).

TABLE 9:
HOMOGENEITY OF VARIANCES PRETEST OF VERB TENSES BY GROUPS

| | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|---------|------------------|-----|-----|------|
| Pretest | 1.337 | 2 | 29 | .278 |

C. Answers to the Research Questions

The analysis of the data gathered in the course of the study indicated that there were significant differences between the mean scores of the groups on posttest of verb tenses ($F(2, 29) = 12.09, p < .05, \omega^2 = .49$ it does represent a large effect size).

TABLE 10:
ONE-WAY ANOVA POSTTEST OF VERB TENSES BY GROUPS

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|--------|------|
| Posttest | Between Groups | 701.952 | 2 | 350.976 | 12.095 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 841.517 | 29 | 29.018 | | |
| | Total | 1543.469 | 31 | | | |

Table 11 displays the descriptive statistics for posttest of verb tenses.

TABLE 11:
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS POSTTEST OF VERB TENSES BY GROUPS

| | | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | Minimum | Maximum |
|--|---------|----|--------|----------------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|---------|---------|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| | | | | | | Posttest | DWPO | | |
| | IWPO | 12 | 65.583 | 5.6962 | 1.6444 | 61.964 | 69.203 | 56.0 | 74.0 |
| | Control | 10 | 54.300 | 5.7745 | 1.8260 | 50.169 | 58.431 | 43.0 | 61.0 |
| | Total | 32 | 60.781 | 7.0562 | 1.2474 | 58.237 | 63.325 | 43.0 | 74.0 |

Although the F-value of 5.89 indicates significant differences between the means of the groups, the post-hoc Scheffe's tests was run to compare them two by two.

Based on the results displayed in Table 10 it was concluded that:

A: The Immediate Written Pushed Output (IWPO) outperformed the control group on the posttest of English verb tenses ($MD = 11.28, P < .05$). Thus the first null-hypothesis was rejected.

B: The Delayed Written Pushed Output (DWPO) outperformed the control group on the posttest of English verb tenses ($MD = 7.20, P < .05$). Thus the second null-hypothesis was rejected.

C: There was not any significant difference between the Immediate and Delayed Pushed Outputs on the posttest of verb tenses (MD = 4.08, P > .05). Thus the third null-hypothesis was not rejected.

TABLE 12:
POST-HOC SCHEFFE'S TESTS

| (I) Group | (J) Group | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|------------|------|-------------------------|-------------|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| DWPO | Control | 7.2000* | 2.4091 | .020 | .985 | 13.415 |
| | IWPO | 4.0833 | 2.3065 | .226 | -1.867 | 10.034 |
| IWPO | Control | 11.2833* | 2.3065 | .000 | 5.333 | 17.234 |

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met on Pretest (Levene' F (2, 29) = .598, P > .05).

TABLE 13:
HOMOGENEITY OF VARIANCES POSTTEST OF VERB TENSES BY GROUPS

| | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|----------|------------------|-----|-----|------|
| Posttest | .598 | 2 | 29 | .557 |

V. DISCUSSION

Generally, this study addressed the effects of written pushed output tasks with and without pre task planning time on EFL learners' acquisition of English verb tenses. Based on the results of the data analysis, it can be mentioned that language learners' Written Pushed Output, both with and without planning time, used as a means of practice can have positive effects on EFL learners' acquisition of English verb tenses.

The first research questions investigated the effect of IWPO, used as a means to practice the newly presented grammatical forms, on the acquisition of English verb tenses. The analysis of the data indicated that the IWPO group outperformed the control group on the posttest of English verb tenses (MD = 11.28, P < .05). On the basis of this result, it can be concluded that pushing learners to put their newly gained knowledge of form into use while performing meaningful and contextualized written output tasks, even under the pressure of time, can contribute to directing EFL learners' attention to language form and in turn lead to the acquisition of language form and higher degree of accuracy. This finding is consistent with the finding of Yuan & Ellis (2003) who believe that on-line planning is a useful methodological operation through which accuracy develops.

The Second research question addressed the effect of DWPO on the acquisition of English verb tenses. As the results of the data analysis indicated, the DWPO group outperformed the control group on the posttest of English verb tenses (MD = 7.20, P < .05) which reveals that output produced from written channel and with planning time can have similar positive effect on the development of grammatical accuracy and more specifically on the accurate use of English verb tenses. This finding is in line with the findings of scholars like Foster and Skehan, 1996; Mehnert, 1998; Skehan and Foster, 1997. On the other hand, studies conducted by some other scholars like Crookes, 1989; Ortega, 1999, and Wigglesworth, 1997 do not support the finding of this study.

It should be noted that these studies were mostly product-oriented and investigated the effects of planning time on the immediate linguistic output of their participants, whereas the present study investigated longer effects of planning time on the accuracy of EFL learners, i.e., in this study planning time was provided during the treatment sessions and not before the post and delayed posttests.

The third research question concerned the effect of pre-task planning time before performing output tasks on the acquisition of English verb tenses. Statistically, the assumption behind the third null hypothesis is that there are no significant differences between the IWPO and DWPO groups' mean scores on the pretest and posttest. The result of the data analysis indicated no significant difference between the scores of the two groups on the posttest (MD = 4.08, P > .05), and accordingly the third null-hypothesis was not rejected while it was supposed that pre task planning time could give the participants the chance to summon their meta- linguistic knowledge. The results of this study are not in line with the ideas of scholars like Skehan (1996) who contend that when learners are deprived from pre-task planning time and they are pushed to on- line communication, they may resort to communicative strategies and lexicalized language production, that is, they may attend merely to meaning and disregard the form and this in turn may lead to fossilization of learners' interlanguage mistakes. This unexpected result might be due to the fact that unlike most of the one-shot output studies which investigate the effects of provision of planning time on L2 accuracy, complexity or fluency, this study considered the effects of planning time from another perspective. Here what was investigated was not the effect of these two variables on the accuracy in a single specific output task but on the development of the participants' accuracy in the course of continual experience of being pushed to produce L2 output with and without planning time. These findings might be attributable to individual learner differences, i.e., learners' affective variables. Therefore, a larger sample size might have yielded different results.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The present study was inspired by Swain's Output Hypothesis and investigated the effects of Immediate and Delayed Written Pushed Output on the acquisition of English verb tenses by Iranian EFL learners. The results of this study, supporting Swain's Output Hypothesis and the findings of other scholars as Mackey and Philp (1998), Mackey and Oliver (2002) Mackey, Oliver, and Leeman (2003), and McDonough (2005), confirm the positive effects of providing language learners with output opportunities, as a means of practice, on the acquisition of language forms. This study with its focus on the written channel of learner output indicated that written output, regardless of temporal features of its production, can have beneficial effect on the development of grammatical accuracy. Nevertheless, here a word of caution is in order. This study suffers from some limitations including the small number of the participants of the study, and limited period of data collection (ten 90-minut-sessions). A longer period of data collection may lead to better description of changes in learners' interlanguage.

The findings of the present study may have theoretical and pedagogical advantages in the field of ELT. Theoretically, they may add to the body of knowledge concerning the impact of pushed output, from written channel of production and under two different temporal conditions, on the process and quality of SLA. Moreover, in the present study the findings of previous output studies which are mainly based on research conducted in European milieu are tested in a non-European environment, Iran. Besides, pedagogically, it might provide ELT Curriculum designers and practitioners with useful information for designing and/or adopting ELT curricula, tasks and activities.

Note: The List of Abbreviations

OPT = Oxford Placement Test

IWPO= Immediate Written Pushed Output

DWPO=Delayed Written Pushed Output

EG = Experimental Group

CG = Control Group

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Gender Differences in the Undergraduates' Attitudes towards EFL

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Abstract—In this thesis, the seniors from six main universities in Tianjin are investigated on their attitudes towards EFL. Data are collected through questionnaires and analyzed by gender which shows that girls hold a more positive attitude to EFL than boys.

Index Terms—EFL, attitude, gender difference

I. INTRODUCTION

A learner's social psychology consists of his attitude, motivation, self-identify, and so on, which are important components of the research on language learning. Attitude is how people consider themselves and the state of their social existence, which is a stable internal psychological statement with a certain structure. As a kind of important social psychological phenomenon, attitude has some features, such as, sociability, subjective experiential infectiousness and dynamic function.

S. Rosenberg and C. I. Hovland (2003) consider that attitude consists of three elements, which are believed to be cognition, emotion, and behavior tendency. This point of view seems to have been already approbated by most social psychologists. As a matter of fact, the cognitive element of the attitude is a statement with judgments, which includes the understanding and comprehension of the attitudinal objective. Emotion means emotional experience of the attitude towards the attitudinal objective, such as favor, averseness, sympathy and sneer. Behavior tendency is a kind of internal response, which is a prepared state kept by a person before acting (Ma, 2014). In the light of attitude measuring, it seems obvious that emotion index will be more effective and convenient for using than other indexes if we make an investigation on the attitude of the students. No one denies that English study is influenced by the interaction of cognition and emotion. (Chang, Kang & Wang, 2005, p.730)

Because attitude is a kind of inward psychogenic state, it is not visible. So researchers can only find it by observing people's external actions. Different styles of scales have been widely used in attitude measurement, such as equal interval scales, summated rating scales and semantic differential scales. All of these scales are auto critical methods. Attitude is not congenital but must be acquired from process of socialization. Once shaped, it will be relatively stable. The society he lives in, the family he is living with, the companion he is working in and the organization he is affiliated with all play momentous roles in forming one's attitude.

Many researches on English learners' motivation have been made and some achievements have been gained. Some of them mainly consider that students take the College English Test with clear tendency of utilitarian purposes. (Ma, 2005: 259; Ma, 2014) The reason why most Chinese university students have to work hard at English learning is not because they have a very strong motive of learning it, but because they have to adapt themselves to the social demands. (Huang & Wen, 2005: 34; Ma, 2014) However, the function of CET is limited in evaluating the present quality of English teaching in Chinese universities. (Tang, 2005: 59; Ma, 2014) The present test is claimed to be lacking of reliability and validity, because it is designed and performed in one aspect as to be devoid of having ever tested the students of their social communicative ability. (Wang, 2005: 52) In recent years, the employers in China are gradually turning to be dissatisfied with the university student for their poor comprehensive ability of English. At the same time, the subjects are just guided by CET without paying due attention to developing their communicative competence. (Tang, 2005: 65) A program directed by Gao Yihong (2004: foreword), is focusing itself on a multi-angular and systematical study on the motivation and the self-identification of Chinese university English learners, which has made considerable achievement because of the professional and rigorous scientific approach.

It seems that among those researches mentioned above, the gender difference of the college students' attitude to CET has not been well studied (Ma, 2014). Due to some limitations, the author has not found much data in this field (Ma, 2014).

II. RESEARCH METHOD

Questionnaires are often in common use for multifarious investigations because it's handy and convenient to be controlled (Ma, 2014). For those advantages the author again chooses this method to accomplish the investigation (Ma, 2014).

A. *Research Objective*

This research is merely conducted among a small crowd. As a special colony, senior students have to face job-hunting after graduation (Ma, 2014). But previous researches are generally aimed at an investigation on the freshmen and sophomores or third year students (Ma, 2014). Hence, the objective of this thesis is aimed at seniors from non-English majors who have passed the written-examination of CET. Those who have not passed the test are not to be chosen for the reason that their attitudes are not to be affected by the pressure (Ma, 2014).

B. *Process of Research*

The questionnaire is a descriptive one, compiled and made up of three parts with 31 questions. The first part is composed of some basic information about the student and his or her English level (Ma, 2014). The second part, which adopts the method of Likert scale, is made of single choice questions with 20 declarative sentences which should be chosen from five options to best express the student's attitude. The last part is multinomial choice with 6 questions (Ma, 2014).

46 questionnaires are handed out by some senior students in six main universities in Tianjin, which are Nankai University, Tianjin Polytechnic University, Tianjin University, Tianjin Medical University, Tianjin Normal University, and Tianjin Commercial University, and 41 questionnaires are valid with a rate of 89% (Ma, 2014). Among the subjects, there are 23 male students from different universities, and 18 female students, who are from 14 different majors of liberal arts, science, medicine, and art etc (Ma, 2014).

There are many influential factors which are involved in the formation of one's attitude, so some of those factors need to be controlled in certain context. And with the imbalanced development of Chinese economy and education, there are some differences in people's command of English language in different regions (Ma, 2014). To make the result more typical and to limit the influence of regional difference, the author chooses students who come from different regions of the north and the south in China (Ma, 2014). Besides, gender ratio, major of the students and representatives of the universities are all considered. Since the questionnaire is to describe the seniors' attitudes towards College English Test but not to be used as research tools, the data collected was not processed for complicated statistical analysis (Ma, 2014).

III. DATA ANALYSIS

To analyze the gender difference of the attitudes between the boys and the girls who are tested, in this part, data is counted separately. In the attitude investigation items, girls get higher marks than boys. Two-thirds of them are marked over 40, which is about ten percentages higher than the boys'. All of the three students who are marked lower than 30 are boys. Therefore, we may easily arrive at a conclusion that girls hold a more positive attitude to College English Test compared to boys.

Boys and girls appear to have differences more or less in most of the items we have investigated. The differences are especially embodied in items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18 and 20. Specific analysis is given as follows:

In item 1, half of the girls approve that the high score that the university students have got in CET could prove that they are good at English learning. Correspondingly, fewer boys do the same (35%) and nearly one-third of them (30%) have no idea about this. That means boys do not think there would be some relationship between their grades and their ability of learning. It seems that boys hold a more rational attitude towards CET than girls.

In item 2, 61% of the girls agreed that the ability to use English as a foreign language is actually much more important than CET school reports, while, as high as 83% of the boys did the same. We can see that boys put more emphasis on what they have mastered. More boys think that in the future their employers would consider it more important for them to speak and write in English than to get high grades in the examinations at the universities.

In item 3, 78% of the boys and 50% of the girls complain that the current College English Test is not practical. Once more we have found that students are not satisfied with College English Test. More boys than girls hold a negative attitude towards CET because they think that the test is lack of practical contents.

In item 4, more boys hold a viewpoint that the current College English Test could evaluate the students' present work on English and it could bring their present state of English learning to light, and at the same time, there are also more boys than girls who disagree with it. This might show that the boys' attitude is more definite and more radical than that of the girls.

In item 6, more girls give positive opinions to the current reformation in the content and the modality of College English Test, only 30% of the boys present similar view. This shows that girls are more optimistic than boys in the belief that the test could be revised to focus itself on testing the communicative ability of the students and made itself more acceptable to the public.

Nevertheless, in item 7, as high as 39% of the boys disagree with the school reports, which has been an important part of the reform on CET, but they agree that this reduces the value of CET. As many as half of the girls have no clear ideas about it because they do not feel any difference after the reform. This might show that girls are not very sensitive to whether CET school reports or CET certificates are issued, and more boys than girls are dissatisfied with CET school reports and consider the new method of issuing CET grades in the form of school reports a disaster.

In item 9, there are 22% of the girls who consider themselves of going abroad or hunting jobs in foreign-invested

companies after obtaining CET school reports, however, only 4% of the boys have the same idea. Dramatically, 61% of the girls oppose that they would go abroad for further studies or work in overseas-funded enterprises after their graduation, a percentage even higher than that of the boys. Thus, girls express themselves more strongly than boys about this problem. More girls than boys wouldn't relate their future employments with their CET performances.

In item 11, there are no boys who oppose the statement that it is of more importance for them to master professional knowledge rather than English while 12% of girls do so. The author conjectures that the phenomenon is caused by the pressure of job-hunting for girls. This result exactly echoes with the statistics of item 16, that CET school report is more important for girls. This seems that girls feel more pressured in their hunting for decent jobs than boys, although they, as mentioned in the above paragraph, don't think that their future jobs should be related with English.

In item 13, though there are 45% of the girls who agree that College English is useless, almost an equal quantity of the students is with the opposite opinions. The boys' choice is much evident that 69% of them are approvers and about one-fifths (21%) are disapprovers. More of the male subjects than the female subjects think that the current College English course is not in conformity with what they need.

In item 14, 56% of the girls feel they cannot learn enough knowledge from professional English courses, whereas fewer than one-fifths (17%) of them are against it. Most of the boys do not agree, and only 30% of them uphold the statement. This reveals the fact that more girls are dissatisfied with the present professional English course while more boys think that they can actually learn something useful from this course.

As mentioned above, in item 16, 67% of the girls think CET school report is much more important for them. While, only 35% of the boys hold the same opinion. This discloses such information that the girls rate CET school report much higher than the boys and it might be true that gender discrimination in job-hunting still exists unfortunately in a wide range of the walks of life.

In item 17, the girls holding opposed attitudes are in excess of the female approvers, whose proportion is 44% to 39%. 17% of the boys hold the negative opinion, much less than that of girls. More female subjects are requiring their teachers of improving their teaching methods and their teaching skills.

In item 18, as high as 22% of the girls argue against the idea that professional English is necessary. Only 8% of the boys disagree with it. The reason is not found in this research and needed to make more investigations.

In item 20, 61% of the boys meet with the difficulty of speaking English freely. However, the condition is not so terrible for girls as only 28% of them have to face this problem. This shows that more male subjects than female subjects feel it is urgent for them to improve their ability to speak English and it might be much easier for girls to learn a foreign language than for boys.

IV. LIMITATIONS

Because of limited time and lack of references, the investigated items in the questionnaire are a little scattered and need to be perfected (Ma, 2014). Another problem is that questionnaires are all handed out by some seniors, so students investigated might not be serious enough in their choices. (Ma, 2014) There might also be some misunderstandings on the same item for different students, which will interfere with them in making their choices (Ma, 2014).

If the subjects investigated are from different universities, and from different cities, this investigation would be more convincing (Ma, 2014). If there are some voices from the employers, it would be more persuading (Ma, 2014).

Though the investigated subjects are various and comparatively typical, the quantity of investigation is not big enough (Ma, 2014). It is still worthy of doing further researches in the future and most of the limitations can be settled (Ma, 2014).

APPENDIX. QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear friend,

Hi. This questionnaire is designed to make a survey on your attitude towards CET-4 and CET-6. Please answer the following questions carefully and express what you really feel about the test according to the following requirements. This will take you some of your precious time and we are grateful to your help.

Part One: Background information.

Please write your corresponding information on the line or put a tick on the line.

I am _____ male or _____ female.

I am/have been graduated from _____ University.

My major is _____.

I am from _____ (Province or city).

I have passed _____ CET-4 or _____ CET-6 or _____ both.

Part Two: Please choose one item that best expresses your opinion and click the corresponding letter marked with A, B, C, D or E.

1. I think that excellent achievements of the CET-4 and CET-6 may prove that my ability of learning is remarkable, and poor performance may show that my ability of learning is also poor.

A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.

- D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.
2. I think the practical ability of using English language is more important than the results of the CET-4 and CET-6.
A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.
D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.
3. I think that what CET-4 and CET-6 test us is not very practical.
A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.
D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.
4. I think that CET-4 and CET-6 can test out my level of learning in College English course.
A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.
D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.
5. I think that the results of CET-4 and CET-6 may show the actual performance of my English language learning.
A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.
D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.
6. I think that the changes that have taken place in the reform of CET-4 and CET-6 have made great progress in testing a foreign language.
A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.
D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.
7. I think that the school report of CET-4 and CET-6 by issuing a report card instead of the original certificates does nothing but reduces the importance of the test itself.
A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.
D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.
8. I think that the school report of CET-4 and CET-6 is a first step forward to the success of hunting a job.
A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.
D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.
9. After I have passed the tests, I am considering of the possibility of going abroad for further studies or entering an overseas-funded enterprise to work.
A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.
D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.
10. I think that the school report of CET-4 and CET-6 is much more reasonable than the certificates of qualification.
A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.
D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.
11. I think that professional skills and knowledge are more important than the grades of CET-4 and CET-6.
A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.
D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.
12. I think that the textbooks of College English are far more different in contents from what CET-4 and CET-6 test us.
A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.
D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.
13. I think that the courses of College English have been proven to be of limited use.
A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.
D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.
14. I think that I have learned nearly nothing of use in the course of professional English for non-English majors.
A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.
D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.
15. I think that the courses should be designed to include more for the students' practical needs in the future.
A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.
D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.
16. I think that the original CET-4 and CET-6 certificates are of more importance to me than the present school reports.
A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.
D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.
17. I think that the results of the CET-4 and CET-6 are closely related with the teacher's performance.
A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.
D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.
18. I think that professional English for non-English majors is quite necessary.
A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.
D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.
19. I think that it is more difficult to improve my writing than my speaking in English.
A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.
D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.

20. I think it is very difficult for me to improve my speaking in English.
 A. I agree with it very much. B. I agree with it. C. I don't know.
 D. I don't agree. E. I don't agree with it at all.

Section Three

Please choose one or more items that most suits to your opinion, you may tick the corresponding letter marked with A, B, C, D.

- What do you plan to do after your graduation?
 A. For further studies B. Joining the work force. C. Going abroad. D. Other choices.
- What courses have you attended before?
 A. The training courses for CET-4 and CET-6.
 B. The training courses for postgraduate entrance examination.
 C. TOEFL
 D. IELTS
 E. GRE
 F. Oral English
 G. No courses.
- What ability do you want to improve yourself most?
 A. Oral English B. Listening comprehension C. Reading comprehension. D. Writing. E. Translation
- What kind of job do you like to hunt?
 A. State-owned enterprise B. overseas-funded enterprise C. Joint venture
 D. a private enterprise E. Government F. Self employed
- Which area would you like to work in?
 A. The Pearl River area B. The Yangtze River area C. The Bohai Bay area
 D. The Northeast Part of China. E. The central plain area
 F. The Southwestern Part of China. G. The Western part of China.
 H. The Northwestern part of China.
- Which kind of place do you like to work in China?
 A. big cities b. medium-sized cities C. small cities D. towns E. villages

Thank you very much for having filled in this form of questionnaire. Best wishes to you for a successful career!

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Construct Validity of C-tests: A Factorial Approach

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Abstract—This study explored the latent variables underlying C-Tests by analyzing the performance of 416 undergraduate and graduate university students majoring in English Language and Literature, English Language Teaching and English Translation in Mashhad, Iran. The C-Tests designed by Klein-Braley (1997) were changed into two other types of tests called Spelling Test and Decontextualised C-Test and administered along with the disclosed Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), a semantic schema-based cloze multiple choice item test (S-Test) and a lexical knowledge test (LKT). The application of principal component analysis (PCA) to the responses of the participants on the three tests, i.e., C-Tests, Spelling Test and Decontextualised C-Test, revealed two components called *language proficiency* and *direction specificity* in this study. While the inclusion of the S-Test, TOEFL and the LKT in the PCA yielded the same two components, their rotation brought about the highest loadings of the included tests as well as the moderate loadings of the C-Tests on the first component, validating them as proficiency measures of language. However, they loaded the highest on the second component along with the Spelling Test and Decontextualised C-Test and thus confirmed their spelling and direction specificity. The implications of the study are discussed and suggestions are made for future research.

Index Terms—C-tests, language proficiency, schema theory, construct validity

I. INTRODUCTION

Theoretical discussion of measuring language proficiency has been a largely mute topic in the field of applied linguistics due to the lack of consensus on defining language proficiency in an operationalized and universally accepted manner. Kelly (1978), for example, asserted that “it is the purpose of a proficiency test to assess whether or not candidates are indeed capable of participating in typical communication events from the specified communication situations(s)” (p. 350). The assertion reflects the era in which little room, if any, was given to any foreign language teaching methods other than communicative approach.

Wilkins (1976) declared that communicative tests should seek answers to such questions as the test takers’ ability to perform certain functions in appropriate social environment. Based on several typologies of language functions outlined by scholars such as Austin (1961), Halliday (1973), Searle (1966), Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), and van Ek (1976) some attempts were made to develop communicative tests. Farhady (1980, 1983), for example, developed and validated the first functional test to measure the English proficiency of students who used English as their second language. However, these tests never gained popularity because translating functions into items measuring linguistic competence within social contexts proved to be too difficult.

Although communicative approach has paved the way for a fairly large number of teaching methods such as Task-Based Language Teaching (e.g., Belgar & Hunt 2002), it has *not* resulted in developing any new and widely accepted language proficiency test in the “Post-Method” era suggested by Brown (2002). Still the tests are developed on structures and vocabulary as language components and are presented either orally or in writing to measure skills such as listening and reading. These components and skills are, for example, measured in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). According to the official site of Educational Testing Service (ETS 2010), the TOEFL is “*the most widely respected* English-language test in the world, recognized by more than 7,500 colleges, universities and agencies in more than 130 countries.”

C-Tests (Klein-Braley, 1981; Ratz & Klein-Braley 1981) are, however, among the few alternative testing methods which differ from the proficiency measures such as the TOEFL in terms of their underlying construct validity. As a type of cloze tests, they are said to be based on reduced redundancy theory which approaches proficiency in a given language as the ability to understand a distorted message by formulating valid guesses about a certain percentage of omitted elements (Spolsky, 1973). C-Tests present test takers with some carefully chosen short texts in which the second half of every second word is removed from its second sentence onwards so that they can restore the mutilated part by activating their learned proficiency of a foreign language.

In 1997 Klein-Braley administered C-Tests with 1) a security language proficiency test called DELTA, 2) two cloze elides (Manning, 1986) requiring test takers to find some extra words inserted in the texts intentionally, 3) two cloze multiple choice item tests and 4) a dictation test to a large sample of university applicants and applied factor analysis to her data. Since three out of the four C-Tests loaded higher than .70 on the *unrotated* first factor she concluded that “the

best test to select to represent general language proficiency as assessed by reduced redundancy testing would be the C-Test" (p. 71).

Khodadady (1997) designed and validated another type of cloze multiple choice item tests (MCITs) and called them schema-based cloze MCITs [henceforth S-Tests (Khodadady, 2012)]. These tests are developed on the assumption that **the words comprising written texts employed in language tests are schemata** whose understanding by themselves and in relation to other schemata comprising the texts under comprehension depends on test takers' personally acquired background knowledge of the concepts they represent. Since these schemata are continuously met in everyday life in whatever forms and modes possible, they go through constant modification.

The schemata comprising written texts are classified into the three main domains of semantic, syntactic and parasyntactic, which are in turn broken into their constituting genera, species and types. The *semantic* schema domain, for example, consists of adjectives, adverbs, nouns and verbs as its genera. Similarly, the genus of adjectives forming the semantic domain includes agentive, comparative, complex, dative, derivational, nominal, simple and superlative adjectives as its species. In a hierarchical fashion, the agentive adjectives, as a species of adjective genus, consist of schema *types* such as interesting and fascinating used in describing the noun genus of semantic domain. Khodadady, Pishghadam and Fakhari (2010) employed these domains, genera, species and types to establish the content validity of their achievement tests and then employed them to explore the relationship among grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension ability. [Interested readers may consult Khodadady (2008, 2013) for the analysis and classification of schemata comprising texts.]

In addition to treating all the *words* comprising the texts as *schemata*, the choices selected in developing and taking S-Tests are viewed as schemata if they bear syntactic, semantic and discoursal relationships with the deleted schemata given as keyed responses. It is hypothesized that the relationships present in the alternatives of the S-Tests provide the readers with concepts which *compete* with the keyed response in terms of their syntactic, semantic and discoursal appropriateness and thus distinguish them from their traditional counterparts called distracters.

The traditional cloze multiple choice item below was, for example, developed by Hale, Stansfield, Rock, Hicks, Butler and Oller (1988). As can be seen, distracter A, *inspecting*, is syntactically and semantically different from the keyed response *contrast*. Similarly, distracter B, *knowledge*, lacks semantic relationship with the keyed response. Distracter D, *medicine*, is discoursally related with some of the schemata forming the sentence such as *chest* and *lung* but has no semantic relationship with the keyed response.

By (46) conventional x-rays generally differentiate only between bone and air, as in pictures of the chest and lungs.

46 A. inspecting B. knowledge C. contrast* D. medicine

In contrast to traditional cloze multiple choice items, S-Test items offer their takers three competitiveness which bear syntactic and semantic relationships with the keyed response and discoursal relationships with the schemata comprising the text as described in the item below developed by Khodadady (2004). In order to answer the item, test takers must know what the four choices mean individually. They should then focus on all the words, or schemata, used in the sentence in order to decide which alternative fits the blank best. The keyed response, i.e., *attack*, and its alternatives, i.e., *raid*, *slander* and *ambush*, have syntactic and semantic relationships with each other. Since they are syntactically nouns by nature, they can all fill the same slot. In addition to being syntactically related, the alternatives share the semantic feature of *assault* and must therefore be equally attractive to test takers.

Fears over access to medical records

Privacy campaigners in the US have launched a fierce ... (1) on a bill that they believe will expose medical records to too many prying eyes.

1 A. raid B. slander C. attack* D. ambush

However, in order for test takers to choose the keyed response *attack*, they must activate their discoursal knowledge and relate it to the contextual expressions of *privacy campaigners* and *bill*, which dictate what type of assault should be launched. *Raid* and *ambush* are not what the writer has used because they involve physical assault. Since *attack* shares the semantic feature of *physical assault* with *raid* and *ambush*, a test designer can rationally predict that they will appeal to the test takers more than *slander*. They will have no choice but to read all the schemata preceding and following the deleted schema in order to make an informed choice.

Khodadady (2004) administered an S-Test with the C-Tests (Klein-Braley, 1977), text-driven cloze test (Farhady & Keramati, 1994) and traditional cloze MCIT (Hale *et al* 1988) to 34 senior undergraduate Iranian students. He also administered the disclosed TOEFL test 1 (Educational Testing Service, 1991, pp. 75-100) as an internationally accepted measure of English language proficiency to explore the construct validity of C-Tests.

Similar to Klein-Braley's (1997) findings, the C-Tests and C-test 2 had the highest loadings on the first factor, i.e., 0.93 and 0.78, respectively. These loadings could not, however, show language proficiency as Klein-Braley claimed because the TOEFL had the second lowest loading on this factor, i.e., 0.69. Furthermore, the TOEFL loaded on the second factor on which the C-test and its subtests all had negative loadings. Due to these unexpected loadings, Khodadady (2004) ran a rotated factor analysis on the data.

When the loadings were rotated, the TOEFL test did not load on the first factor any more. Only the C-Tests (0.95) and their subtests, i.e., C-Test 1 (0.72), C-Test 2 (0.80), C-Test 3 (0.67) and C-Test 4 (0.80) had the highest loadings on this factor. Khodadady (2004) concluded that since the TOEFL differs from the four methods of reduced redundancy in terms of its construction, it does not load on the first factor and therefore C-Tests have their own unique effect on the loadings. The TOEFL had, however, the highest loading on the second factor (0.90), upon which the S-Test, text-driven cloze test, traditional cloze MCIT and even C-Tests loaded, indicating that the second factor represents English language proficiency.

In order to find out what the nature of the first factor was, Khodadady (2007) developed two decontextualised and spelling tests on the C-Tests developed by Klein-Braley (1997) and administered them along with the TOEFL and two vocabulary tests to 63 senior undergraduate Iranian students majoring in English language and literature at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. (The tests will be described in details in the instrumentation section).

Table 1 presents the varimax rotated factor matrix using principal component analysis of the C-Tests, decontextualised C-Test, matching vocabulary test, spelling test, disclosed TOEFL and its subtests. Based on the results shown in the table, Khodadady (2007) concluded that “since neither the C-Tests nor the decontextualised and spelling tests load on the first factor, they must measure method-specific abilities.”

TABLE 1
VARIMAX WITH KAISER ROTATED FACTOR MATRIX

| Tests | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Matching vocabulary test | .73 | * | * |
| TOEFL | .90 | .33 | * |
| Structure | .75 | .30 | * |
| Written expressions | .70 | * | * |
| Vocabulary | .74 | * | * |
| Reading comprehension | .75 | * | * |
| C-Tests | .35 | .93 | * |
| C-Test 1 | * | .86 | * |
| C-Test 2 | * | .83 | * |
| C-Test 3 | * | .85 | * |
| C-Test 4 | .47 | .58 | * |
| Decontextualised C-Test | * | * | .93 |
| Spelling test | * | * | .83 |
| Eigenvalue: | 6.75 | 1.48 | 1.44 |
| Variance Explained: | 51.93% | 11.39% | 11.10 % |

* Loadings less than .30

As will be discussed below, the tests employed by Khodadady (2007) were distinctly different from each other. And there was no other measure of language proficiency based on reduced redundancy to find out whether it would load with the C-Tests on the second factor. Furthermore, as can be seen in Table 1, the decontextualised C-Test and spelling tests loaded on the third factor rather unexpectedly. The present study was therefore designed to find out whether three rotated factors would be extracted if an S-Test was added to the list of the tests and whether the C-Tests and decontextualised C-test and spelling test would still load on two separate factors if all the tests were administered to a larger and more representative sample. These objectives were explored via the following research questions.

Research Questions

1. What is the factor structure for the C-Tests, the Decontextualised C-Test and the Spelling Test? Do they load on two factors as they did in Khodadady’s (2007) study?
2. What is the factor structure if the TOEFL, the lexical knowledge test and S-Test are included? Do the C-Tests and S-Test load on the same factor?

II. METHOD

A. Participants

Four hundred and sixteen university students took part in the study in the course of two academic semesters in 2009. However, the scores of 402 participants were analyzed because 14 of them missed one or more of the tests for reasons beyond the researcher’s control. Out of 402 participants, 327 (81.3%) were studying English Language and Literature, 86 (16.4%) Teaching English as a Foreign Language, and nine (2.2%) English Translation at undergraduate (n = 327) and graduate levels (n= 75) at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad in Iran. The majority of participants were female, i.e., 301 (75%), and only one fourth were male, i.e., 101 (25%). They had enrolled as freshman (147), sophomore (49), junior (93) and senior (113) full time students when the project started and conducted in the period specified. The participants’ age ranged between 18 and 45 (Mean = 22.92, SD = 3.21) and they spoke Persian (395) and Turkish (7) as their mother languages. They took all the tests voluntarily, however, in order for the participants to take the tests seriously and be rewarded for their time and participation, it was announced that the researcher will add 10% to their final score in whatever courses they took with him.

B. Instruments

Six tests along with their various subtests were employed in this study, i.e., C-Tests consisting of four texts, a decontextualised C-Test, a spelling test, the disclosed TOEFL test consisting of structure, written expressions, sentential vocabulary and traditional multiple choice item reading comprehension test subtests, a lexical knowledge test, and a semantic schema-based cloze multiple choice item test.

C-Tests. The C-Tests developed by Klein-Braley (1997, pp. 79-80) were used in this study. It consisted of 99 items developed on four texts. Since they are different in content, each text is considered as a C-Test in its own right and specified as C-Test 1, C-Test2, C-Test 3 and C-Test 4. With the exception of C-Test 2, which had 24 items, the other three C-Tests had 25 items each. The reliability coefficient (KR-21) reported for the C-Test was 0.85. The alpha reliability coefficient obtained by Khodadady (2007) for C-Tests was .89 and they correlated significantly with the TOEFL, i.e., $r = .62, p < .01$.

Decontextualised C-Test. This test was developed by Khodadady (2007). He took the 99 mutilated words comprising C-Test 1, C-Test 2, C-Test 3, and C-Test 4 out of their linguistic context, numbered them from 1 to 99 and presented them to 63 senior undergraduate students of English. The participants were instructed to restore the mutilated half of the words by considering the number of letters given. They could add the same number of letters given or one more. If, for example, there was one letter such as h__, they could add one or two letters to produce the English words *he* and *his* as appropriate responses. They were also told that only words having acceptable spelling will be scored correct. The restored words were then scored twice. As a decontextualised C-Test, only the exact words comprising the texts of the C-Tests were scored correct. For example, item six on the decontextualised C-Test requires the participants to supply the letters *e* and *w* to restore the mutilated word *few* as the exact answer. The reported alpha reliability coefficient for this test was .60 and it correlated significantly only with the written expressions section of the TOEFL, i.e. $r = .62, p < .05$.

Spelling Test. The researcher scored the restored mutilated words on the decontextualised C-Test for the second time by accepting whatever words the participants produced on the basis of the directions given, i.e., adding the same number of letters given or one more. For example, all the restored words for item six, i.e., *far, fat, few, fit, fix, for, fun* and *fur* were scored correct. In order to ensure the validity of scoring, various references such as *Collins Dictionary of the English Language* (Hanks, 1986) were consulted. Khodadady (2007) argued that since this method measures the test takers' knowledge of letters comprising English words irrespective of their meaning and context, it is a test of spelling knowledge. The reported alpha reliability coefficient for this test was .89 and it correlated significantly with the TOEFL, i.e. $r = .37, p < .01$.

Structure Test. Following Khodadady and Herriman (2000), the structure subtest of the disclosed written TOEFL test (Educational Testing Service, 1991) was employed in order to measure the participants' structure competence and its relationship with C-Tests. It comprises of 30 cloze multiple choice items developed on 30 isolated and unrelated sentences addressing a discrete grammatical point. The structure test had an alpha reliability coefficient of 0.89 and correlated significantly with the C-Tests, i.e., $r = .55, p < .01$.

Written Expressions Test. The written expressions subtest of the disclosed written TOEFL test (Educational Testing Service, 1991) was also employed to measure the grammar proficiency of the participants. It consisted of 25 isolated and unrelated sentences whose four parts had been underlined and numbered. In contrast to the structure subtest, the written expressions subtest of the TOEFL requires test takers to identify the erroneous underlined part of sentences. It had an alpha reliability coefficient of 0.74 and correlated significantly with the C-Tests, i.e., $r = .49, p < .01$.

Sentential Vocabulary Test. The multiple choice vocabulary subtest of the disclosed written TOEFL test (Educational Testing Service, 1991) was used in the present study to measure test takers' *sentential* vocabulary knowledge. It is labeled *sentential* in the present study because each item is developed on a single underlined word in an *isolated sentence* which has no thematic relationship with the other sentences comprising the sub test. From among the four alternatives given below each item, test takers must choose the keyed response replaceable with the underlined word. It had the alpha reliability coefficient of 0.79 and correlated significantly with the C-Tests, i.e., $r = .53, p < .01$.

Lexical Knowledge Test. Mirêlis (2004) defined mental lexicon as "the collection of words one speaker knows and the relationships between them" (p. 2). Since the matching vocabulary test designed by Nation (see Schmitt, Schmitt, & Clapham, 2001) is a collection 160 words, it was employed to measure the participants' lexical knowledge. Although the original lexical knowledge test (LKT) consisted of 60 items presented in 20 groups of three words having six words opposite to be selected by writing the number of question in front of the words given in each group, its format was changed to 6-choice items in the present study to save space and sheets and do away with writing.

In the new format, the three key words are numbered and presented in a single box. Six other words marked A, B, C, D, E and F are given in front of the three numbered words as shown below. The participants were instructed to select the choice which best fitted the meaning of each word and mark their choice on the answer sheet by filling in the corresponding box. For example, in the box below, the participants had to select choice **C** as the best meaning for the word number 1 and fill box C for item 1 on their answer sheet. The LKT proved to be a highly reliable test, i.e., $\alpha = .89$, in Khodadady's (2007) study and correlated significantly with the C-Tests, i.e., $r = .42, p < .01$.

| | | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|----------|---------|----------|--------|
| Example | 1. Assert | A | cast | D | detest |
| | 2. Ban | B | confide | E | falter |
| | 3. Throw away | C | state | F | forbid |

Traditional Multiple Choice Reading Comprehension Test. The multiple-choice reading comprehension subtest of the disclosed written TOEFL test (Educational Testing Service, 1991) was chosen as a *traditional* reading comprehension test (RCT) because it was developed by testing specialists who used their expertise and intuition to write some 30 items on five passages (Khodadady 1997, 1999; Khodadady & Herriman 2000). Both the stem and the choices of the items were developed by the ETS specialists and participants had to read and understand the passages so that they could choose the best alternative. Khodadady (2007) reported the alpha reliability coefficient of 0.79 for the traditional RCT correlating significantly with the C-Tests, i.e., $r = .49, p < .01$.

S-Test. The 60-item semantic S-Test developed by Gholami (2006) on the adjectives, adverbs, nouns and verbs of an authentic text was used in order to find out whether it would show strong relationships with the C-Tests and load with them on the same factor because both are developed on the schemata comprising texts. Gholami developed the S-Test on the article *why don't we just kiss and make up* (Dugatkin, 2005) published in *NewScientist* magazine having passages "more academic than articles in quality newspapers" (Clapham 1996, p.145). The reported alpha reliability coefficient for the S-Test was 0.64 and it correlated significantly with the TOEFL, i.e., $r = .84, p < .01$.

C. Procedure

With the exception of the decontextualised C-Test which was given as the first test, the other eight tests were combined and counterbalanced in four other sessions of administration. The former was given first because the administration of C-Tests would have disclosed its items and thus invalidated its decontextualised version. After the administration of the first test in the first session, the participants were seated on every other chair in the other four sessions and each received one of the tests different from the one given to the participant sitting nearby. Structural, written expressions and traditional reading comprehension tests were administered as a single test in one session as were the sentential vocabulary test and lexical knowledge tests in another. The C-Tests and S-Test were administered in two separate sessions and thus the whole project required five sessions in all. Since the participants wrote their names on the answer sheets, the researcher could easily check what test was given before and which had to be given next.

D. Statistical Analysis

After having the SPSS version 16.0 calculate the descriptive statistics of the tests administered in this study, their internal consistency reliability was estimated via Cronbach's alpha. The difficulty level and the discrimination power of the tests were estimated by employing *p*-values and point biserial correlation coefficients (r_{pbi}). *P*-values were calculated as the proportion of correct responses given to each item (Baker, 1989) and the r_{pbi} coefficients were estimated by correlating each individual item with the total test score. Finally factor analysis was run to determine what latent variables the tests administered in the study would load on.

III. RESULTS

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the tests administered in this study. As can be seen, with the exception of the decontextualised C-Tests, all other tests enjoyed high reliability levels. The highest and lowest reliable measures of language proficiency were lexical knowledge test, i.e., 0.93, and the decontextualised C-Tests, i.e., 0.46, respectively. The low reliability of the latter was expected because the restoration of its items did not depend on any specific language ability other than the test takers' personal and random selection of certain words from among all the possible words they were familiar with on the basis of their constituting letters fitting the directions given.

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE TESTS AND THEIR SUBTESTS ADMINISTERED IN THE STUDY

| Tests | # of item | Mean | Std. Deviation | Kurtosis | Mean <i>p</i> -value | Mean r_{pbi} | α |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------|----------------|----------|----------------------|----------------|----------|
| C-Tests | 99 | 54.85 | 13.397 | -.062 | .55 | .32 | .91 |
| C-Test 1 | 25 | 15.25 | 4.183 | -.365 | .61 | .33 | .77 |
| C-Test 2 | 24 | 12.42 | 3.903 | -.243 | .52 | .30 | .72 |
| C-Test 3 | 25 | 14.50 | 4.223 | -.251 | .58 | .35 | .78 |
| C-Test 4 | 25 | 12.67 | 3.508 | -.085 | .51 | .29 | .70 |
| Spelling | 99 | 85.44 | 9.501 | 4.840 | .86 | .30 | .91 |
| Decontextualised C-Tests | 99 | 18.75 | 4.878 | 3.430 | .19 | .13 | .46 |
| TOEFL | 115 | 77.90 | 14.380 | .458 | .68 | .29 | .91 |
| Structure | 30 | 22.57 | 4.311 | 2.478 | .75 | .32 | .79 |
| Written Expressions | 25 | 17.29 | 4.671 | .328 | .69 | .37 | .82 |
| Sentential Vocabulary | 30 | 20.09 | 5.170 | .512 | .66 | .14 | .82 |
| Reading Comprehension | 30 | 17.94 | 5.912 | -.561 | .60 | .36 | .86 |
| S-Test | 60 | 28.62 | 8.661 | .061 | .47 | .31 | .85 |
| Lexical Knowledge Test | 60 | 25.94 | 12.581 | -.757 | .43 | .45 | .93 |

Based on the mean p -values presented in Table 1, the most difficult and easiest tests were the spelling (.89) and Decontextualised C-Test (.19), respectively. The very difficulty of the latter and its being based on the participants' personal preference to restore the mutilated words only on the basis of the directions given has made the Decontextualised C-Test the most difficult and the least reliable. However, it is a valid measure of language ability because its mean r_{pbi} (.13), i.e., discriminatory power, is almost the same as the sentential vocabulary test (.14) and correlates significantly with all the tests employed in this study.

Table 3 presents the correlation coefficients among the 14 tests and their sub tests. As can be seen, they all correlate significantly with each other. With the exception of the spelling test, the decontextualised C-Test shows the highest and lowest significant correlations with the C-Tests, i.e., .32, and S-Test, i.e., .18, respectively. Similarly, the spelling test has the highest and lowest significant correlations with the C-Tests, i.e., 0.53, and S-Test, i.e., 0.31, indicating that among the TOEFL, C-Tests and Lexical Knowledge test, the S-Test is the least related to the directions given and the spelling proficiency of test takers.

TABLE 3
CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS OBTAINED AMONG THE TESTS

| | TOEFL | Str | WExp | SVK | Read | Ctest | CT1 | CT2 | CT3 | CT4 | Spell | DCt | S-Test |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| TOEFL | 1 | .855** | .872** | .755** | .852** | .679** | .627** | .504** | .558** | .610** | .402** | .216** | .580** |
| Str | .855** | 1 | .772** | .490** | .651** | .595** | .532** | .462** | .507** | .515** | .335** | .168** | .417** |
| Wexp | .872** | .772** | 1 | .567** | .654** | .611** | .565** | .454** | .503** | .549** | .382** | .193** | .503** |
| SVT | .755** | .490** | .567** | 1 | .507** | .524** | .505** | .352** | .415** | .507** | .309** | .134** | .550** |
| Read | .852** | .651** | .654** | .507** | 1 | .534** | .482** | .400** | .454** | .471** | .288** | .211** | .461** |
| Ctest | .679** | .595** | .611** | .524** | .534** | 1 | .860** | .831** | .866** | .826** | .526** | .318** | .524** |
| CT1 | .627** | .532** | .565** | .505** | .482** | .860** | 1 | .620** | .627** | .642** | .458** | .268** | .485** |
| CT2 | .504** | .462** | .454** | .352** | .400** | .831** | .620** | 1 | .638** | .553** | .446** | .291** | .376** |
| CT3 | .558** | .507** | .503** | .415** | .454** | .866** | .627** | .638** | 1 | .645** | .401** | .262** | .398** |
| CT4 | .610** | .515** | .549** | .507** | .471** | .826** | .642** | .553** | .645** | 1 | .483** | .257** | .525** |
| Spell | .402** | .335** | .382** | .309** | .288** | .526** | .458** | .446** | .401** | .483** | 1 | .492** | .312** |
| DCt | .216** | .168** | .193** | .134** | .211** | .318** | .268** | .291** | .262** | .257** | .492** | 1 | .177** |
| S-Test | .580** | .417** | .503** | .550** | .461** | .524** | .485** | .376** | .398** | .525** | .312** | .177** | 1 |
| LKT | .569** | .412** | .472** | .607** | .431** | .451** | .438** | .329** | .308** | .465** | .244** | .105* | .579** |

* All correlations are significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 presents the unrotated and rotated components extracted via Principal Component Analysis. As can be seen, the C-Tests, Spelling test and decontextualised C-Test load on two components and thus confirm the results obtained by Khodadady (2007). The most interesting result of the present study is, however, the fact that when the components are rotated, the decontextualised C-Test loads the highest on the second component only and thus illuminates its nature. Since the test takers could get the exact responses of the C-Tests by following the directions given and without having any context to guide them, it reveals how direction-specific the C-Tests are. This finding, therefore, challenges Eckes and Grotjahn's (2006) claim regarding the nature of what C-tests measure. The success on C-tests partly depends on test takers' ability to comply with their directions.

TABLE 4
UNROTATED AND ROTATED COMPONENTS EXTRACTED VIA PRINCIPAL COMPONENT ANALYSIS FROM
THE C-TESTS AND THE TWO TESTS DEVELOPED ON ITS ITEMS

| Tests | Unrotated Components | | Rotated Components** | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| C-Tests | .981 | * | .971 | * |
| C-Test 1 | .841 | * | .831 | * |
| C-Test 2 | .818 | * | .793 | * |
| C-Test 3 | .837 | * | .851 | * |
| C-Test 4 | .826 | * | .809 | * |
| Spelling Test | .661 | .514 | .391 | .741 |
| Decontextualised C-test | .455 | .795 | * | .912 |
| Eigenvalue: | 4.37 | 1.03 | 3.80 | 1.60 |
| Variance Explained: | 62.36% | 14.76% | 54.3% | 22.81% |

* Loadings less than .30

** Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

In addition to establishing C-Tests as direction specific, the results presented in Table 3 reveal another latent feature of C-Tests. As can be seen, even rotating the components does not bring about any drastic changes in the loadings of the spelling test as it does with the decontextualised C-Test. Since it loads on the first factor as well even after being rotated as the C-Tests do, it can be concluded that C-Tests are spelling specific as well.

Table 5 presents the unrotated and rotated components extracted via Principal Component Analysis from the tests and their subtests administered in this study. As can be seen, even when the S-Test, the TOEFL, and Lexical Knowledge Test are included in the Principal Component Analysis and the extracted components are rotated, two components emerge. These results thus disconfirm the existence of the third factor found by Khodadady (2007).

TABLE 5
UNROTATED AND ROTATED COMPONENTS EXTRACTED VIA PRINCIPAL COMPONENT ANALYSIS FROM THE TESTS AND THEIR SUBTESTS

| Tests | Unrotated Components | | Rotated Components** | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|
| | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| C-Tests | .906 | .318 | .513 | .812 |
| C-Test 1 | .805 | * | .508 | .656 |
| C-Test 2 | .714 | .385 | .321 | .745 |
| C-Test 3 | .754 | .311 | .398 | .712 |
| C-Test 4 | .797 | * | .516 | .632 |
| Spelling Test | .568 | .453 | * | .708 |
| Decontextualised C-test | .350 | .521 | * | .626 |
| S-Test | .673 | * | .655 | * |
| TOEFL | .905 | -.335 | .917 | * |
| Structure | .774 | * | .761 | * |
| Written Expressions | .810 | * | .801 | * |
| Sentential Voc. Test | .715 | -.342 | .773 | * |
| Reading Comprehension | .736 | -.305 | .767 | * |
| Lexical Knowledge Test | .626 | -.347 | .706 | * |
| Eigenvalue: | 7.599 | 1.513 | 5.253 | 3.859 |
| Variance Explained: | 54.281 | 10.804 | 37.523 | 27.562 |

* Loadings less than .30

** Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

The results presented in Table 5 above also emphasize the distortion of latent variables when they are presented as unrotated components. As can be seen, all the tests and their subtests load acceptably on the first unrotated component, giving the rather queer impression that a spelling test based on some 99 words taken out of their context is as much a measure of language proficiency as a lexical knowledge test consisting of 160 semantic words simply because they load 0.57 and 0.63 on the first component, respectively. However, the high and acceptable loading of 0.57 disappears as soon as the components are rotated. It is therefore suggested that the findings reported on the basis of unrotated components be treated cautiously because they are distorted at their face value and logically fallacious on a theoretical basis.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Klein-Braley (1996) believed the question, “what exactly do C-tests measure in terms of language processing?” (p. 24) was *irrelevant* because C-Tests do function as measures of language proficiency. The results of the present study support her belief by revealing significant relationships between C-tests and the TOEFL ($r = .68, p < .01$). This relationship was further emphasized by Babaii and Ansari (2001) who found correlations as high as .88 between the two and thus provided statistical evidence to treat the C-tests and TOEFL as interchangeable measures of language proficiency.

In contrast to the TOEFL, C-Tests, however, show the highest significant correlations with the words whose restoration is solely based on the number of letters specified by their directions ($r = .53, p < .01$), indicating that 28 percent of test takers’ scores on C-Tests can be explained just by their spelling knowledge. Similarly, the significant relationship between C-Tests and their decontextualised version ($r = .32, p < .01$) reveals the fact that ten percent of variance in scores on C-Tests is context-independent. These findings question the validity of employing retrospective verbal protocols to study test takers’ performance on C-Tests (e.g., Babaii and Ansari, 2001).

Based on Ericson and Simon’s (1984) understanding of verbal protocols (VP) as the direct verbalizations of specific cognitive processes, Babaii and Ansari (2001) asked their participants to verbalize how they completed the task after they took C-Tests. Based on the 6.1% of participants’ retrospective VPs, they concluded that top-down cues are used to exploit the relationship among contextual words such as *police, theft, gang, ...*, to restore ‘missing’ in (the mis__vehicles) by moving back and forth all through a text. The conclusion seems to be questionable on two grounds. First, in their primer on VPs Trickett and Trafton (2009) cited Nisbett and Wilson (1977) who argued that test takers do not necessarily have access to what they did or why they did it after they complete a given task. Babaii and Ansari’s few participants, therefore, might have not based the restoration of the second half of the word *missing* on the specified contextual words but claimed to have done so in order to be treated more academically.

Secondly, the findings of the present study show that the majority of Babaii and Ansari's (2001) participants who restored the mutilated part of the word *missing* correctly might have done so by exploiting the number of letters constituting the word only. The responses of 402 participants on the decontextualised C-Test administered in this study, for example, showed that 367 (91%) and 271 (67%) restored the words *mixture* and *matter*, respectively, without having any top-down cues. In other words neither the immediate context of the words, i.e., (a mix___ of) and (important mat___, between) nor the words comprising other parts of the paragraph in which they appear were available to provide top-down cues for the respondents as Babaii and Ansari claimed.

It is argued in the present paper that the application of top-down cues are best captured in the performance of test takers on the disclosed TOEFL, S-Test and Lexical Knowledge Test (LKT) administered in this study because these measures of language proficiency neither depend on their directions as the C-Tests do nor load acceptably on the second rotated factor upon which only C-Tests and their decontextualised version as well as the spelling test do. If the C-Tests do require top-down processing they must load acceptably on the rotated factor upon which these tests load as well.

The factor analysis of the C-Tests along with the disclosed TOEFL, S-Test and LKT, however, revealed two components as the latent variables underlying these tests. While the unrotated components yielded logically unsound high loadings on the first factor due to initial extraction, the second unrotated factor revealed negative loadings not only on the TOEFL but also on the other two tests taken along with the C-Tests implying that whatever C-Tests measure, the other tests measure in the opposite direction.

The rotation of components, nonetheless, reveals the fact that C-Tests measure language proficiency as the TOEFL, S-Test and LKT do. But as a measure of language proficiency, C-Tests do not load on the first rotated component as highly as the other three measures do. Instead they reveal their dependency on the test takers' spelling proficiency and understanding of their directions by having their highest loadings on the second rotated component. Interestingly enough, neither the TOEFL nor S-Test and LKT had any acceptable loadings on the second rotated component, implying that the very dependence of C-Tests on the spelling and its directions makes it a unique language proficiency test.

Further research is therefore needed to specify the nature of spelling proficiency as a part of general factor contributing to the proficiency tests employed in this study. Future studies must, for example, show whether changing LKT into a spelling test by following the directions given in the C-Tests will bring about their loading on the second rotated component or not. Replicating the study with a different language proficiency test such as the International English Language Testing System may also shed some light on the nature of C-Tests because it requires a limited amount of writing in its being answered as the C-Tests do.

Furthermore, the findings of the present study highlight the importance of spelling and thus call for further research in terms of designing and including spelling tests as part of language proficiency measures. Although the Spelling Test employed in this study does not load on the first *rotated* component, it does contribute to whatever the C-Tests measure and thus load on both the first and second unrotated factors as the other measures employed in this study do. The inclusion of a more comprehensive spelling test in future research projects must indicate whether accommodating the spelling variable in language proficiency tests such as the International English Language System stands to fairness when it penalizes test takers for misspelling in their written responses.

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Women's Reconciliation with the Real World in *The Good Apprentice*

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Abstract—This paper focuses on the reconstruction of female selfhood through Murdoch's elaboration of the multiple ways that the women use to integrate their female self by reconciling with the real world. It interprets and redefines "self", the core concept of Murdoch's philosophy. Furthermore, it explores the way for the woman to bring the life back to the real world and reconcile with the contingency in life in the novel. It points out that the various ways that the female characters adopt to survive their plights lead them to different destinations that aren't always the places where they want to be, which is precisely the focus of Murdoch's philosophy that how the female could join the human race with a complete self and how they could approach the Good.

Index Terms—Iris Murdoch, *The Good Apprentice*, reconciliation, female self

I. INTRODUCTION

Murdoch begins *The Good Apprentice* with a horrible incident that Edward Baltram kills his best friend Mark Wilson indirectly and unwittingly. Edward cheated Mark into eating a drugged sandwich, hoping he could enjoy a "happy journey" (Murdoch, 1997, p.1), and then left him alone. When he came back from a date with his fellow-student Sarah Plowmain, he found the window in the flat open and Mark lying on the pavement below dead. Suffering from guilt and depression over the incident, Edward puts his feet on the journey of self-forgiving and self-redemption. *The Good Apprentice* is divided into three sections. The first section "The Prodigal Son" describes Edward's breakdown after the incident. The second one "Seegard" depicts his self-redemptive journey to search for his magic father. And the third one "Life After Death" recounts his bottom out and the restart of his life with more attention and love to others. Along with the main clue of suffering and redemption, Murdoch also explores the possibility of and the likely ways to the integration of female self through the depiction of the female characters' struggle in their own familial, marital, and emotional plights.

In *The Good Apprentice*, Murdoch reveals the difficulty in the formation of female self by portraying female characters' personal growth through increased awareness of themselves and the relationship with others and the plights of failing "to see the individual because we are completely enclosed in a fantasy world of our own" (Murdoch, 1997, p.216). While Mother May is struggling with the male dominance in the family in order to complete female self, Margaret McCaskerville, known by her nickname "Midge", is experiencing a fierce inner struggle to bring her life back to the real world and reconcile with the contingency in life for the same purpose. Murdoch assigns Midge with a cultured husband Thomas McCaskerville, a psychiatrist whom Midge is "impressed by his prestige, by his power, and by his being grand and older" (Murdoch, 2001, p.171). Unlike Jesse and Mother May, Midge and her husband live together in peace without the exerted authority of the husband in the family. Regardless of "her little air of self-satisfied animation" (Murdoch, 2001, p.22), Midge is an approachable beauty that are highly admired by the people around her. Unfortunately, admiration from others and the decent marriage life fail to bring the real happiness to self-confused Midge who is tangled in the extramarital love affair with Harry. Through the characterization of Midge, Murdoch illustrates how women could identify their self through the reconciliation with the real world and comply with the contingency in it.

II. COMPROMISE WITH THE REAL WORLD

In the novel, Midge is depicted as a woman who puts all her effort to prove her worth and her existence through the approbation of others and the triumph in the competition for attention and admiration. So there is no doubt that her ambition doesn't lie in the self-improvement in education and personal career. After "her short career as a fashion model" (Murdoch, 2001, p.5), Midge does nothing but to busy herself with such consolations as flowers and clothes that "slowed the pace of the world toward a point of absolute repose" (Murdoch, 2001, p.135) for her. Midge reacts less positively to her friend's suggestion that she should get herself out of house and have some education to get rid of harmful idleness and her complaints about being ignorant.

Midge has been growing under the shadow of her sister Chloe as the “invisible” (Murdoch, 2001, p.86) little sister, Sibling rivalry is “in full bloom and wreaking havoc” (Khogeer, 2005, p.126) in the relationship between them. Her jealousy of Chloe’s “beauty, charm, intelligence and vivaciousness” (Khogeer, 2005, p.126) provokes her hatred to her sister and drives her to “be plagued by a dilapidating and almost crippling inferiority complex” (Khogeer, 2005, p.126). Eager to be approved and appreciated, Midge starts from scratch when she “looked like nothing at all” (Murdoch, 2001, p.86). Compared with Harry who is made “by [his] father, [his] childhood, [his] school, [his] education, [his] money” (Murdoch, 2001, p.86), Midge is exhausted to “invent myself out of nothing” (Murdoch, 2001, p.86). It is “one of [her] aims in life” for Midge “to triumph over Chloe” (Murdoch, 2001, p.345). With her sexual awakening brought by a careless glimpse of Chloe’s lover Jesse Baltram who is “a great dominating powerful man” (Murdoch, 2001, p.88) in her mind, Midge spends years “busy inventing [herself]” (Murdoch, 2001, p.86) and finally becomes a more famous fashion model than Chloe, which proves the assertion of her father and her sister that she has no talents to be completely wrong. And her two-year illicit affair with Chloe’s husband Harry, Chloe’s death and Jesse’s kissing her means her clear victory over Chloe since “[t]here’s nothing more [she] can take away from the poor girl” (Murdoch, 2001, p.345). In the competition with her sister Chloe for attention and appreciation, Midge shapes her self-perception on the basis of the affirmation from others and the comparison with others. The days when Chloe was everything and Midge was nothing pass, and Midge does believe she is not a shadow of Chloe, “a substitute, a second-best” (Murdoch, 2001, p.88) any more. Once she finds herself completely overwhelm Chloe, she feels the meaninglessness of her competitiveness in the past years and gets involved in the estrangement with the real world concerning how to confront her husband and her lover in her life, which results from her blind pursuit of triumph over her sister.

Although the men in her life, from her husband Thomas to her lover Harry, are showing considerable respect to women, they are all scornful of women’s “lost bad spirit” (Murdoch, 2001, p.30), that is “spirit without absolute” (Murdoch, 2001, p.30), which shakes the traditional dominate position of men:

Women are always a touchstone, ... like litmus paper or dogs before an earthquake, look at them now running round in manic excitement, they’re destroying the old order you’re so fond of, men are terrified, no wonder Islam is the most popular religion in the world! (Murdoch, 2001, p.30)

Furthermore, they still firmly believes in the necessity of absolute discourse power that “will be reserved for the creative few ... who have all the power” as “the only individuals left” (Murdoch, 2001, p.30), while “the ordinary mob will simply be codified manifestations of a generalized technological consciousness” (Murdoch, 2001, p.30). And Murdoch summarizes the men’s general attitudes to women who “have to make everything personal” (Murdoch, 2001, p.30) through comments of Midge’s female friend on Harry:

I can’t stand these prophets of doom, gloating over the collapse of civilisation, they’re always anit-women. I think Harry despises women, well I suppose most men do. Poor old planet all the same. No wonder Dirk Plowmain shot himself. (Murdoch, 2001, p.34)

Here Murdoch refocuses on the prevailing prejudice against women and the limited improvement in women’s status.

Though deeply loved by both her husband and her lover, Midge is not free from the restriction of the male. According to their friends opinion, Midge is not ideally matched with her husband since “Thomas ought to have married a busy Scottish body who was always in the kitchen, and Midge ought to have married a rich industrialist with a yacht who would enable her to have a *salon* full of the rich and famous” (Murdoch, 2001, p.362). As “an autocrat and a bully” (Murdoch, 2001, p.362), Thomas fails to detect her subtle psychological changes and emotional needs, which implants in Midge that “he is not thinking about [her] at all, he deserves to lose [her], he thinks all [her] activities are a form of play” (Murdoch, 2001, p.136). Dissatisfied with her marital life, Midge turns to her lover Harry for happiness and sense of triumph over Chloe. However, Harry’s love for her is so aggressive that he likes “Midge to wait upstairs like a captive bride” (Murdoch, 2001, p.168) and urges her to have a showdown with her husband for divorce, though they agreed to continue their affair on the premise that they keep it a secret to Thomas.

Indulged in the happiness brought by the extramarital affair and the sense of security from the family, Midge is reluctant to choose between Harry and Thomas. With “a look of evasive hunted irritation ... and dreaded” (Murdoch, 2001, p.90), Midge is caught in a dilemma: she loves Harry absolutely, but she couldn’t stop worrying and caring about Thomas. Harry points out the unreality of her life to her:

You live a sort of permanent double life where everything is true except that it isn’t. When you’re with me Thomas doesn’t exist, when you’re with Thomas I don’t exist. If the deception succeeds perfectly you can dream that nothing’s happening, that you’re innocent. (Murdoch, 2001, p.170)

Midge attempts to lower her husband’s position in her heart to assuage the guilt, deceiving herself that her feeling for Thomas has “become dark and in the dark it’s diminishing, like a little animal left somewhere to die and you come every day and hope that it’s dead and it’s still twitching and it’s still breathing” (Murdoch, 2001, p.170). So she “must untie [herself] from Thomas, undo [herself], quietly patiently thoroughly untie every little bond, cut every little vein” (Murdoch, 2001, p.172) to “make a great blank where he is, make him into a zombie in my mind, then it won’t hurt so” (Murdoch, 2001, p.172). On one hand, Midge is highly aware of her own state and what she wants: “I’m not happy, I’m miserable, I’m in hell, and that’s all wrong, it isn’t *me*. I *must* be happy, it’s my nature, it’s my right” (Murdoch, 2001, p.205). On the other hand, she is afraid to break down “the customary modes of gentleness and concern and ordinary instinctive communication and *politeness* were ever, between her and Thomas” (Murdoch, 2001, p.205). And she is

afraid to change herself for someone being “liked and petted” by everybody to someone who caused “such grief, such scandal and such chaos” (Murdoch, 2001, p.204). The irresolution makes “her face wrinkled in frightened evasive anxiety” (Murdoch, 2001, p.173) and her “losing [her] identity” which she “never had much anyway” (Murdoch, 2001, p.206). In order to “preserve her sanity” (Murdoch, 2001, p.203), she feels like to “do something ... like to break something or jump into a river or out of the window, it’s like wanting to brush something off, like a purification” (Murdoch, 2001, p.203).

Midge’s fear to make a choice is actually rooted in her escaping self from the reality. The contingent event happened at Seegard is revealed by Mother May in her diary that is published by a well read newspaper, which brings Midge’s illicit affair with Harry to the light and forces her to make a prompt decision. Midge’s self-recognition and identity that are based on the double life collapse so completely that “[i]t was as if there was nothing left in her life up to now with which she could either rest or work” (Murdoch, 2001, p.460).

The guilt, the disloyalty, the lies, the hurt and harm done to others, must be seen as real. But Midge, in attempting so to see it, did not consider it as a place where there were for her any stepping stones, any possibility of reconstruction, renovation, explanation, acts of healing. The collapse was, she reckoned, too complete for that she could not do good, and only stain her hands further, by going back, however well intentioned, into that mess. (Murdoch, 2001, pp.460-61)

So far, Midge still tries to escape from the reality that she must face her self-identity crisis with the courage to tell the truth instead of “convincing herself of its horror and completeness and of her guilt with which she could do nothing except somehow leave it behind” (Murdoch, 2001, p.460). As a witness to Midge’s embarrassment from the exposure of her illicit affair with Harry and from her passionate kiss with Jesse at Seegard, Stuart is regarded by Midge as “an obsessive image” (Murdoch, 2001, p.333) who “in his detestable role of witness and judge, had ‘got into her’” (Murdoch, 2001, p.333) for “a word from his could destroy us” (Murdoch, 2001, p.333). At that moment, Midge feels that “[e]verything [she]’d *wanted* just became worthless, as if [she] didn’t want *anything* anymore” (Murdoch, 2001, p.367) and decides to change her life and “do some good in the world” (Murdoch, 2001, p.367) just like Stuart. So soon after Midge comes back from Seegard, she thinks that she has fallen in love with Stuart, which is her way to “dismiss him, to defeat him, and by voicing her contempt for his opinions to make it efficacious and real” (Murdoch, 2001, p.333). Lacking introspection, Midge turns to Stuart for “a sort of absolution ... some forgiving understanding, compassion, *feeling* –” (Murdoch, 2001, p.368). With the alternative to make the difficult choice, Midge feels “soothed ... as if her whole body was being remade, as if by radiation, the atoms of it changed” (Murdoch, 2001, p.369).

Murdoch depicts Midge’s avoidance of confronting the real world as “a diversion, another emotional experience, a way of experiencing – of continuing – that relationship” (Murdoch, 2001, p.366), which leads Midge to live nowhere but “in some sort of dream” (Murdoch, 2001, p.366) and determines “her altered self” (Murdoch, 2001, p.369), though “entirely new” (Murdoch, 2001, p.369), to be unreliable. Seemingly enlightened, Midge considers her life “so idle, so useless, so full of vanity” (Murdoch, 2001, p.371) that she must force Stuart to “take responsibility for [her]... recognize [her] and acknowledge [her]” (Murdoch, 2001, p.371). Failing to realize the impossibility of happiness in a deception, Midge toughly believes that Stuart is the only hope to save and comfort her. However, firmly declining Midge’s court, Stuart disagrees with her assertion that “[f]alling in love is a renewal of life” (Murdoch, 2001, p.330), but reminds her that she should renew her life by realizing how much she loves her son and her husband because “[t]elling a lot of lies, particularly systematic lies, gradually detaches one from reality, one can’t *see*” (Murdoch, 2001, p.366). So the point is to tell the truth since “[t]elling him is what will make everything clear and real” (Murdoch, 2001, p.366).

Encouraged by Stuart and determined to change herself, Midge takes her first step on her way to the real world by confessing to Harry her decision to leave him though “[o]ld deep habits of love and loyalty fought for life against the new revelation” (Murdoch, 2001, p.370). After her confession, she feels “a kind of relief” (Murdoch, 2001, p.398), though “miserable” (Murdoch, 2001, p.398):

I can tell the truth. I’ve always been afraid of saying what I really thought, I’ve evaded direct questions, always hidden in half-truths. All those endless lies had got into me so that I couldn’t talk properly to anyone, as if I had no truthful language at all – it made me into a puppet, something unreal, *we* were unreal, I’ve often felt that. (Murdoch, 2001, p.398)

Then, the exposure of her illicit affair by Mother May drives her to confess passively to her husband her love affair with Harry and her decision to stop it and then to love Stuart, which makes Thomas leave home angrily. Obsessed by “his commanding being, his authority, his separateness, his inaccessibility, his unconnectedness with other people” (Murdoch, 2001, p.462) that will save her from “a fall to death” (Murdoch, 2001, p.462), Midge fails to really understand Stuart’s point on her issue until her talk with Edward makes her come to an understanding all of a sudden.

As “a candid intelligent well-intentioned on-looker” (Murdoch, 2001, p.485), Edward points out that Midge’s falling in love with Stuart is just “an escape from choice” (Murdoch, 2001, p.469) in order to prevent her from thinking about Thomas and Harry. Since all happen just in her mind, Stuart is “just an external impulse, a sort of jolt, a solid entity, something [she] bump[s] into” (Murdoch, 2001, p.469).

Taking it in, Edward had, quickly intuitively, touched her state of mind, pressing its structure at vulnerable and unstable points. His cry ‘it’s mad, it’s daft, it must be false!’ about her love for Stuart had startled her like the war cry of

a new force. It was possible to see 'the event' in a different light, not losing faith in it, but receiving in relation to it, more space more play. (Murdoch, 2001, pp.485-86)

Realizing that her love with Stuart is just "a means by which she had separated herself from Harry" (Murdoch, 2001, p.486), Midge decides to return to family. By accident, her husband Thomas goes back home at this moment after his running away for her affair with Harry. "The not-lying made everything so completely different, and of course not as it once was" (Murdoch, 2001, p.488). Reconciling with the real world, Midge unmakes herself and finally realizes what's of the most importance in her life.

She could not have survived that rupture, that desertion, that flight, that had seemed so beautiful in the unreal prospect of it, to leave Thomas behind and Meredith torn in two, and live a new free life with Harry, casting off the past. It had only seemed possible because it was really out of the question, something not really imagined, a fantasy coexisting with a reality which excluded it. (Murdoch, 2001, p.490)

The reconciliation with the reality finally helps Midge "out of this cage of lies and pain at last" (Murdoch, 2001, p.204) and free to "discover all her old feelings for Thomas, or rather to find out what had been happening to them, as if she had come back to find the grown, developed, refined, and most evidently powerful" (Murdoch, 2001, p.491).

III. ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONTINGENCY IN THE REAL WORLD

Besides the reconciliation with the real world, Murdoch also emphasizes the importance of accepting the contingency in the real world. "[A]ll sorts of things ... happened by pure chance. At so many points anything being otherwise could have made everything be otherwise" (Murdoch, 2001, pp.517-18). In the process of integrating female self, Midge's personal growth is full of contingency so that she can't help wondering:

Supposing that confident key in the door had been Harry's and not Thomas's? It was all chance of else the opposite, something arranged by God. Edward's arrival for instance. (Murdoch, 2001, p.485)

Midge's "self-authenticating experience" (Murdoch, 2001, p.491) makes her "aware that all the good things she felt sure she was destined to do would perhaps after all turn out to be the dull old familiar things, the duties of her family and her home (Murdoch, 2001, p.490)" since "[s]ometimes such fates could not be avoided, but here it would have been wanton" (Murdoch, 2001, p.490).

For the sake of the analysis of female characters, self-consciousness is interpreted as the ability to introspect and examine one's inner self, desires and feelings in order to know oneself as an individual while inner life could be interpreted as the continual process of self-cognition that makes an individual definable and recognizable in interpersonal relationships. As identity formation is the process of the development of the distinct personality of an individual and the inner life deals with the individual in relation, self could be understood as the substantial nature of an individual that enables him/her to have a full understanding of oneself with self-consciousness and to be definable and recognizable in the relations with self-identity on the reception of reality. Moreover, selfhood refers to the fully developed self achieved by the connection to others through "attention" (Murdoch, 1997, p.327). The application of these concepts to the character analysis reveals the progressive, though sometimes overlapping before and after, changes in Murdoch's characterization of female characters. Murdoch's focus on the female in her novels shifts from women's self-redemption from the crushing traditional selfhood imposed by the patriarchy, to their self-improvement to be conscious of themselves, to their self-knowledge of their identity in the real life, and finally to the integration of the female self to reconcile with the real world.

While Mother May is struggling with the male dominance in the family in order to complete female self, Midge is experiencing a fierce inner struggle to bring her life back to the real world and reconcile with the contingency in life for the same purpose. Different from Mother May's internecine fight against the male dominance, Midge's inner struggle against her own self-centered pursuit for happiness and her fundamental lack of understanding of the reality leads her to the reconciliation with the real world which is full of contingency and finally completes her female self. From the characterizations of these female characters, Murdoch illustrates that blind hatred and revenge as well the lies all hinder women from the integration of female self and from reaching the state of Goodness. Different from Mother May's internecine fight against the male dominance, Midge's inner struggle against her own self-centered pursuit for happiness and her fundamental lack of understanding of the reality leads her to the reconciliation with the real world which is full of contingency and finally completes her female self. From the characterizations of these female characters, Murdoch illustrates that blind hatred and revenge as well the lies all hinder women from the integration of female self and from reaching the state of Goodness.

IV. CONCLUSION

While Murdoch conveys her philosophical thoughts in her novels, her creation of characters and plots in turn enriches and deepens her philosophy. Reluctant to respond directly to the question on women's liberation and gender equality, Murdoch says that she identifies with men more than women and expresses her willingness to help women "join the human race" (Dooley, 2003, p.83) but not make "any land of feminine contribution" (Dooley, 2003, p.48) since both men and women are human beings. But when it comes to the realistic description of women's situation, her theoretical impartiality becomes impracticable. Besides the character development of women figures, Murdoch also

reflects the sociocultural changes impacted on the women social status through impartial description of male-female relationships. However, Murdoch implies that there is still a long way for women to really “join the human race” (Dooley, 2003, p. 83) as there have been a few male characters who have reach the state of being good, the highest state of Murdoch’s morality, but there are no women who achieve it even though some of them are on their way to approach it.

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The Effect of Concept Mapping on Iranian Pre-intermediate L2 Reading Comprehension

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Abstract—Teachers are always looking for innovative ways to help students improve their reading comprehension. One popular method is the use of graphic organizers such as concept maps. This study examined the use of concept maps (a meta cognitive technique) to aid reading comprehension of Iranian pre-intermediate L2 learners in one of the language institutes in Shiraz. The researcher wanted to find appropriate answers to the following research questions 1) does the application of concept mapping technique have any significant effect on Iranian pre-intermediate L2 reading comprehension 2) do Iranian pre-intermediate L2 learners have positive attitude toward the application of concept maps in their reading classes? For this, 30 pre-intermediate L2 learners were selected and assigned as experimental group. *This experimental group received instruction on how to use concept mapping technique as a pre-reading activity.* This group took part in language classes twice a week for one hour and half and reading activities covered thirty minutes of the whole class and also they completed two thirty-minutes reading comprehension tests, one as the pre-test and the other as the post-test. The results of Wilcoxon Sign Rank test showed that the participants in concept mapping group performed better in post-test than in pre-test administration. Moreover, the results of Chi-square revealed that, on the whole, L2 learners had positive attitudes toward using concept mapping technique in reading classes. This study had theoretical as well as pedagogical implication in the field of second/ foreign teaching and learning.

Index Terms—concept maps, reading comprehension, experimental group, positive attitude, theoretical implication, pedagogical implication

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the most useful and necessary skills for daily life. People usually read because they want to obtain information about a specific subject. People read variety of texts such as signs, timetables, directories, maps, letters, tables, application forms, stories, textbooks, instructional, leaflets and the like in order to get facts, exchange ideas, enjoy their leisure time, express feelings, etc. From a technical perspective, reading comprehension is a dynamic mental activity in which the reader interacts with the text to extract meaning (Farhadi, 2005).

In spite of the fact that a good number of books on reading comprehension have been published both locally and internationally, the number of books that has treated reading comprehension from a scientific perspective is very limited. Most of the textbooks published on reading comprehension, specially the local ones, consist of a certain number of passages followed by some true-false, multiple-choice, or fill in the blank exercises. Of course, the value of these types of activities should not be denied, because they are useful techniques to assure the comprehension of the readers. However, they do not suffice for a successful reading comprehension program. To cope with these complexities in the reading comprehension process, readers should equip themselves with certain techniques and skills (Farhadi & Mirhassani, 2005).

According to the context and their philosophy, teachers implement variety of techniques in their L2 reading classroom. However, regardless of the variation that exist between teaching methodologies, the ultimate goal of teaching reading is helping L2 learners progress to the advanced levels through a curriculum (Farhadi, 2005).

Besides, L2 learners have difficulties in organizing, maintaining, and comprehending text readings, and they just rely on decoding and encoding, vocabulary or structures. They are not able to grasp the general meaning as a whole, and also because the traditional methods used by teachers, which put emphasis merely on final product, do not make significant changes in L2 learners' reading performance, new techniques for teaching reading to L2 learners are required (Farhadi, 2005).

Concept mapping is one of the techniques that are related to the readers' prior knowledge. Background knowledge that aids in text comprehension has recently been studied under the rubric of schema theory. This theoretical framework (aptly termed by Grabe, 1991, a "theoretical metaphor") emphasizes the role of preexisting knowledge (a reader's "schema") in providing the reader with information that is implicit in a text so it seems that it is beneficial for L2 learners' reading development. Although its positive effect on students' L1 reading has been proved, few studies have been conducted to examine their effect on L2 learners reading performance.

Therefore, in this study one technique of teaching reading , namely concept mapping is surveyed in order to provide evidence on the method of teaching reading if it is effective for Iranian Pre-intermediate L2 reading comprehension.

Concept Mapping

A concept map presents the relationships among a set of connected concepts and ideas. It is a tangible way to display how your mind "see" a particular topic. By constructing a concept map, you reflect on what you know and what you don't know. In a Concept Map, the concepts, usually represented by single words enclosed in a rectangle (box), are connected to other concept boxes by arrows. A word or brief phrase, written by the arrow, defines the relationship between the connected concepts. Major concept boxes will have lines to and from several other concept boxes generating a network. (Novak, 1998).

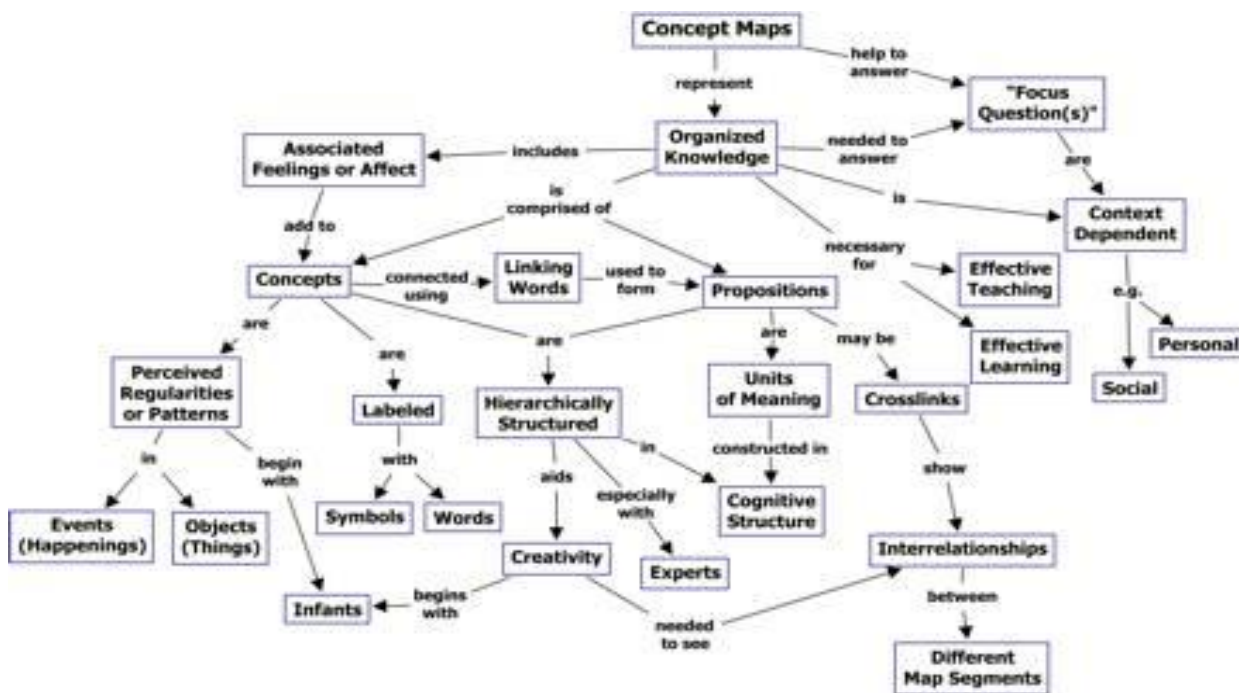


Figure 1.1 shows an example of the structure of a concept map.

Types of concept map

As it was stated earlier, depending on the nature of the subject matter, and context of learning, one can use different kinds of concept maps, regarding the ideas one can wishes to express. Each of concept maps are discussed here.

1.1. Web Concept Mapping

The web concept map is like a spider web, in which many ideas are linked by a common thread .this type of concept map is in accordance with hierarchical order of connecting concepts, which was emphasized by Novak (2006b). the web concept map is suitable for all subject matters. Figure 1.1 represents one example of web concept mapping.

1.2. Fish Bone Concept Mapping

The fish bone concept map looks like a fish skeleton, in which supporting reasons and specific example are pointed to the main idea. This type of concept mapping can also be useful for all topics.

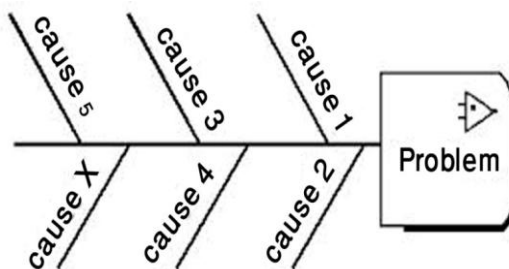


Figure 1.2 shows a fish bone concept map.

1.3. Venn Diagram Concept Mapping

The Venn Diagram is most appropriate for comparing and contrasting two issues. In this type of concept mapping, the circles represent the qualities of each issue. Where the circles overlap in the center of the diagram, it represents the

similarity of issues. Usually, the center of the map contains the general ideas and the outside section contain the specific differences. A Venn Diagram is often not as complete as a Web, and the topics are not fully developed.

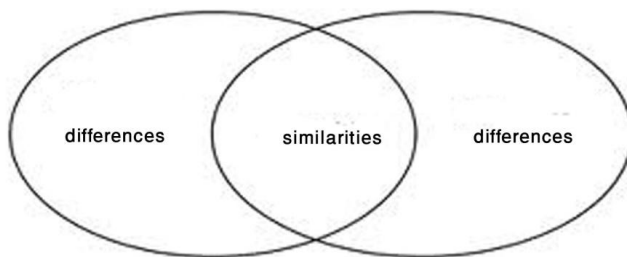


Figure 1.3. displays the format of such concept map.

1.4. Matrix Concept Mapping

The matrix concept mapping is useful for categorizing and classifying qualities. It can be used for all topics.

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>General idea</i> | | |
| <i>General idea</i> | <i>General idea</i> | <i>General idea</i> |
| <i>General idea</i> | <i>Supporting details</i> | <i>Supporting details</i> |
| <i>General idea</i> | <i>Supporting details</i> | <i>Supporting details</i> |

Figure 1.4. shows one matrix concept map.

1.5. NPR Concept Mapping

NPR concept mapping is like a matrix and is also useful for categorizing and classifying qualities. It is most appropriate for making an argument. NPR stand for New (topic the way things are now); proposed (What we proposed to change); and Reason (Why we make this proposition).

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>N (Now)</i> | <i>P(Proposed)</i> | <i>R(Reason)</i> |
| <i>General idea</i> | <i>General idea</i> | <i>General idea</i> |
| <i>Supporting detail</i> | <i>Supporting detail</i> | <i>Supporting detail</i> |

Figure 1.5. shows the format of a NPR concept map

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURES

The technique of concept mapping was developed by Joseph D. Novak and his research team at Cornell University in the 1970s as a means of representing the emerging science knowledge of students. It has subsequently been used as a tool to increase meaningful learning in the sciences and other subjects as well as to represent the expert knowledge of individuals and teams in education, government and business. Concept maps have their origin in the learning movement called constructivism. In particular, constructivists hold that learners actively construct knowledge.

Novak’s work is based on the cognitive theories of David Ausubel (assimilation theory), who stressed the importance of prior knowledge in being able to learn new concepts: “The most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Various attempts have been made to conceptualize the process of creating concept maps. Ray McAleese, in a series of articles, has suggested that concept mapping is a process of off-loading. In this 1998 paper, McAleese draws on the work of Sowa and a paper by Sweller& Chandler.

Concept mapping and Reading comprehension

Chularut and DeBuker (2004), examined the effect of concept mapping on achievement, self-regulation, and self-efficacy when reading an English text. The major participants of the study were 39 students attending a Center for English as a Second Language located on the campus of a major university in the Midwest, US. According to the scores obtained on Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency, the participants were divided into four language proficiency levels: 19 students for beginner level, 20 for intermediate level, 20 for advanced level, and 20 for expert level of proficiency. By using stratified random assignment, students were assign to two experimental groups: 40 student in concept mapping group, and 39 students in the individual study plus discussion group. Before starting the intervention, all participants were given the Achievement Test and the Survey of Learning Behaviors as pre-test. Following pre-testing, all students participated in five 60-minute study sessions. Each session was devoted to reading one English passage. In these study sessions, either concept mapping or individual plus discussion was employed. All students were encouraged to study each passage in order to understand both stated and implied information in the passage .the findings showed that all students made progress from pre-test to post-test in all variables of self-efficacy, self-monitoring, and achievement. However , the groups which used concept mapping technique showed statically greater gains from pre-test to post-test than individual study group.

III. METHODOLOGY

Grabe (2001) believes that reading is like watching a movie in your head. Rivers (2001) also believes that reading is the most important skill in language learning because it can extend one's knowledge of the language.

In this part, the criteria for choosing participants of the study, the characteristics of the instrument used in the study, and the data collection and analysis procedure are presented. An accurate explanation of the above-mentioned principles will be necessary for obtaining appropriate results.

A. Participants

This research is a type of experimental study with a pretest-treatment-post test design.

Initially, 30 learners were selected from Farzanegan English institute in Shiraz. They were female students within the age range of 16-20. This Experimental group taught by concept mapping technique, To make sure about their level of language proficiency at the time of study, the QPT (quick placement test) which include 60 multiple-choice tests was administered. Of course, this test was administered to 60 learners in that institute and 30 of them selected based on their proficiency level, it determined that they were pre-intermediate learners.

B. Materials

The materials employed in this study were as follows:

Two readings for concept mapping experimental group.

Samples of concept maps

C. Instruments

The first instrument utilized was quick placement test version 1, a type of Oxford Placement Test (OPT) (ALLEN, 2004), to assess the participants' primarily knowledge of the reading comprehension. The second one was a research questionnaire in order to gather information about the participants' opinion toward the specific technique they have been exposed.

After three months, a post test with a same structure was administered to them in order to measure the students' learning. Of course an interview and class observation were performed then.

D. Procedure

To carry out this study, these procedures were followed: First, administering the QPT (Allan, 2004) 30 pre-intermediate were selected out of a pile of 60 L2 learners in one of the language institutes in Shiraz (Farzanegn institute) and named experimental group. this experimental group who received instruction on how to use concept mapping technique as a pre-reading activity participated in a pre-test administration first, and then a post-test was administered to them to see whether participants' performance improved in post-test design.

Concept Mapping Experimental Group

Thirty pre-intermediate L2 learners participated in this experimental group. This group received four sessions of instructions on using concept mapping as a pre-reading activity. Before starting the treatment, a descriptive reading pre-test (see Appendix B) was administered to this group. Then the following procedures were pursued to teach concept mapping technique to the L2 learners.

In the first session of instruction, learners ought to read the text carefully, then they divided it to three sections, beginning, body, and the conclusion. Then, they summarized it and finally they illustrated the main point of the text.

In the second session, after giving a brief explanation about concept mapping technique, the reading's topic was given to the students and they were asked to draw a concept map for this topic. In other words, L2 learners followed these steps in this session:

1. Group brainstorming: Students were asked to think about the topic and then express what comes to their minds, without caring about their appropriateness or relevance.

2. Putting the relevant concepts in boxes: at this stage, L2 learners were asked to determine the relevant concepts and put them in boxes.

3. Arranging the concepts from the general ones to more specific ones: L2 learners were asked to determine the most exclusive concepts to less exclusive ones, and then arranging them in a hierarchical order in which the most exclusive terms stand above, and the least exclusive ones at the bottom.

4. Determining the relationship between the concepts: at this step, L2 learners were asked to determine the relationship between concepts by drawing arrows between the concepts and by using linking words on the arrows. Then, the actual reading (see Appendix D) along with its concept map drawn by the researcher (Appendix F) was delivered to the students, and their concept map was compared with writer's concept map. Afterwards, the actual text was read in the class, and the students learned how concept map is changed to a text.

In the next session, another text (see Appendix E) was given to the students and they were asked to draw its concept map collaboratively (see Appendix G). Then the next concept map was compared with that of the researcher.

In the last session of the instruction, a topic was given to the students and they were asked to draw a concept map for it and then they changed it to a reading text. In fact, in this session, L2 learners did what they had done in the first session besides the following steps:

1. Changing the relationship determined by arrows to sentences: L2 learners changed the concepts and the relationship between them to well-formed sentences.

2. Connecting the sentences to each other and creating a nice reading text. In this step, the sentences written in the previous steps changed to a coherent and cohesive reading text.

It should be pointed out that all students took part in all the stages and all the steps were covered collaboratively.

After the concept mapping treatment was finished, a reading post-test (see appendix C) was administered to see the degree of L2 learners progress in reading performance. In this test, students should draw a concept map for the topic and then write a text based on that concept map, and also the concept map questionnaire (see appendix H) was given to students to determine L2 learners' attitudes toward using this technique in reading classes.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

To address the research questions, At first, descriptive statistics were computed and displayed, Then, Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was used in order to determine whether concept mapping post-test scores were significantly higher than concept mapping pre-test scores. Afterwards, chi-square computed in order to measure the attitudes of learners toward the specific instruction they have been exposed.

Before the obtained data in concept mapping group analyzed, descriptive statistics for all scores presented in the following table.

TABLE 4.1.
DISPLAYS RESULTS OF DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF TOTAL SCORES FOR CONCEPT MAPPING GROUP

| | | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|-----------------|-----------|----|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Concept mapping | Pre test | 30 | 8.00 | 17.50 | 13.9500 | 2.23742 |
| | Post test | 30 | 14.00 | 19.50 | 17.6000 | 1.59011 |

A. Testing the First Research Question

Does the application of concept mapping have any significant effect on Iranian pre-intermediate L2 reading comprehension?

For the distribution scores of pre-test and post-test was not normal, the Wilcoxon sign rank test was run. now the researcher wanted to find out whether or not there is a significant difference between the mean rank of Concept mapping pretest and posttest.

TABLE 4.2
DISPLAYS THE RESULTS OF WILCOXON SIGNED RANKS TEST FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS IN CONCEPT MAPPING EXPERIMENTAL GROUP (CMEG).

| | | N | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
|------------------|----------------|----|-----------|--------------|
| pretest-posttest | Negative Ranks | 0 | .00 | .00 |
| | Positive Ranks | 30 | 15.50 | 465.00 |
| | Ties | 0 | | |
| | Total | 30 | | |
| Z | 4.797 | | | |
| Sig. | .000 | | | |

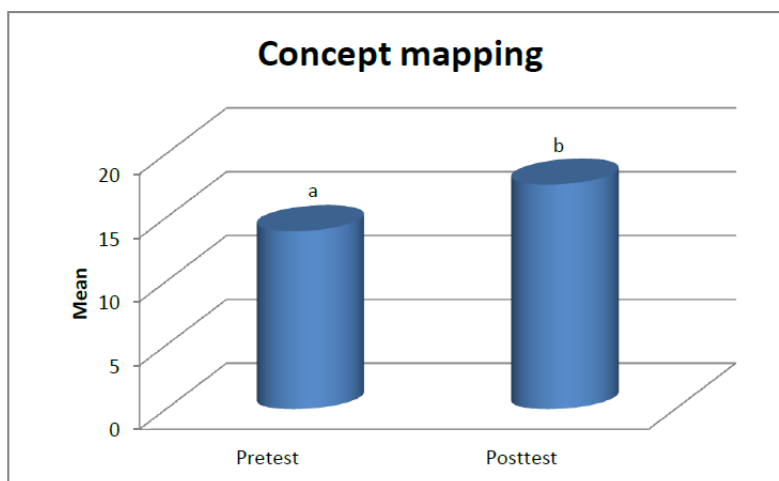


Figure 4.2. Displays mean of the pretest and posttest in concept mapping experimental group

As this table shows, the Wilcoxon test which is calculated by z was equal to 4.797 at probability level of $p=0.000$ which is smaller than $\alpha 0.05$, $sig<0.05$. therefore, it is determined that the scores increases highly in post-test. The following figure also confirms this result.

As you noticed the first research question was proved.

B. Analyses of the Questionnaire

Testing the second research question

Do Iranian pre-intermediate L2 learners have positive attitude toward the application of concept maps in their reading classes?

To address this hypothesis, chi-square test was run.

TABLE 4.3.
RESULT OF CHI-SQUARE FOR CMQ
CONCEPT MAPPING QUESTIONNAIRE

| | Observed N | Expected N | Residual |
|-------------------|------------|------------|----------|
| not at all | 6 | 30.0 | -39.0 |
| very little | 10 | 30.0 | -35.0 |
| uncertain | 23 | 30.0 | -22.0 |
| somewhat | 98 | 30.0 | -53.0 |
| to a great extent | 88 | 30.0 | -43.0 |
| Total | 225 | | |

As Table 4.3 displays, the observed number for scale 1 (*not at all*) is 6, for scale 2 (*very little*) is 10, for scale 3 (*uncertain*) is 23, for scale 4 (*somewhat*) is 98, and for scale 5 (*to a great extent*) is 88, respectively. Therefore, on the whole, CMEG participants have selected choice 4 (*somewhat*) more than the other ones, and since all the questionnaire items were positive statements, it can be concluded that they had a positive attitude toward using concept mapping technique in reading classes. So the second research question also was proved.

V. DISCUSSION

This part is concerned with the discussion and the general conclusions which can be drawn from the analysis of the obtained data. First, the possible reasons for the findings of the study will be discussed. Then, a comparison will be made between the results gained in this study and the previous ones conducted in other settings. Finally, some implications for the findings will be presented.

Although today most of the teachers try to use new strategies, especially meta cognitive ones, in their L2 reading classrooms, it seems that the implication of such techniques have been overlooked in Iran. Therefore, an attempt has been made in this study to investigate one of such techniques (namely, concept mapping) on reading performance of Iranian EFL learners.

The results of data analysis revealed that concept mapping technique has a positive effect on L2 students' reading comprehension. The results of this study can be interpreted in the light of three ideas from Ausbel's (1968) Assimilation Theory, which are also of psychological foundations of concept mapping strategy. These three ideas are as follows:

1. "Ausbel sees the development of new meanings as building on prior relevant concepts and propositions" (Novak & Canas, 2006, P.4). The first step in developing concept mapping is brainstorming. In brainstorming, L2 learners start with their prior knowledge by reading relevant elements. Then, by using their imagination and creativity, and developing new relationships among those concepts and propositions, they reach to new meanings. In other words, in the brainstorm phase of developing a concept map, L2 learners become aware of their current level of knowledge, and then they try to advance themselves to a higher level, by building appropriate schemata in their minds. This is also in accordance with Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD Theory and Rumelhart's (1980) schema Theory. Vygotsky believes that by knowing the current level of knowledge, students try to advance to higher ZPD, and little by little this will lead to learner autonomy.

2. "Ausbel sees cognitive structure as organized hierarchically, with more general, more exclusive concepts occupying higher levels in the hierarchy, and more specific, less inclusive concepts subsumed under the more general concepts" (Novak & Canas, 2006a, P.4). In the technique of concept mapping, L2 learners use an order to draw one.

3. "When meaningful learning occurs, relationships between concepts become more explicit, more precise, and better integrated with other concepts and propositions" (Novak & Canas, 2006a P.4). By drawing concept maps, the relationship between concepts and propositions in readings, become more explicit, and so meaningful learning can occur.

Regarding the first research question, the result of this study is in accordance with the action-research of Reinildes Dian (2008). In this study, which was conducted in Brazil on one group of ESP readers, participants were enrolled in an ESP course in order to comprehend of texts related to specific field of study. By analyzing four readings from each of the learners with and without concept mapping, he concluded that, by using concept mapping technique, the participants made progress in their reading comprehension.

In the same vein, Chang, Chung & Sung (2002), have examined the effect of concept mapping to enhance text comprehension in one National University in Taiwan. Like this study, they also concluded that concept mapping technique can help L2 learners in developing their reading comprehension.

The result of this study is also in line with those which have been conducted in first language. For example, in a study conducted in one High school Biology classroom in USA Cynthia H. Joseph (2001) found that using concept mapping technique can lead to more creativity and higher order thinking in students. In another study, Nikoliarazi and Vikiri (2012) examined the effect of concept mapping instruction on reading comprehension by students who are deaf in Greece. she also concluded that this technique was very helpful in enhancing learners' reading ability.

VI. CONCLUSION & IMPLICATION

The basic concern underlying the present study is to what extent concept mapping, one of the meta cognitive techniques can help L2 learners autonomous regarding reading performance. According to Ausubel (1968, cited in Novak & Canas, 2006 a), effective language learning environment is one that makes learners autonomous. However, without applying appropriate reading techniques, L2 learners cannot reach to such high level of understanding and learning.

The findings of this study revealed that pre-intermediate L2 learners enjoy using concept mapping to develop their reading proficiency (both in overall and components of reading). Also, responses to the questionnaires confirmed that L2 learners have positive attitudes toward using such technique in reading classes. Therefore it can be concluded that concept mapping technique has the criteria of fostering meaningful learning (i.e., clarity of materials, their relevance to learners' prior knowledge, and increasing students' motivation to learn) in L2 learners.

However, since the data in this study have been taken from a small sample of learners in one institute in Shiraz, it is important not to over generalize the results of the study. But replication studies elsewhere can help in building a rich body of knowledge.

The findings obtained from this study have theoretical as well as pedagogical implications. Regarding theoretical implications, the present research, providing some data on the effect of concept mapping on the readings of EFL learners, has tries to enrich the literature behind it.

The findings also have pedagogical implications for foreign language teachers and learners. By being aware that concept mapping techniques can help L2 learners develop their reading performance in almost all reading aspects, teachers become motivated to use such techniques in their L2 reading classes. Findings of this study can also encourage students to use such meta cognitive strategies in completing reading tasks.

Syllabus designers, curriculum developers, and course book designers can also benefit from the findings of the present study. They can include concept mapping in foreign language course books and curricula.

APPENDIX A. CONCEPT MAPPING PRE-TEST

Name.....

Please read this passage and then answer the following questions.

There is a major difference between the Islamic calendar and the Western calendar. The former is based on the time required for the moon to revolve around the earth. Whereas the latter is based on the time for the earth to revolve around the sun.

Where the Western calendar is used, the seasons always come in the same months each year. Thus, summer falls between mid-June and the end of September, whereas the cold weather of winter falls between the beginning of December and the end of March.

Why does each month always come in the same season each year? The reason is that the Western Calendar is based on the earth's revolution around the sun. the passage of the seasons is caused by this movement of the earth, too.

Where the Islamic calendar is used, that is not the cause. The basis of the calendar is the moons movement, not that of the earth. there is no connection between the moon's movement and the seasons.

The months and holidays of the Islamic Calendar don't always come in the same seasons. Let's suppose the Feast of the Sacrifice comes in the summer this year. In a few years it will come in the winter.

- The Islamic and Western Calendar basically differ in.....
 - two ways
 - no way
 - many ways
 - one way
- Where the Western calendar is used, summer falls between mid-June and September, autumn always comes between the months of.....
 - December and March
 - June and September
 - September and December
 - June and March
- According to the Western calendar, each month always comes in the season because the calendar is based on the movement of the.....
 - earth
 - sun
 - moon
 - season

4. Holidays of the Islamic calendar , falls in accordance with the.....
 - a) movement of the moon
 - b) basis of the season
 - c) revolution of the earth
 - d) use of the calendar
5. The best title for this passage would be
 - a) Solar and Lunar Calendar
 - b) Plant’s Movement
 - c) Season’s Change
 - d) Calendars’ Origin

APPENDIX B. CONCEPT MAPPING POST-TEST

Name:

Please read this passage and answer the following questions.

There is a major difference between the Islamic calendar and the Western calendar. The former is based on the time required for the moon to revolve around the earth. Whereas the latter is based on the time for the earth to revolve around the sun.

Where the Western calendar is used, the seasons always come in the same months each year. Thus, summer falls between mid-June and the end of September, whereas the cold weather of winter falls between the beginning of December and the end of March.

Why does each month always come in the same season each year? The reason is that the Western Calendar is based on the earth’s revolution around the sun. the passage of the seasons is caused by this movement of the earth, too.

Where the Islamic calendar is used, that is not the cause. The basis of the calendar is the moons movement, not that of the earth .there is no connection between the moon’s movement and the seasons.

The months and holidays of the Islamic Calendar don’t always come in the same seasons. Let’s suppose the Feast of the Sacrifice comes in the summer this year. In a few years it will come in the winter.

1. The best title for this passage would be
 - a) Season’s Change
 - d) Calendars’ Origin
 - c) Solar and Lunar Calendar
 - d) Plant’s Movement
2. The Islamic and Western Calendar basically differ in.....
 - a) one way
 - b) no way
 - c) many ways
 - d)two ways
3. According to the Western calendar, each month always comes in the season because the calendar is based on the movement of the.....
 - a) sun
 - b)earth
 - c)moon
 - d) season
4. where the Western calendar is used , summer falls between mid-June and September , autumn always comes between the months of.....
 - a) December and March
 - b) September and December
 - c) June and September
 - d) June and March
5. Holidays of the Islamic calendar, falls in accordance with the.....
 - a) movement of the moon
 - b) basis of the season
 - c) use of the calendar
 - d) revolution of the earth

APPENDIX C. WHAT IS A COMPUTER

Computers are changing all over lives and also old ways of doing things with their superhuman speed. They come in different sizes-from very large to small pocket-sized ones. they can always be used in any field of activity. No one can deny their influence and importance.

Computers are used to design different things. They are used in giant airplanes and modern cars. All spacecraft which are orbiting out through space are controlled by computers.

In addition to helping us to work better, computers are opening new fields of Endeavour. Perhaps the most important is in medicine where computers are helping doctors to research disease, chemist to design drugs and disabled people to learn skills.

Furthermore, computers can also be programmed to do many separate tasks at the same time. The central computer of an airline, for example, is constantly busy sending and receiving information to and from office and airports around the world.

1. According to the passage.....
 - a) the computer has had little effect on your life
 - b) people usually use pocket-sized computers at home
 - c) computers are available everywhere
 - d) the computers will influence our life in different aspect
2. computers can be used
 - a) in the field of medicine

- b) to design drugs for disabled people
 - c) to switch from one job into another
 - d) by chemists only
3. we learn from the passage that.....
- a) disabled people do research to design drugs
 - b) doctors teach the disabled people different skills
 - c) computers are used in research projects
 - d) computers should only do certain tasks
4. what can computers do in an airline?
- a) it can correspond information to and from airport
 - b) it can design different things
 - c) it can help passengers talk to each other
 - d) it can help the flight attendant to convey the information

APPENDIX D. VARIOUS FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

Ever since humans have inhabited the earth, they have made use of various forms of communication. Generally, this expression of thoughts and feelings has been in the form of oral speech. When there is a language barrier, communication is accomplished through sign language in which motions stand for letters, words, and ideas. Tourists, the deaf and the mute have had to resort to this form of expression. Many of these symbols of whole words are very picturesque and exact and can be used intentionally, spelling however can not.

Body language transmits idea of thoughts by certain actions, either intentionally or unintentionally. A wink can be a way of flirting or indicating that the party is only joking. A nod signifies approval, while shaking the head indicates a negative reaction. Other forms of nonlinguistic can be found in Braille (a system of raised dots read with the fingertips).

Road maps and picture signs also guide, warn, and instruct people.

But verbalization is the most common form of language. Writing a letter, having a telephone call, a class discussion, and a friendly chat are examples of this kind of language.

1. which of the following best summarizes this passage?

- a) nonlinguistic language is invaluable to foreigners
- b) although other forms of communication exist, verbalization is the fastest
- c) when language is a barrier , people will find other forms of communication
- d) everybody uses only one form of communication

2. which of the following statements is not true?

- a) verbalization is the most common form of communication
- b) ideas and thoughts can be transmitted by body language
- c) there are many forms of communication in existence today
- d) the deaf and mute use an oral form of communication

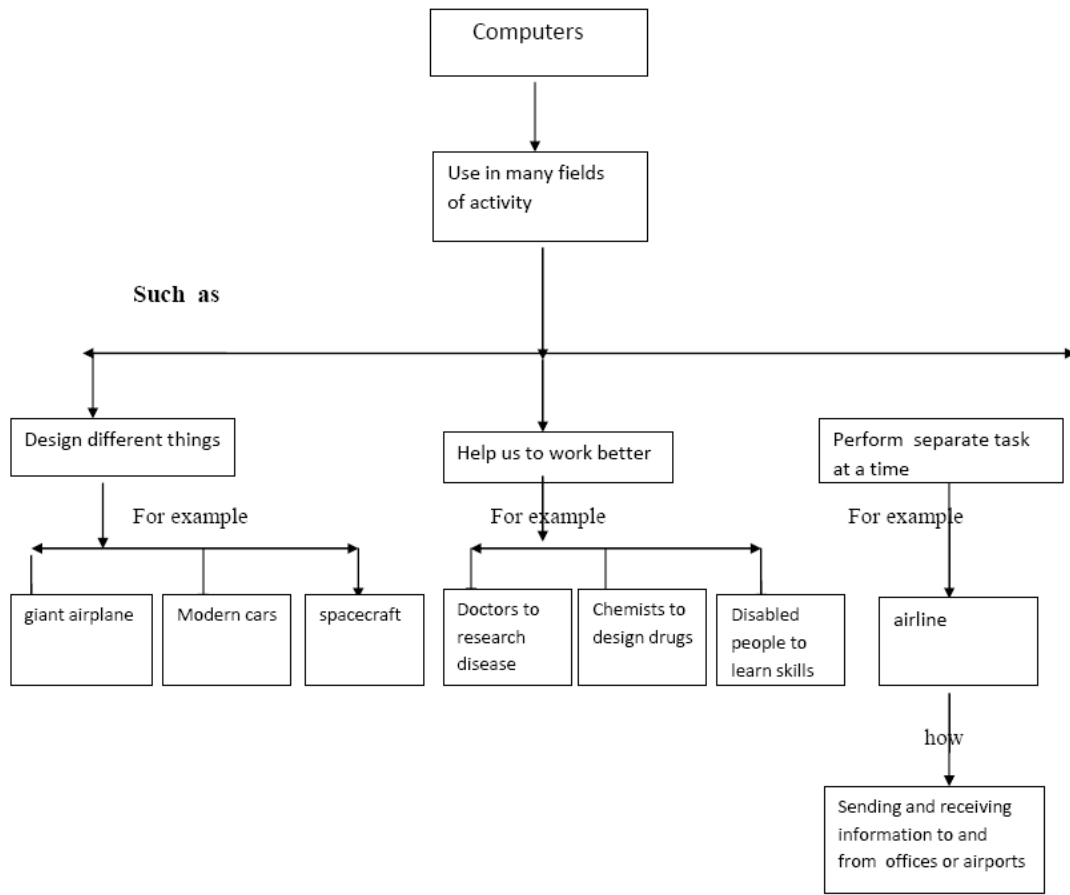
3. which form other than oral speech would be most commonly used among blind people?

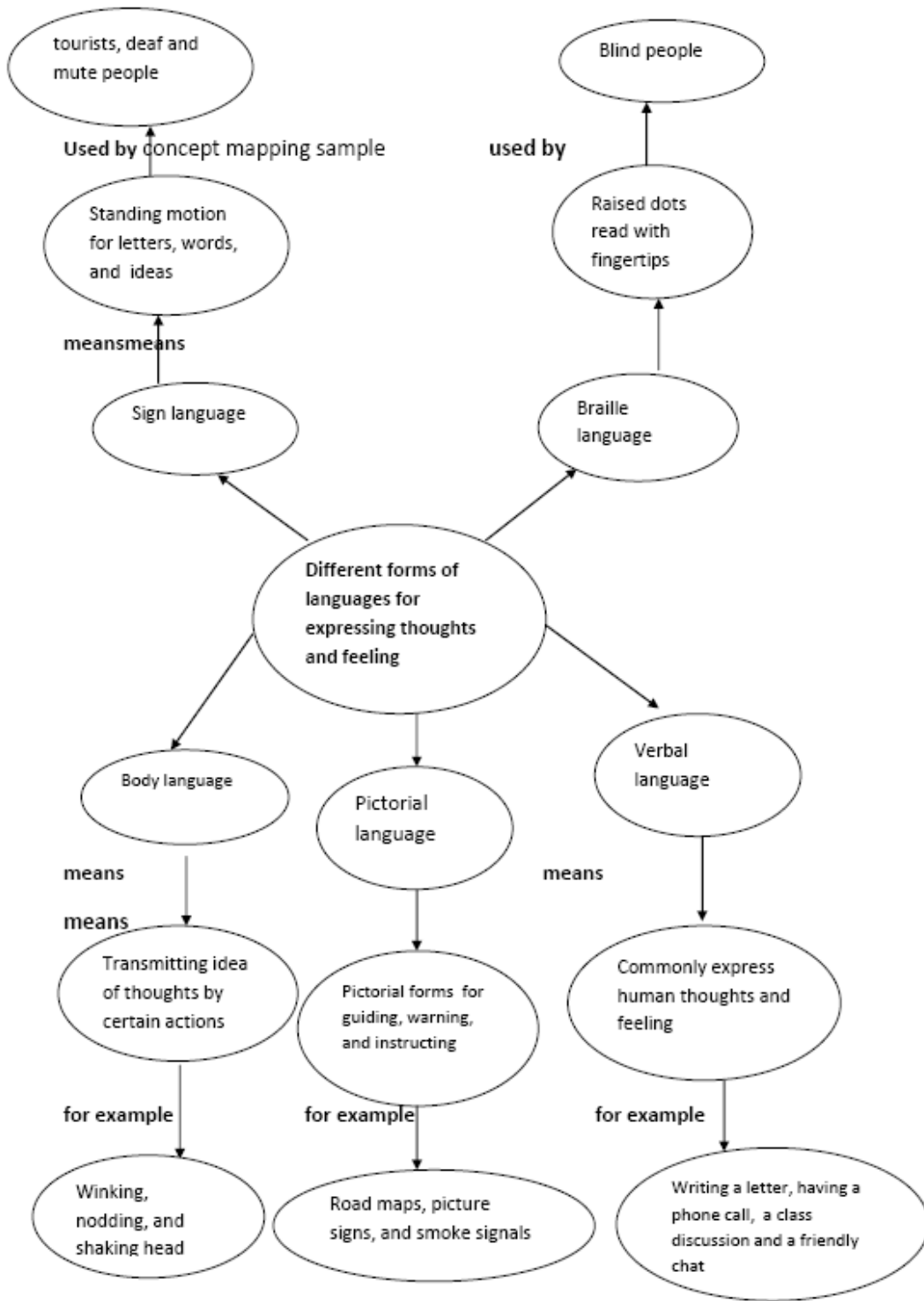
- a) picture signs
- b) road map
- c) Braille
- d) body language

4. how many different forms of communication are mentioned here?

- a) 5
- b) 7
- c) 11
- d) 9

APPENDIX E. CONCEPT MAPPING SAMPLE





APPENDIX F. CONCEPT MAPPING QUESTIONNAIRE

Name.....

Date.....

What is your preference for using concept mapping in reading classes? Please check the number that best describes your attitude.

1= Not at all 2= Very little 3= Somewhat 4= To a great extent

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Concept mapping helped me to improve my learning of reading. | | | | |
| 2. Concept mapping increased my motivation in learning the principals of reading. | | | | |
| 3. Concept mapping increased my involvement in the class interaction. | | | | |
| 4. Concept mapping helped me to communicate my obtained information to others in the class. | | | | |
| 5. Concept mapping stimulated me to think analytically and independently. | | | | |
| 6. Concept mapping helped me to learn cooperatively with my classmates. | | | | |
| 7. Making association among concept events in concept mapping tasks challenged my critical thinking. | | | | |
| 8. Concept mapping helped me to remove my deficiencies in reading comprehension. | | | | |
| 9. Concept mapping helped me to gain a better understanding of my learning process in the class. | | | | |
| 10. Concept mapping helped me to critique my own learning as well as others. | | | | |
| 11. By the use of Concept mapping, the content of my writing (e.g appropriate development of ideas , unity, etc.) was improved. | | | | |
| 12. By the use of Concept mapping , the form of my reading (e.g. correct use of grammar , vocabulary, punctuation, etc.) was improved. | | | | |
| 13. Concept mapping was useful in developing reading comprehension process. | | | | |
| 14. Concept mapping was useful for the improvement of the quality of final product (complete comprehension delivered at the end). | | | | |
| 15. Concept mapping decreased the time I spent on reading. | | | | |

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She has already graduated from the college and this is the first time that she wished to publish an article in journal, of course she has some accepted articles in academic English held in some cities in Iran but they were orally presented. For example, the study that she worked on high school students which titled (An Evaluation of Graphic Representation in Iranian Intermediate EFL Textbook) was one of them, it was accepted by *US-China Foreign Language* and *Sino-US English Teaching* journal, but she didn't follow its procedure and never published. And also she has an article about Contrastive Analysis, titled, (A Contrastive Investigation of English Two-word verbs and Persian Compound verbs: Implication for Translation) she can send their files to you if you want.

She (SoghraKhalili), the author of this article, works in her own home, she is a private teacher for Pre-universities students. her thesis in university was about The Effect Of Concept Mapping and Story Mapping On Pre-intermediate L2 Reading Comprehension and the paper that she send it to you is one of the article elicited from this thesis. she hopes she could send more papers for your journal.

The Study of Non-verbal Allusion Translation in Film Subtitle: Based on Relevance Theory

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Abstract—This dissertation attempts to find a proper way of translating non-verbal allusion in a film based on Relevance Theory through the comparison of two Chinese versions of *The Simpsons Movie*. According to Relevance Theory, the key of translation is to search and achieve the Optimal Relevance, thus non-verbal allusion subtitle translation is considered as a process of achieving Optimal Relevance between the allusions in subtitles and the Target Language Viewers.

Index Terms—Relevance Theory, Optimal Relevance, non-verbal allusion

I. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Nowadays, Subtitle translation is considered to be very important while people are enjoying a foreign film, because the inaccuracy of the translation could easily misguide the understanding of the target viewers. The Subtitle language is the carrier of culture. Many examples show that one cannot learn English well if one is ignorant of the culture of the English-speaking countries. In English, there are so many heavily culture-loaded verbal and non-verbal which are easy to lead to cross-cultural failures in communication. Most of the movies are rich in allusions which are originated from various fields, including mythology, historical events, fables, religion and literary works. Allusions are of great importance in understanding the foreign culture since they have close connection with people's life. Thus, more attention should be paid to the translation of allusion subtitling to make people better understand and enjoy the original intended meaning of the movie.

The quality of subtitle translation of a film, including the translation of allusion subtitle, could have a great influence on people's understanding and appreciation of the film. It is the translator's duty to show the target language viewers the original meaning concerning cultural factors of the movie. How to understand these cultural elements and reduce differences caused by them are two problems the translator should deal with. However, just as Yves Gambier and Henrik Gottlieb point out (2001), research in subtitling is still difficult for lack of theoretical frames and methodological tools (Yves Gambier and Henrik Gottlieb, 2001). Many theories have been applied in fields of translation; however, very few researches have been done in allusion subtitle translation, especially guided by Relevance Theory.

Good translation of subtitles could help the target viewers get a proper understanding of the original and bring enjoyment to the viewers. Good translation techniques guided by proper theory could make it much easier for the target viewers to understand the film just as the original viewers do. Thus, the dissertation attempts to find a proper way of translating Non-Verbal Allusions in a film based on RT through the comparison of two Chinese versions of *The Simpsons Movie*.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative study is adopted in the research of the allusion subtitle translation in the English movie *The Simpsons Movie* in order to analyze which version of Chinese translation has used better translation techniques and whether it has achieved the optimal relevance, that is, whether the two Chinese versions have the original intention clearly conveyed to the Target Language Viewers. Transcription, descriptive and comparative analysis, and exemplification are applied in this dissertation.

Transcription serves in the collection of the two versions. The version from YDY is transcribed from Internet (Net.2). The version from Yyed is from the DVD released by The TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX.

Descriptive analyses are made in the case study to establish the translation brief and to analyze the source-texts. It shows how the translator conveys the original information of a film in order to make the target viewers achieve an expected understanding of the original film.

Comparative analyses are applied in target-text analysis and exemplification is used to support the viewpoints in the descriptive and comparative analyses.

III. RESEARCH THEORY

Relevance Theory is a cognitive theory of human communication, which lays emphasis on the importance of optimal relevance. The allusion subtitle translation could be explained better by Relevance Theory through its principle of optimal relevance. Thus, this dissertation attempts to study allusion subtitle translation on the basis of Sperber and Wilson's RT, hoping to get a desirable method of allusion subtitle translation and provide a wide theoretical basis for the research of allusion subtitle translation.

According to Sperber and Wilson (1986), the notion of relevance was defined as a useful theoretical concept in a technical sense. Relevance is comparatively defined in terms of contextual effect and processing effort as "an assumption is relevant in a context if and only if it has some contextual effect in that context" (Sperber and Wilson, 1986, p.122). And its two extent conditions are as follows:

"An assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that its contextual effects in this context are large. An assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that the effort required to process it in this context is small." (Sperber and Wilson, 1986, p. 125). The definition shows that: when other things are equal, the relevance is depending on two factors, that is, the greater the cognitive effects, the greater the relevance; the smaller the processing effort, the greater the relevance.

According to Relevance Theory, the translation of allusions is difficult because on the one hand, the author uses allusions to deliver the rich and implicit implications, which need rich contextual effects in the corresponding translation; on the other hand, allusions are rooted in special culture, which requires higher cognitive environment and more efforts in understanding. Thus, we could redefine the dilemma in allusion translation based on Relevance Theory: in one way, the cultural elements in the allusions could be deleted and only the meaning is expressed in allusion translation to decrease the efforts needed by target readers, which will not succeed because it may not reach the Optimal Relevance since it has not produced enough contextual effects; in the other way, the cultural elements of the allusions could be reserved and translated directly so as to produce rich contextual effects, which will also not succeed because it may not reach the Optimal Relevance since it may cost the target viewers more efforts to understand it.

According to Relevance Theory, relevance is decided by context, and a sentence may have much different relevance in different contexts, which has important meaning to allusion translation: the success of translation is decided by the context of intention viewers. Thus, in allusion translation, the translator should first of all make sure of the differences between the context of target viewers and the required context for correctly understanding the allusion. The degree of resemblance between the original text and the translation is based on the above factor. Then, the translators must always keep Optimal Relevance in mind when choosing the specific translation strategies to make sure that the translation can produce enough contextual effects to the target viewers without the waste of excessive efforts. The translation will be successful when these two points are achieved.

IV. BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF *THE SIMPSONS MOVIE*

The Simpsons Movie, which was directed by David Silverman, is an American animated comedy film made in 2007 based on the animated cartoon sitcom *The Simpsons*. It is known as "the Encyclopedia of America", which is full of allusions which play a key role in adding the fun and humor of the movie, making the movie a bit difficult to understand, especially for a foreigner watching a translated version.

The film describes a recognizably American family in a fictional American town named Springfield. The Simpson family is a middle-class white family with a typical family structure of two adults, three kids, a cat and a dog. Using the environmental pollution as a clue, the movie describes the evil head of the Environmental Protection Agency who intends to destroy Springfield, in which a lake was polluted by Homer. At last, Homer succeeds to regain his dignity by stopping Cargill's scheme after being abandoned by his family and chased by the townspeople.

The film has reached a big commercial success and has won many awards. It grossed a combined total of \$74,036,787 in its opening weekend on 5,500 screens at 3,922 theaters, reaching the top of the box office for that weekend. (Net.1) The film's trailer, music and website also received great awards. It was also nominated for a series of awards before its release.

As have mentioned above, the film is full of allusions. Therefore, *The Simpsons Movie* is chosen to be an example in this dissertation. Berger (1997) thought that allusion could make it convenient to remind the reader of certain people and events, and enable people to see the current scene or situation based on this additional information. According to Berger, the viewer may not understand the allusions in a comedy from a different culture which leads to the loss of humor and a poor understanding of a movie. (Berger, 1997).

Lepphalme (1997) also believes that a cultural barrier can be a barrier in understanding an allusion, unless the receivers know well about the two cultures (Lepphalme, 1997). The audience of *The Simpsons Movie* is of various types, even in the original target culture. The translator should take the different age, gender and nationality of the audience into consideration when choosing the translation strategies. Being such a popular movie, its subtitle translation, especially allusion translation, is of great importance.

V. ANALYSIS ON ALLUSION TRANSLATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF RELEVANCE THEORY

People often use old allusions in new contexts to convey their new implications which make allusions implicit;

Meanwhile, allusions are produced from cultural heritage familiar to people with the same historical and cultural backgrounds which add its cultural characters, including historical events, mythology, religion, literature works, fables and old legends.

Studies on allusion translation have focused on the fact that allusions are not always recognized by Target Language Viewers, who have a different cultural background than the source-text author and his/her original audience. Therefore, allusions should be translated with great care due to their implicitness of meanings and distinct cultural property. It is always a dilemma for the translators to convey the implied information of the allusions while keep the original cultural property as much as possible (Wilss, 2001).

According to Relevance Theory, the translation of allusions is difficult because on the one hand, the author uses allusions to deliver the rich and implicit implications, which need rich contextual effects in the corresponding translation; on the other hand, allusions are rooted in special culture, which requires higher cognitive environment and more efforts in understanding. Thus, we could redefine the dilemma in allusion translation based on RT: in one way, the cultural elements in the allusions could be deleted and only the meaning is expressed in allusion translation to decrease the efforts needed by target readers, which will not succeed because it may not reach the Optimal Relevance since it has not produced enough contextual effects; in the other way, the cultural elements of the allusions could be reserved and translated directly so as to produce rich contextual effects, which will also not succeed because it may not reach the Optimal Relevance since it may cost the target viewers more efforts to understand it.

According to Relevance Theory, relevance is decided by context, and a sentence may have much different relevance in different contexts, which has important meaning to allusion translation: the success of translation is decided by the context of intention viewers. Thus, in allusion translation, the translator should first of all make sure of the differences between the context of target viewers and the required context for correctly understanding the allusion. The degree of resemblance between the original text and the translation is based on the above factor. Then, the translators must always keep Optimal Relevance in mind when choosing the specific translation strategies to make sure that the translation can produce enough contextual effects to the target viewers without the waste of excessive efforts. The translation will be successful when these two points are achieved.

VI. NON-VERBAL ALLUSIONS IN *THE SIMPSONS MOVIE*

There are two kinds of allusions in *The Simpsons Movie*: Verbal Allusions and Non-Verbal Allusions. (Net.2) Except verbal allusion, there are also many Non-Verbal Allusions which play a key role in the understanding and enjoying of the whole film. Here “non-verbal” refers to some texts or signs in certain scenes without sounds.

Whenever possible, you could find jokes or sight gags in signs, newspapers and elsewhere in the film with familiar background scenes. For example, there is a love scene in *The Simpsons Movie* which parodies many Disney films with Disney-style animals helping them undress; when in the Dare Contest, Bart is riding his skateboard naked, different passing objects are constantly covering his genitalia, a nod to similar techniques used in *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery*; Hillary Clinton appears as Itchy’s competitor, while an Orc from *The Lord of the Rings* appears in the mob scene. There are all together 14 NVA taken as examples in this chapter.

VII. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NON-VERBAL ALLUSIONS OF THE TWO CHINESE VERSIONS

A. *The Non-verbal Allusion Appeared within Texts*

Examples 1 to 5 are Non-Verbal Allusions which appear in the written forms.

Example 1

When Itchy returns to his country, the other mice gather to elect him as their president. The words on one of the streamers is **ITCHY/HILLARY’08**.

Version 1: 依奇/希拉里 08

Version 2: Omitted

Hillary Clinton appears as a U.S. presidential candidate. Hillary Clinton is a United States Senator for New York from 2001 to 2009. Being the wife of Bill Clinton, she is also the First Lady of the United States from 1993 to 2001. In January of 2007, Hillary expressed her wish to campaign for the president of the United States in 2008 through her personal website. Thus, the film is a spoof to Hillary. It is no doubt that the name Hillary is known to most of the TL viewers since she is a very famous politician of the United States. The translator should first let the target viewers know “Hillary” is “希拉里”, and the mice are electing for their president. Thus, the technique of replacing the name with TL form plus adding additional information should be adopted here in translating this allusion. For example, it could be translated as “依奇/希拉里 08 (竞选总统)”. However, both of the two versions fail to do so.

Example 2

LISA SIMPSON PRESENTS: AN IRRITATING TRUTH

Version 1: 丽莎 辛普森报告会: 令人愤怒的真相

Version 2: Omitted

The name of Lisa’s presentation at the town meeting is *An Irritating Truth*, which is a parody of the film name *An*

Inconvenient Truth. The allusion used here to show the same purpose of avoiding pollution with the film *An Inconvenient Truth* which attempts to spread awareness of global warming to the whole world. When translating this allusion, the translator should think about two factors: first, whether the film *An Inconvenient Truth* is familiar to the TL viewers; second, whether it helps for comprehension of the present film plot to translate the allusion out. Since the film *An Inconvenient Truth* is probably not a well-known film to most of the target viewers, and the target viewers could enjoy the film to the same degree without the allusion being translated, the allusion could be translated into its TL form without further explanation just as version 1 does so as to achieve the best enjoyment. Therefore, the translator should omit the allusions sometimes due to the great cultural differences between the SL viewers and the TL viewers.

Example 3

In order to mourn the lately dead rock band Green Day, the church plays “**American Idiot: Funeral Version**”. *American Idiot*, which is an album released in 2004 by Green Day, is a rock opera strongly criticizes the government and media.

Version 1: 美国白痴: 葬礼版

Version 2: Omitted

Due to the fact that *American Idiot* is an album produced by Green Day and the sarcastic feature of the album, the allusion should be translated by adding some additional information so that the target viewers could get enough contextual effect with the SL viewers who are familiar with this band and can easily get the laugh point. Thus, both of the two versions fail to achieve the optimal relevance. It could be translated as “美国白痴 (Green Day 的歌曲): 葬礼版”.

Example 4

The name “**Green Day**” is shown on the streamer.

Version 1: **Green Day** 乐队

Version 2: Omitted

The man who is singing on the boat is Billie Joe Armstrong, the main singer of **Green Day** which is an American rock band formed in 1988. As the film shows, the band consists of three core members: Billie Joe Armstrong, Mike Dirnt and Tre Cool. Version 2 omits the name of the band totally which is not the best choice since the band appears one more time later. The target viewers will be confused about the plot if the allusion is not translated out here, which will cost more efforts of the target viewers. Version 1 translates the allusion by retaining the name and adding some additional information. But the target viewers will still not know that it is a real band of America, which may not raise the mocking effect as the film maker wants to show. Thus, the technique of adding footnote should be adopted here. For example, it could be translated as “Green Day (美国著名摇滚乐队)”.

Example 5

When in Eski-Moe, Homer plays a video game named **Grand Theft Auto**.

Version 1: 海象飞车

Version 2: Omitted

The video game Homer plays is a parody to the popular video game series Grand Theft Auto. The games are routinely criticized by its subject of violence. The video game in the movie is full of violence just as it is in real life. In the movie, Grand Theft Auto appears by taking almost half of the screen to attract the viewers’ attention which makes the purpose of this allusion very clear. The allusion used here is an intention to show one aspect of the Homer’s personality. As the picture has shown the violent action clearly enough, the target viewers can get the same contextual effects as the SL viewers do without knowing what the allusion is. Therefore, version 1 is a good translation by omitting the original allusion but translating its sense with the picture on the screen vividly described. Version 2 fails by losing the intention of the original film.

B. *The Techniques Used in Verbal Allusions without Texts*

Only five Non-Verbal Allusions appeared within texts are translated out, leaving the others omitted.

Example 6

Itchy kills Scratchy and makes up lies when he return to his country, but his people regard him as a hero and elect him as president. It is a parody of the famous political film *Wag the Dog*.

Example 7

In the dare contest, Bart rides his skateboard naked with different passing objects covering his genitalis constantly. This is a parody of the film *International Man of Mystery* which uses a same technique of expressing.

Example 8

In Homer and Marge’s love scene in Alaska, many Disney-style animals appear to help them undress which is a parody to the Disney films.

Example 9

The dancing penguin appears in the game is also a reference to the penguin in the animated movie *Happy Feet*, who is out of home because of his dancing tendencies.

Example 10

The robot who is sent to dispose the bomb by the policemen of the Springfield commits suicide under great pressure.

It is clearly a parody to the film *Full Metal Jacket* which contains a similar way of suicide.

Example 11

The immense shadow of the EPA dome which is delivered to Springfield and the reactions of the People inside the Springfield are quite like the film *Independence Day*, when the Alien Destroyers positioning themselves over Washington DC, New York City, and Los Angeles.

Example 12

Homer grabs on to a passing truck in order to get home after he comes out from Eski-Moe, a parody to actor Buster Keaton who was best known for his silent films.

Example 13

Trees can be found in every emotional or important scene throughout the film. When Lisa meets Colin for the first time, an apple tree is inserted behind them, a reference to the biblical story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Example 14

The crowds are celebrating their victory from being bombed at the end of the film. The same hand gesture of Carl is a parody of Lando Calrissian's gestures in the film *Star Wars Episode VI: Return of the Jedi*.

The above eight Non-Verbal Allusions cannot be translated because of two reasons: the target viewers can easily recognize these allusions which are very popular to people all over the world, or the audience can get much information from the screen, such as the various expressions on their faces, the reaction they have made for the changes and so on. On the other hand, the viewers could not enjoy the pictures and music in a short time if too many words are inserted to explain the allusion. According to Relevance Theory, the Optimal Relevance will be achieved only with the most contextual effects and the least processing efforts. Thus, both of the two versions have not translated them out which are in accordance with the principle of relevance.

All the comparative analysis of Non-Verbal Allusions shows that adding further explanation is a quite common-used technique in translating all these kinds of allusions since it could make allusions more clear to the Target Language viewers which would help them with their understanding process and getting the most contextual effects with enough processing efforts. Omission is also used in translating the non-verbal allusions due to their unique features.

VIII. MAIN FINDINGS

The purpose of the dissertation is trying to find out the significant trend of the translator's choice of strategies in Non-Verbal Allusion subtitle translation. The examples of translated subtitles are taken from the movie screen produced by YYet and YDY subtitle groups and analyzed descriptively and explanatorily from a relevance-theoretical approach.

Based on Relevance Theory, some translation techniques below are concluded from the analysis of *The Simpsons Movie*, which could be also suitable for the translation of allusions in all movies of this kind. When translating Non-Verbal Allusion, four techniques could be used:

- (1) Use its Target Language form when the allusion needs not to be translated, such as in example 2;
- (2) Add further explanation to the allusion which could rise confusion to the Target Language viewers without further explanation, such as in example 1,3,4;
- (3) Reduce the allusion to its sense by showing its meaning, such as in example 5;
- (4) Omit it when it cannot be translated, such as in example 6-13.

It is sure that there are some limitations in this dissertation. Firstly, the present study is only a descriptive one with little empirical research. It does not test in a quantitative way how the Relevance Theory and its principle are going to guide the allusion subtitle translation. Secondly, the classification of the examples and their analysis are from the author's own understanding under the guidance of Relevance Theory, which might be incomplete and subjective to some extent. Thus, further exploration and research will be needed to improve the study. The author hopes that this dissertation can provide some enlightens to translation methods for allusion subtitles of all films from the Relevance Theory perspective, and hopes that more translators and researchers could pay attention to allusion subtitle translations so that foreign movies can be mostly enjoyed.

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The Effect of Explicit Teaching of Listening Strategies and Gender on EFL Learners' IELTS Performance

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Abstract—The main aim of this study was to investigate the effect of explicit teaching of listening strategies on EFL learners' listening score in IELTS test. The second purpose was to explore the effect of gender on participants' final listening performance. 40 participants at advanced level attended the classes over a period of three months. Participants were divided into control and experimental group. The former that was only exposed to listening input and the latter which received explicit teaching of listening strategies (e.g. selective listening, predicting, and finding key words). Secondly, they were divided into male and female classes. The findings demonstrated that explicit teaching of listening strategies had significant effect on participants' IELTS listening score. However, in terms of the effect of gender, results revealed that gender did not have any effect on participants' IELTS listening score.

Index Terms—explicit teaching, EFL learners, gender, IELTS listening score, listening strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

For some decades, listening skills have not been taken into account as the first priority by many researchers. Nunan (1997) named listening as Cinderella skill which has been ignored by another skill_ speaking. The influential role of listening in learning English as a foreign language has been considered as one of the least understood of the four language skills. At EFL English classes, good listeners are both scarce and valued. The methods also laid emphasis on productive skills and the relationship between receptive and productive skills were not clear enough (Richards & Renandya, 2002). However, this trend changed after Krashen's (1982) idea about comprehensible input which caused listening skill to gain its importance again. In addition, in terms of second language acquisition (SLA) listening is an important language skill to develop (Dunkel, 1991; Rost, 2001; Vandergrift, 2007). Also, it has been indicated that a key difference between more successful and less successful acquirers relates in large part to their ability to use listening as a means of acquisition (Rost, 2001).

Researchers have found that learners need to use learning strategies effectively to understand the aural information. This process is vital in learning a second language due to the fact that without these effective strategies, students' listening comprehension will confront some challenges and problems (Mendelsohn, 2006). As a result, over the last three decades, researchers have been laying emphasis on the learning strategies utilized by effective learners and suggested teachers that one of the first priorities in the designing of listening lessons should be to instruct students how to approach listening, how to handle information that is not completely comprehensible (Mendelsohn, 1994, p. 134). Learning strategies are defined as actions adopted by different learners in terms of different learning situations to make learning process somehow faster, more understandable, easier, more effective, and transferrable to new situations and conditions (Oxford, 1990). These strategies are usually developed in order to help students in different academic areas. It is documented that by using instructional techniques as one of the most effective solutions for students who are dealing with some learning problems, strategy instruction is a good answer and often crucial to students' success (Beckman, 2002; Reid & Lienemann, 2006).

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In order to improve learners' performance, good listeners use different strategies to meet cognitive challenges. If teachers consider improving listening skills of the learners as the first step specific factors in listening must be identified and taken into account. Therefore, first of all, listeners show several behaviors to inform their communication partners to know that they are ready to focus their attention on the message. After that, they will be quiet, look at the speaker, pay attention to the materials presented by the speaker, and avoid distracting (Owca, Pawlak, & Pronobis, 2003). Listeners can make comments, ask questions, and respond to questions (Brent & Anderson, 1993; Owca et al., 2003). There is considerable literature that outlines the most effective method to teach learning strategies (Pressley &

Woloshyn, 1995). Rubin (1975) is considered by some researchers as the first scholar in the area of second language acquisition who indicated a direct relationship between learning strategies and good language learners. Most scholars agree that the strategy should be described to the learners, in form of different steps and the advantage of using each strategy should be clarified. It is better to have an accurate description of strategy-based instruction at the beginning.

According to Mendelsohn (1995) cited in Mendelsohn and Rubin (1995), strategy-based instruction in teaching listening skill can be defined as:

“A strategy-based approach is a methodology that is rooted in strategy instruction... It is an approach that sees the objective of the SL/FL course as being to teach students how to listen. This is done first, by making learners aware of how the language functions – i.e., developing metalinguistic awareness, and second, by making them aware of the strategies that they use – i.e., developing what I call “metastrategic awareness.” Then, the task of the teacher becomes to instruct learners in the use of additional strategies that will assist them in tackling the listening task.” (p. 134)

Rubin (1975) concluded that good language strategies produce good language learners. Other studies after Rubin argued that good learning strategies were related to effective listening acquisition skills (Chamot, 1995, p. 14). Furthermore, the literature on L2 listening strategies (see for example, Cohen & Macaro, 2007) shows that there is a significant relationship between strategy use and proficiency. Green and Oxford (1995) summarized a large number of studies that had analyzed the possible relationship between strategy use and proficiency, who concluded that learners at higher proficiency level are more inclined to use more number and illustrated more frequent use of strategies.

Learning necessarily takes place through trial and error, students need therefore plenty of opportunities for such trial (Taylor, 2007). Moreover, as Stahr (2009) asserts that spoken language is identified by assimilation as well as unclear articulation, and lexical units are not as important and clear as marked in written text. This means that in absence of clarity, spoken language makes word segmentation an extremely hard task for L2 listeners. Therefore, listening can be regarded as a source of stress for L2 learners (Elkhafaifi, 2005). Noro (2006) examined the psychological aspect of using the term of listening stress instead of listening anxiety by conducting a study by use of questionnaire and oral interviews with Japanese college students. The result showed that the difficulties were some sort of ‘stress’ to them. According to the literature it is clear that if students can master the skill to control their listening process, they can develop their comprehension as well. Different views towards listening lead to the same classroom pedagogical activities (Richards, 2005).

Theoretical Perspectives on Listening Comprehension

Nowadays both top-down and bottom-up processing for listening comprehension have shown to be useful; in addition, a combination of both can enhance the results effectively. Hulstijn(2003) argued that learners’ world knowledge and linguistic knowledge influence each other and work together to make a mental image of what they have heard. As a result, there is a consensus that both top-down and bottom-up processes interact with each other make spoken input comprehensible (Vandergrift, 2007). On the other hand, Anderson (2009) provides a completely different model from the top-down and bottom-up processes of language comprehension in the field of cognitive psychology. Consequently, he breaks down the language comprehension process into three stages: perception, parsing, and utilization. The first stage involves the perceptual process that encodes the spoken message; the second stage is the parsing stage, in which the words in the message are transformed into a mental representation of the combined meaning of the words. The third stage is the utilization stage, in which listeners use the mental representation of the sentences’ meaning. If the sentence is a question, they may answer; if it is an instruction, they may obey.

Also, the studies have focused on the significant difference between more-skilled and less-skilled L2 learners in terms of the top-down and the bottom-up processes have shown considerable evidence of the crucial importance of metacognitive strategies for L2 listening success (Vandergrift, 2003, 2007; Goh, 2008). Furthermore, Vandergrift’s (2003) who studies the adolescent learners of French, faced the fact that skilled listeners reported using about twice as many metacognitive strategies as their less-skilled ones. His study also indicated that two factors could explain together about 39% of the common variance in L2 listening ability: listening ability and L2 proficiency, with L2 proficiency explaining about 25% and L1 listening ability about 14%. Ridgway (2000) argued that activating consciously taught strategies and listening at the same time can be really cumbersome and demanding for learners who have limited cognitive capacity. Still, there are not consensus over the issue that whether strategy instruction improves learners’ listening. Ridgway (2000) pointed out that learners do not have enough cognitive capacity in order to consciously activate taught strategies and listen simultaneously.

Some scholars such as Chang and Read (2006) believed that listening support in tasks can improve learners’ performance and use of metacognitive strategies in listening comprehension. Also, they found the effect of listening support on the listening performance of English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. In addition, they understood the fact that various listening tasks can influence the listening strategies that learners use by varying degrees as well as their listening performance. The findings demonstrated the fact that the most effective method of supporting was to provide information about the intended issues as far as possible and then it should be followed by input repetition.

The most methodology used in English classes is known as strategy-based approach. A strategy-based approach is a method of teaching in which strategies mostly used by so-called good listeners are selected for systematic and intensive teaching in the classroom, for instance, predicting, comprehension monitoring, inferencing, clarifying, and summarizing. Furthermore, there are a few number of recent empirical studies which illustrate positive effects of strategy training of

L2 comprehension on listening (see for example, Graham & Macaro, 2008; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010). It is worth noting that the experimental effects in both studies indicate a limited instructional value, which in turn hinders to conduct a full scale of listening strategy training in the classrooms as the major syllabus for listening improvement (Hassan et al., 2005; Wang, 2010) and shows the need for following research in the same field. However, it should be noted that the major results of the present studies reveal that metacognitively-based listening strategies can provide a condition in which learners will be more conscious of their learning processes while they are dealing with different kinds of listening. Also, this trend in turn can help learners for better and more effective organizing, planning, assessing, and monitoring their learning (see Zeng, 2012).

As it has been mentioned above, the recent studies have investigated different aspects of listening, but no specific research has been conducted exploring the effect of explicit teaching of listening strategies and gender on EFL learners' IELTS listening performance.

III. METHOD

A. Participants

There were forty learners (20 females and 20 males) at advanced level, who have been studying language in different English institutes in Rasht (Guilan, Iran), enrolled in this research. The participants' mother tongue was Persian and nobody has ever been in an English speaking country. All of them were studying at university or graduated. They were between the ages of 21 to 33. Also, based on the pre-test (IELTS test, based on the listening test of IELTS test builder book), the participants' listening number was around 5.5 (out of 9, based on IELTS measurement), which revealed the fact that the learners were homogeneous.

B. Listening Strategies

There have been different strategies that can be taught in an English class such as personalizing, progressive structuring, inferencing, etc. (Nunan, 1997), but for this study selective listening, predicting (guessing), and finding key words (both in questions and listening parts) were taken into account. It was assumed that the aforementioned strategies can have significant effect on the learners' IELTS score. These strategies were connected to content teaching and learners tried to utilize these strategies in different IELTS tests as far as possible to develop their listening skill and improve their score in their final IELTS listening test.

C. IELTS Listening Classes

The IELTS classes were an elective course, which were designed for learners who passed the pre-test and showed a level of proficiency to enter these classes. Forty students made up four different classes which each one included ten learners. Each class lasted for one and half an hour and in each session a whole listening part of an IELTS test (40 questions) was covered. Also, participants attended classes twice a week for three months.

D. Procedure

Participants were divided into two groups (control and experimental group) that attended in four classes. The first group which included 10 male and 10 female participants composed two classes were received explicit teaching of listening strategies. The second group which contained 20 other participants (10 males, 10 females) made the two other classes were just exposed to listening tests and were asked to answer them during the classes and were informed in terms of their wrong answers and their final scores at the end of each session.

However, my general plan for the experimental group (who received explicit teaching) was to make them practice three different strategies in each session. First, they were asked to underline key words in given tests and then predict what they need (e.g. noun, adjective, number, special name) and guess the related information to answer the questions. Next, they must have listened and answered the first 10 questions. After that, the listening part was replayed and the participants made clear which part was related to each question and they were helped by the teacher to find key words in listening part which gave signs to answer the questions. By doing this, they practiced selective listening and learned which parts must be skipped. Also, the questions that participants answered incorrectly were more important for further analysis and consideration. Finally, they had to guess about the meaning of some parts of listening which they could not completely understand. However, it was not a blind guess. Learners learned how the words surrounded the intended word can help them to guess more correctly. By doing this; they could improve these three listening strategies. This process was done for the rest three parts of each complete IELTS listening test.

It should be mentioned that in this research predicting and guessing were considered as one strategy because there is considerable overlap between them, therefore, predicting as an umbrella term was utilized in this study to cover guessing too.

E. Research Design

The study was composed of two independent variables and one dependent variable. The independent variables were teaching listening strategies and gender and the IELTS listening score was dependent one. An independent sample t-test was run to calculate the effect of explicit teaching of listening strategies and gender on IELTS score.

IV. RESULTS

An independent sample t-test was run on the results of IELTS listening tests to demonstrate the possible differences and similarities between the control and experimental group based on means and p value. In this research the value which was utilized as a critical number to compare the means between the groups known as p value was 0.05. The means of IELTS listening score for the control group and experimental group were 28.20 and 35.45, respectively. Therefore, there was a significant difference between two groups in terms of means. Furthermore, the p value of $0.00 < 0.05$ demonstrated that the two groups were significantly different and there was a meaningful relationship between explicit teaching of listening strategies and IELTS listening score. The results were illustrated in the following tables.

Group Statistics

| group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|----|-------|----------------|-----------------|
| participants' score on IELTS exam control group | 20 | 28.20 | 1.963 | .439 |
| experimental group | 20 | 35.45 | 1.504 | .336 |

Independent Samples Test

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|------|------------------------------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|--------|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| participants' score on IELTS exam | Equal variances assumed | .648 | .426 | -13.114 | 38 | .000 | -7.250 | .553 | -8.369 | -6.131 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -13.114 | 35.586 | .000 | -7.250 | .553 | -8.372 | -6.128 |

Gender was regarded as the second independent factor in this study which it may have some effects on the participants' IELTS listening score. Based on gender, participants were divided into the male and female group. Then, the independent sample t-test was run to calculate the means of two groups' performance. The means of IELTS listening score were 31.90 and 31.75 for the male and female group. It showed that the two groups werenot significantly different in terms of gender. In addition, the p value of the IELTS listening scores was 0.909 which was higher than p value(0.05) indicating that the two groups were not significantly different. The results are illustrated in the following tables.

Group Statistics

| group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|--|----|-------|----------------|-----------------|
| participants' score on IELTS exam male | 20 | 31.90 | 4.303 | .962 |
| female | 20 | 31.75 | 3.905 | .873 |

Independent Samples Test

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|------|------------------------------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|-------|
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| participants' score on IELTS exam | Equal variances assumed | .895 | .350 | .115 | 38 | .909 | .150 | 1.299 | -2.480 | 2.780 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | .115 | 37.648 | .909 | .150 | 1.299 | -2.481 | 2.781 |

V. CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to shed light on the effect of explicit teaching of listening strategies and gender on the participants' IELTS listening performance. Based on these factors (teaching listening strategies and gender) the

participants were divided into different groups and were exposed to different kinds of teaching which were clarified by the researcher. Therefore, it is very necessary to discuss: first, the effect of explicit teaching of listening strategies on participants' performance and second, the effect of gender on final listening performance.

The findings of this study clarified that explicit teaching of listening strategies could improve participants' IELTS listening score and has positive effect on their final performance. Also, the result of independent sample t-test showed that there was a significant difference between the control and experimental group based on final IELTS listening score ($p < 0.05$). Explicit teaching of listening strategies caused the participants to be familiar with some strategies (selective listening, guessing, and finding key words) which helped them to outperform the participants who were not aware of them. The results of this study are in accordance with the findings of some previous studies that indicated the significant effect of teaching listening strategies on listening performance (e.g. Graham & Macaro, 2008; Vandergift, & Tafaghodtari, 2010). On the other hand, the findings of this study are against the idea of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982) which laid too much emphasis on comprehensible input as the main source of improving learners' knowledge. In addition, the results of this study are in contrast with some studies (e.g. Ridgway, 2000).

In terms of gender, the results of this study demonstrated that gender did not have any effect on the participants' IELTS listening score. In addition, the result of independent sample t-test demonstrated that there was not any significant difference between the male and female participants based on the final IELTS listening scores ($0.909 < 0.05$). Therefore, in mixed classes, gender should not be considered as a significant effect on learners learning and syllabus design.

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Rethinking the Way Out for College English Teaching—After China’s Reform in National College Entrance Exam in English

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Abstract—In the past thirty years, English shares the equal position with Chinese and Math in China’s national college entrance exam (also *gaokao*). To help test takers achieve higher scores in the once-in-a-lifetime test, students (kids) start to contact English soon after they step into schools. Ironically long tested learners don’t make them become skillful language users. Their sole goal in learning English is to acquire higher scores. In response to most voices against it, China is ready to implement the English *gaokao* reform. Hopefully English will be totally removed in 2017. As we know, the reform is not to reduce the power of the English language, but force learners to learn it and use it as a communicative tool. Standing at the top of education, college English shoulder more difficulties, and are confronted with more challenges. In this paper a frontline teacher conducts some exploratory methods in order to help college students to learn English in a practical way, hoping that more educators can rethink about it and the efficiency of EFL teaching and learning will be improved in years ahead.

Index Terms—way, college English, reform, national college entrance exam

I. INTRODUCTION

Since 1980s, English has been a required test for the national college entrance exam (also *gaokao*). Nearly all the students have to acquire high scores if they want to be accepted by top universities in China. The English test is accounted for 150 points in “3+X”, with Chinese and Math accounted for 150 points respectively, and “X” standing for politics, history and geography for arts students; and physics, chemistry and biology for science students, which each accounts for 300 points. In 2013, the Ministry of Education released a draft reform plan for *gaokao*, making it known to the public that English will be excluded in *gaokao* in the future. According to the plan, English will not be a *gaokao* test subject. Instead, students can take English tests more than once each year; and only the highest score will be counted in total score for college entrance exam.^[1] Before the English test is totally removed from *gaokao*, the English score is reduced each year, 120 points in 2015 with the reduced 30 points added to the Chinese course, 100 points in 2016, and no English test in *gaokao* in 2017. In an effort to lessen academic pressure and readjust once-in-a-lifetime exam system, the English tests will be held several times in a year and let students have an option to decide when and how often they will take the test.^[2]

As is known to all, the English test has made most test-takers feel frustrated, even been taken as a greatest nightmare. No matter what the reform is, some basic problems should be taken into consideration. Over 30 years of the English test in *gaokao*, few people can use English properly in real life, even for those with high scores just have large vocabulary in mind and master grammar proficiently on paper. After the reform news, it has aroused a heated discussion among educators around China. As a college English teacher, it is not wise to take a “let-it-happen-naturally” attitude, after all two or three years later those learners will sit in class, taking the English course as nothing at all. Where is the way out for college English education? Do as most learners expect: making college English learning as English music or movie appreciation lessons? But after high education receivers’ graduation from college, they have to “show” their language skills in a communicative way, instead of boasting of how many English songs or movies they have been showed. In response to the *gaokao* English reform, there should be one, two or more educators doing the similar work who take some initiatives no matter what the result. Started in September 2013, in order to know about college freshmen’s English learning activities, a bunch of investigations were conducted: three important test scores were collected and analyzed besides constant class observations and immediate practice and correction were made.

II. METHODOLOGY

In September 2014, two freshman's classes were chosen as the target students in the current research. There are 31 students in food and security class, and 30 in law class. Nothing was told to them in relation to the research. Everything is done as a normal English class. After being introduced of college English learning strategies at the first lesson, three questions were asked. To make the task less nervous and better understand what was in their mind, written form was required.

Question 1. Why do you learn English?

Question 2. What's your most difficult part in learning English?

Question 3. How do you look at the freshmen who major in English?

They are old questions, but different opinions are contributed by new generation of freshmen each academic year. For question 1, years ago, many freshmen answer: I have no interest in English but I have no choice as it is a required course. For these two classes of 2013, most mention that they are conscious of the importance of English, and they will continue to work hard at it though it is not easy to do so; some even stress that although they were not interested in it, for the sake of a prosperous future, they still like to try hard. For question 2, students write about that, before college they were busy with various exercises and tests either in class or out of class; they did not take time to practice their English as a communication tool. As a result, listening and speaking skills are their most difficult part. But the truth is, according to their written answers on paper, their vocabulary needs to be expanded, and grammars to be strengthened. Less than a quarter of 61 students write complete sentences with correct spellings and grammar. For questions 3, one-third of the students admire English-majors as language genius. The fact they don't know is that not every English-major is an expert at the English language. It is better for them to find it out. However at least in their deep heart, they have a positive attitude towards English learning. Another part of students would love to hear about how English-majors learn English as they are experienced learners. Still some students think it is unimaginable to spend the whole college life with English. The next time satisfaction and encouragements are expressed in class. Besides that, the fourth question is asked.

Question 4. What do you think how we improve our English in class?

For this question the suggestions are given in the order of the number of contributors: A. Let us speak more and train our listening ability; B. Watch movie or listen to music; C. A good learning environment is created and thus English should be used as a class language; D. More Chinese is used for better understanding of the usages of language points, sentence structure and other new knowledge concerned; E. Explain English knowledge in the textbook in details. Appreciative of everything they have offered, I need to rethink college English teaching: for students' successful graduation, for their prosperous employment opportunities, or for their reliance on college English teachers.

To help them, to know them first. From the admissions office, I got their English scores in the national college entrance exam (*gaokao*), and recalculated those using 100 points for future comparison. (See figure 1)

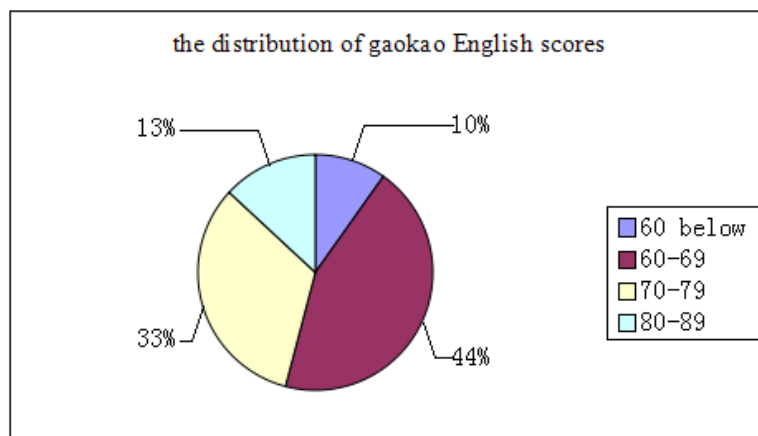


Figure 1: the distribution of *gaokao* English scores for the food quality class

If we have to classify the students into four levels, 60 below is graded as bad (F), 60-69 as so-so (D), 70-79 as OK (C), 80-89 as good (B). Obviously from above, most students are OK level. There is none for excellent (A).

As to the national college entrance exam in Sichuan province, there are three parts: one is the practical use of English knowledge (50 points), another is reading comprehension (50 points), and the third is writing (50 points). In Part I there are Vocabulary and Grammar (20 points) and Cloze (30 points), in Part II they are passages (5 passages, 40 points) and a cloze-test passage (10 points). And in Part III there is a short-answer passage, a proof-reading passage, and a composition. From the distribution of each part, we can tell that the stress is laid on reading and writing skills. Wherever the question of China's English education is raised, there will be a heated discussion: current testing system is a major criminal, teachers are incapable or irresponsible, Chinese students are lazy, or it is hard to find a positive language environment. As a consequence China's English learners are characteristic of "dumb English" or "deaf English". There seems no big difference in their practical skills in English between a high school graduate or a college degree beholder. Years ago when a famous linguist spoke of China's English teaching, he emphasized "low efficiency"

(Hu, 2002). As a frontline English teacher, I have concluded the following three reasons for the current situation.

A. *Blame on One-size-suits-all Exam System*

Undoubtedly many people will make a long list of disadvantages for it. From one learning stage to next one, no exam can be escaped, while English plays an equally important role as Chinese and Math do. The higher (score) the better access to a more decent school (university) or find a better job. It is a must to acquire higher scores in Secondary School Entrance Exam, National College Entrance Exam, and College English Test Band 4/6 for non-English majors, and Test for English Majors Band 4/8. Since all the students attend an identical test, the miracle is created out of how hard teachers and students work in class. To help students achieve higher scores in the exam, teachers do loads of work to analyze and compare with test exercises of the previous years. No wonder similar points of knowledge is tested each year, even new points of knowledge might be predicted by some “genius” teachers. Consequently the best strategy adopted is to let students totally immersed in mountains of exercises both in class and after class. They believe more means higher possibility of “meeting” them in the exam. If some knowledge has nothing to do with the test, both teachers and students will skip it automatically. As is explained above, there is no listening comprehension for *gaokao* English in Sichuan province. Thus there is not much listening practice in English class, if it is not at all, to say nothing of speaking skill practice. During the fifteen years of English teaching career, I am always told at the first lesson in each academic year “my English is very bad especially my listening and spoken skills as we don’t get trained before college”. Personally the exam itself cannot be blamed as in many ways it is an ideal assessment for self-check or checking our teaching and learning. The current problem is that it serves as a tool to pass all kinds of exams and learners become slaves to them instead of devoting themselves to their improvement of skills as a way of communication.^[1]

B. *Ignorance of Different Levels of English Proficiency*

Students entering a new learning stage of meet new people with different levels of English. Some come from a prosperous city, or some from a remote village; some graduate from a famous school, or some from an ordinary school. Different backgrounds affect their English very differently. “Good” schools with new modern technologies offer students opportunities to listen or watch some English materials, or invite some English-speaking guests to give lessons or lectures, which is of great encourage for learners. Students from “bad” school are not lucky enough to get access to new learning stuffs, even some English teachers are borrowed from or shared with other schools, and they might never have a chance to “see” a foreigner at all if not leaving their town.

Take our university as an example. Located in a small city in west China, it admits college-bound students from twenty-three provinces all over the country. Initially the whole country had a uniform set of test papers with exact date of testing time for certain courses in *gaokao*. Starting in 1985 some provinces have their own sets of test exercises in order for a better adaption to regional difference. For instance, normally in eastern provinces they have listening comprehension in *gaokao*, and practice listening skill in class. However, in western areas such as Sichuan and Chongqing, they treat English listening comprehension differently. There is no listening comprehension in Sichuan, there accounts for 30 points in Chongqing: five short conversations (7.5 points), four dialogues (18 points), and a monologue (4.5 points). Why I emphasize listening comprehension is that this skill is a fatal weakness for college students, and listening comprehension accounts for 35 points (the total scores 100 points) in final exam and 35% (the total scores 710 points) in CET-4/6 (College English Test). When students are getting together, they will be put into a certain class by majors, and then combined with another (class) into a bigger one for English lessons (60 students more or less). Luckily English majors usually are given lessons in the form of natural class (about 30 students).

C. *Shortage of Resources for Hardware Facility and Teaching Staff*

This point was emphasized in a speech given in 2005 at Universität Klagenfurt.^[4] In this research the two classes are combined into a new class (61 students) for college English teaching. Usually in the first semester, I can give lessons in a multi-media classroom where more English materials can be shown to students with modern technologies, in the second semester (spring semester) there are so many other courses who are first choices to use multimedia classrooms, English is the last choice, and thus I teach English in an ordinary classroom with everything written on a blackboard. The usual way to train listening is through teachers’ talking, and to let students speak more to practice speaking skills. In the countryside campus where I work, there are three language labs, but the facilities at least have five years long, especial under the situation of improper management. Fortunately things are quite different in main university: there are eight labs with advanced facilities and all the classrooms connected to the internet.

I graduated with B.A. Degree in English education, and two thirds of thirty classmates are English teachers in high schools. The other day I had a quick inquiry via QQ about how many classes they have in a week. Twelve classmates respond: everyone has over fourteen 45-min classes. In our English department, we have sharp difference in class arrangement. There are three campuses for our university: one in the countryside, two others in the city. Many teachers don’t like to commute as they live in city. In the countryside campus, twenty-eight teachers undertake the teaching task of over 200 classes (about 7,000 freshmen). Roughly speaking each teacher has eight classes, and the truth is that few teachers have twelve 45-min classes in a week, most have sixteen 45-min classes, and some (three teachers for sure, me included) have twenty 45-min classes. I am not complaining, but making a point. The other day I read about that in China most foreign English teachers don’t know how to teach, while the saddest thing is that schools hire native

English-speaking people just to attract more students.^[3] In this sense the removal of *gaokao* English is a heavy slap against opportunists. Not a single article about China's English teaching mentioned that China is starving of English teachers. Wrong! In my opinion what we are in most need of is to promote teachers' teaching enthusiasm, and offer them more opportunities for personal growth.

III. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

As everyone knows, any language learning includes listening, speaking, reading and writing. In our university non English majors are the textbooks compiled by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. Two textbooks are used in class: one is *Reading and Writing*, the other is *Listening and Speaking*, with both books attached to CD-ROM. In the book of *Reading and Writing*, there are ten units, and in each unit there are Section A and Section B. In my understanding Section A is aimed at intensive reading, which is composed of vocabulary, text and the following exercises of short-answer questions, reinforcement of new words and phrases, sentence structure (grammar revision), translation (from Chinese to English, and from English to Chinese), and structured writing. Section B is for extensive reading, which consists of vocabulary, text and the exercises related to the comprehension of the text and the reinforcement of vocabulary. The time allocation is to spend four 45-min classes (4 class periods) on Section A, two class periods on Section B and another two classes on the book of *Listening and Speaking*. The most common method used to be like that: learn new words by giving examples of its usage, study text by explaining the whole sentence by sentence, and do exercises by dictating or writing down the keys on the blackboard. There are not many other assessment ways except having dictations for new words.

For long-tested freshmen reading and writing continue to be their difficult parts in learning English. The very first step is to correct their pronunciation. To train their speaking skill, let them listen to CD, follow the speaker, get them to read aloud individually, have reading competition after that. Since it is a large class, divide the whole class into teams, and a different student is required to read each unit. Once they are familiar with English pronunciation, sentences should be read properly. Again listen to the passage, and pay attention to how the speaker reads each word in sentences. Now some students may question "why some words are pronounced differently from when we learn them in vocabulary part?" I respond: "Do we speak Chinese word by word?" Then I will emphasize the variations of sounds in English, and suggest listening more and reading aloud frequently and fluently as rules are complicated to explain for non English majors. In the later listening practice, I feel quite encouraged that they can figure out "a costly investment" and "She won't feel offended if a student falls asleep". Reading and speaking are closely related using the textbook of *Reading and Writing*. As far as my knowledge is concerned, it is not quite necessary or helpful to practice speaking skills using simple daily life situation like greetings, asking for directions or giving advice, which are over-used in textbooks before college. Text-oriented strategy is employed in class. Take the example of the text (its title is A Good Heart to Lean on) in Unit Three, Book I, it is about a crippled father who influences his son with his good qualities. For it I prepare two tasks for students: basic questions and group discussion. For one thing, questions are designed to encourage students to speak more. For another, sometimes learning something makes us think, and teaches us more than knowledge.

Question 1: According to paragraph 1, what do we know about his father? (very short, crippled)

Question 2: Explain how severely his father is crippled. (need someone for balance when walking; it is impossible to walk on snowy ground even with someone's help; cannot stand unaided on soft sand.)

Discussion Topic 1: Describe what kind of person the writer's father is. (Find out facts to show his father has a good heart.)

Discussion Topic 2: Explain the changes of the writer's feelings about his father. (embarrassed as a child; proud when growing up; guilty and grateful after he passed away.)

For question part (task 1), most students can give satisfactory answers by using the information from the text, though some read the correct sentences to the class. For those who read, I will let them recite what is read afterwards. For discussion topic 1, they don't know how to answer it; most just pick out some sentences from the text and read them as the answers. To answer it, we have to understand the examples the writer shows us, and think what he wants to say about his father related to his qualities. For discussion topic 2, it is easier for them as the writer concludes how he feels as a child and as a growing man, for the third stage (after his father passed away) they fail to find some proper words to describe the writer's feeling. Now we can draw a conclusion that most freshmen stay at the level of understanding the text literally.

Next is listening skill. Amounts of materials are added besides the textbook. Word dictation, sentence repetition and spot dictation are for the initial stage of practice. Listen at the first time, read aloud what's heard after giving the correct answers, then listen for the last time without looking at the correct answers. My rule is to test yourself for real at the first time, to correct your listening by knowing the answers, and to strengthen them for the third time. The second stage is to understand short conversations, long conversations, and passages, with the difficulty added according to their progress, starting from high school listening materials.

The last is about writing. At the freshman year, I don't give them any writing assignment. Firstly, freshmen are bits busy with other courses and extra-curricular activities. If I assign it, they will copy one from the internet, which frustrates me more. Secondly as long as a student can write complete sentences with correct grammars, that's a good base for composition. When learning new words or doing Chinese-English translation, I will let them do it in class, no

preparation before class. To translate a sentence, there are three steps to follow: analyze the sentence structure (a simple sentence or a complex sentence); determine tenses or voices; and make sentences with familiar words, phrases and structures. When one is asked to translate, others listen attentively. If there is something wrong, I will invite another student to correct. It takes time and patience, but it is quite rewarding. In December 2013, they attended college English test band 4 (CET-4). In March 2014, I downloaded their scores from the website of our university education department. Below is a figure (see figure 2) about the percentage of scores in listening comprehension, reading comprehension and the writing part, of which the total scores are composed.

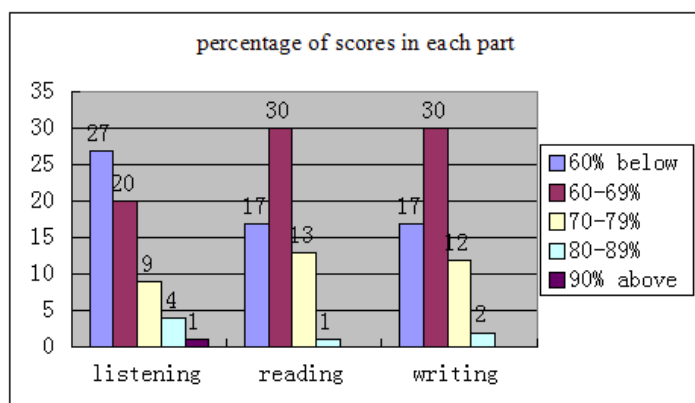


Figure 2: percentage of scores in each part of CET-4.

Compared with *gaokao* English, CET-4 test includes a bigger scope of comprehensive knowledge as a language use. Listening comprehension accounts for 35%, reading comprehension 35%, and the writing accounts for 30%. The most difficult part for college students is the listening. It has three sections: Section A is eight short conversations and two long conversations; Section B is three passages, and Section C is compound dictation. From the figure above, we can see listening skills can be improved efficiently over tough training, although it has the highest percentage of losing scores. Sadly reading and writing stay at a unsatisfactory level as before college students have accumulated experiences in dealing with them. In the mid-term of the second semester (spring semester 2014), in order to improve our English class, students were asked to write anything about their English learning or teachers' teaching. Honestly before that I had thought that students would express their satisfaction with their learning and our cooperation because they did exceptionally well with CET-4 compared with former freshmen in any other grades. To my surprise, they have new expectations for their goals, except that they are working hard at CET-6 (preparing for another authorized test). Majority of students suggest they be given more opportunities to "use" English in class, and few students advise we watch more movies or listen to music in class. Instead they say that, encouraged by their performance of CET-4 over honest hard work, they would love to reinforce their practice skills both in and after class. They want to have more practice (competition) in class as a good language environment can be very encouraging. Movies and music adds extra interests to their extra-curriculum learning activity. What a relief! The existence of some "authorized" tests is necessary. The problem lies in how to handle it properly.

IV. CONCLUSION

So far it is hard to predict to what extent this reform will benefit English learners. What is mostly acclaimed is that we are taking actions to what's regarded as something bad by most people. It is not wise to put the blame on the policymakers, or on the language teachers, or on the language learner. Every party needs to do our bits to improve ourselves in a positive way. For the policymaker, it is a need to keep a close contact with the teaching and learning group, knowing their needs, and remedying something efficiently. For the education administration of the schools, have a frequent meeting with frontline teachers, listen to them, and have a scientific time allocation for Lang classes. For teachers, think more about being patient, helpful and efficient. Lastly for language learners, stop being slaves to tests, and learn English actively as a communication tool.

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A Study of the Sayed Ashraf-Al-Din Gilani (Nasim-e-Shomal) Poems in the Light of Frankfurt School and Constitutional (Mashrooteh) Movement

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Abstract—Frankfurt school started its activity in 1928 by establishing an institute for social research. Some of the theorists of this school are Marcuse, Horkheimer, Adorno, Fromm and Benjamin Habermas. This school considered most of the thoughts and ideas of classical Marxism as incorrect and criticized them. Basically, in this school criticizing the poor condition of the school community has been an important component and art is considered as a medium to make the people aware of these problems. In Iran with the advent of the constitutional (Mashrooteh) movement, literature and art entered a new phase and the poets were committed to criticizing the disorders and social, political and cultural problems. They believed that the art with no benefit for the people's welfare and improvement of social and political conditions, and not used as a weapon against tyrants, is a worthless art. Thus, the authors in this study made an attempt to investigate these critical ideas in the works of one of the most prominent poets and critics of constitutional (Mashrooteh) era, sayed Ashraf-Al-Din Gilani known as Nasim-e-Shomal, and to determine the critical components in the poems of this renowned Iranian poet.

Index Terms—Frankfurt school, criticism, Mashrooteh, Sayed Ashraf-Al-Din Gilani (Nsim-e-Shomal)

I. INTRODUCTION

Frankfurt school was founded in 1928 and is associated with the institute for social research. It was transferred to New York in 1933 after Hitler exiled its members, but it was started again in Frankfurt in 1950. Marcuse, Horkheimer, Fromm and Benjamin are the theorists of this school and in the contemporary era Habermas and Peter Burger are the ones who have put the critical tradition of Frankfurt on the agenda (Taslimi, 2009, p. 151). In fact, there are four specific periods in the history of Frankfurt school:

1. The first period was 1923-1932, when the research carried out in the institute were completely diverse and were not a raw interpretation of Marxist ideology to be instilled in the critical theory. In this era, the founder of the institute, Karl Grunberg, was a social and economic historian who had a close association with the thoughts of Austrian Marxists and a noticeable part of the institute's works had mainly experimental nature.

2. The second era included the exile period in North America from 1933 to 1950 during which contrasting views (Hegelian critical theory) were firmly instilled as the principles of the institute's activities. The manager of the institute was Horkheimer in this era. In the policy of the institute, he devoted the philosophy of the superior map to himself instead of history and economy. This orientation was strengthened by the membership of Marcuse in 1922 and Adorno in 1938 following the little cooperation they had in 1931.

3. In the third era from the return of the institute to the Frankfurt school in 1950, the main viewpoints of critical theory were vividly formulated in a number of the works by member authors and scholars, leaving principal effects on their social views over time. Its scope of its influence was advanced later, especially after 1956 and the rise of the new left movement all over the Europe and the United States in which some of the members had remained. The great political and ideological effect of radical student movements reached its crescendo. Marcuse was introduced as the main representative of the Marxist critical theory. The impact of Frankfurt school gradually declined from early 1970, the period considered as the fourth period in the history of Frankfurt school. In fact, Frankfurt school came to an end with the death of Adorno in 1969 and Horkheimer in 1973. At last, Frankfurt school distanced from Marxism, which was once its source of inspiration (Monigh, et al., 2007). Frankfurt school has considered many predictions and ideas of classical Marxism as incorrect. They believed the capitalist society would downfall due to excessive exploitation of the working class and the deep social class contradictions. But, Marcuse states that the ruling class prevented the advent of socialism and its downfall by enhancing the working class welfare (Marcuse, 1983, p. 13-14).

The main ideas of the Frankfurt school are manifested in the critical theory. From this point of view, an idea should be committed and revealing because a kind of wide domination of vice on virtue and self-alienation on freedom is created (Marcuse, 1983). Critical theory is a kind of non-criminalist view which is mainly concerned with entire

emancipation from oppression and repression as well as a commitment to freedom, prosperity and intellectual discipline in the society. The critical theory is against positivism. The works of four main characters, Marcuse, Horkheimer, Adorno and Fromm, constitute the core of the critical theory.

From the viewpoint of Horkheimer, et al., this theory is a precise explanation and rejection of colonialism and domination of false ideas and beliefs, an explanation that stresses exploitation system (Ahmadi, 2010).

According to this school, an original art is one that rejects and criticizes the present situation. In this theory, aesthetics in humanities and social sciences is not sufficient to explain the current situation, but the present situation should be taken into account. Therefore, social and human phenomena should be analyzed critically and the intellectuals have to take a critical position towards the society, a position aiming at informing the individuals to create changes in the present situation (Pour Alashti & Abbasi, 2001, p. 2). Thus, the purpose of art is conflicting the present condition and showing dissatisfaction and aggression (Marcuse, 1971, p. 95).

One of the most important events in Iran during the past century was constitutional revolution (Mashrooteh). During this time, Iranians together with intellectuals, some of whom were poets and writers, had partly become familiar with the ideas of the Europeans. Literature entered a new era then whose objectives and aspirations included awakening the citizens, stimulating national patriotic feelings, promoting personal and social freedom, eliminating superstitions and wrong beliefs, criticizing the disorders severely (Momeni, 1973, p. 3) and familiarizing the people with their right (Yahaghi, 2004, p. 21).

It can be argued that commitment to the people and social, political and cultural issues of the society is one of the characteristics presented in the poems by these poets. Commitment in art, which is mostly interpreted as social commitment, is an issue in the history of art, especially in the contemporary period. The idea of beauty for beauty or art for art has been considered a dissenting idea in art. It can also be stated that literature in the constitutional system of Iran and Frankfurt school in Europe is fundamentally against supporting the power and wealth in capitalism. They believe that literature and art should not be a precious tool for the ruler to control the mind and awareness of the people, but it should criticize the problems. In fact, the Iranian intellectuals in the age of constitution (Mashrooteh) and supporters of Frankfurt school in Europe regularly criticize the chaotic condition and believe that the artist should not give up against the pressure of the ruling class on the society. In the poems of Sayed Ashraf-Al-Din Gilani (Nasim-e-Shomal), this critical view against the chaotic condition of the society is evident. Thus, the critical viewpoints of this poet of constitution (Mashrooteh) era are discussed in his poems.

A. Criticizing the Marxist's Economic Theory

Marxism is an economic theory that specifically examines the capitalist theory stating how forces and relations act in capital production style. By analyzing this economic relationship, one of the most important concepts of Marxism is obtained, the concept of alienation. There are two aspects in the Marxism's concept of alienation. First, the work that produces added value is an alienated work (separated from the worker), the work which is done on the merchandise to become part of the capitalist's benefit, therefore it does not belong to the worker. Second, in addition to alienating the worker from his labor power, capitalism alienates the worker from himself. When the worker is forced to sell his labor power, he is changed into merchandise too, that is the goods that are sold in the market. Thus, the worker that is changed into goods is not a complete person philosophically because he has no choice in the selection of the work. A worker forced to live in the labor market as merchandise is separated from humanity. When someone sells his work it becomes alien to him and changed into merchandise that is separated and different from the worker, something that is distinct from the producer. Disagreement of the working class and their exploitation by capitalists create the political contradictions of capitalism that consequently causes conflict among workers, owners, labor and capital (Klages, 2009, p. 173-174).

Sayed Ashraf-Al-Din Gilani criticizes the Marx's theory. In his poem entitled: "the king's talk with the laboring subject" this Iranian critical poet criticizes the capitalist's exploitation of the workers and makes the workers aware of the capitalists' exploitation:

You the poor are considered a human?
 ای فقیر تو هم داخل آدم شدی امروز؟
Why have you become Mirza Ghashmasham?*
 میرزا قشمشم شدی امروز؟ بیچاره چر
You are not allowed into the rich?
 در مجلس عیان به خدا راه نداری
For you do not have money
 زیرا که زر سیم به همراه نداری
In your kind hear you have nothing but sorrow
 در سینه بی کینه بجز آه نداری
Why have you become so much old and frail?
 چون پیرنودساله چرا خم شدی امروز؟
Why have you become Mirza Ghashmasham?
 قشمشم شدی امروز؟ میرزا بیچاره چرا
 (Nasim-e-Shomal, 1984, p. 276)

Then, Sayed Ashraf-Al-Din states that whoever owns the property and wealth owns status and glory and the subject is mean with no dignity.

هر کس که به اقبال ظفر صاحب مال است *Anyone who becomes rich because of victory*
اندر همه جا صاحب جاه است جلال است *has glory and status everywhere*

* Mirza Ghashmasham: a person who is poor and tries to show himself better than the what he is

امروز یقین مال مسلط به کمال است
 Wealth is certainly more important than perfection
 احمق تو برای چه مصمم شدی امروز؟
 Why are you so determined today?
 بیچاره چرا میرزا قشمشم شدی امروز؟
 Why have you become Mirza Ghashmasham?
 (ibid)

Later, in this poem the lord orders the subject to work for him, collect firewood in the forest and do whatever for his welfare. The poet has intended to inform the subjects of the exploitation imposed on them. He declares that he has even lost his hope in the constitution (Mashrooteh) to eliminate this injustice.

چکش بزن جان بکن ای فعله بی پول
 Work hard, you the poor worker
 جنگل برو هیزم بشکن ای فعله بی پول
 Go to forest and bring firewood, you the poor worker
 قالیچه به صحرا افکن ای فعله بی پول
 Put your rugs out, you the poor worker
 Then, a struggle happens between the king and the subject:
 لات و گدایی ما راحت آسوده شما
 We are rich and you are poor
 فقرا بیید عربان و فلکت زده جزو
 You are poor and miserable
 در نعمت و دولت همه محتاج مایید
 You need us even in prosperity
 هر چند ز مشروطه مفخم شدی امروز؟
 Although you have earned honor because of Mashrooteh
 بیچاره چرا میرزا قشمشم شدی امروز؟
 Why have you become Mirza Ghashmasham?
 (ibid)

B. Criticizing the Parliament

Sayed Ashraf-Al-Din was an adroit poet and unique in terms of comic and irony. He was sort of the poets that appear every few centuries in the self-centered nations, captivate everyone by their eloquent speech, are naturally inspired by previous rulers and poets and arrange the others' innovative basics and renovate them with other words. This is an inborn art that not all people can possess.

From the beginning of the constitutionalist movement, poetry moved toward national and patriotic issues. The poets were more concerned with the people's affairs, integrity of the country, fighting against outsiders, supporting freedom, opposing the authoritarian ruling, etc. Using different figures of speech such as irony, they discussed this issue. With the advent of constitution (Mashrooteh), the literature of real irony appeared pointing at the society and public problems more than the people (Amin Pour, 2004, p. 136).

In the early constitutional era, the poets used poetry to express social, ethical and political criticisms along with irony and allegory (Aryan Pour, 1993, p. 120) and the parliament, as one of the most important political institutions, was involved in these poems. Sayed Ashraf-Al-Din Gilani is one of the prominent poets in the constitutional era that has criticized the parliament.

When the poet finds the parliament unable of establishing justice and improving the life of the people, he compares it to a broken carriage, scabbed dog, lame donkey and an addict that has no value and efficiency:

این درشکه شکسته، لایق سواری نیست
 This broken carriage is not deserved riding
 تازی شکاری نیست این سگ گر مفلوک ،
 This scabbed dog is not a hound
 این خر سیاه لنگ ، قابل مکاری نیست
 This black lame donkey is not cheatable
 این حریف تریاکی ، پهلوان کاری نیست
 This addicted opponent is not a strong hero
 (Nasim-e-Shomal, 1984, p. 381)

Afterwards, the poet hopelessly compares it with an infertile land and states that people have been waiting for good changes in their life for nine years, but the oppressed people have obtained nothing but sorrow and sadness from the parliament.

هست مدت نه سال خلق پارلمان دارد
 It is about nine years people have parliament
 هم به آسمان عدل، بسته ریسمان دارند
 They are also connected to the heaven of justice
 اندر این بهارستان کعبه امان دارند
 They are safe in the nice Kaaba
 باز هر چه می بینم خلق الامان دارند
 I see that the people are secured
 کار ملت مظلوم غیر آه زاری نیست
 The oppressed people have nothing but sorrow
 در جبین این کشتی نور ستگاری نیست
 There is no salvation in this ship of light
 (ibid, p. 381)

Sayed Ashraf-Al-Din strongly criticizes the performance of the representatives of the parliament and the unsubstantiated promises they make to the people:

غم مخور ای مستمند بی کفیل
 Do not be sad, you the unprotected poor
 امی شوم شش روز دیگر من وکیل
 will become a representative few days later
 من وکالت بی اجازت می کنم
 I will act independently
 تو ی مردم سرفرازت میکنم
 I will make you proud among people
 رخت میخواهی برایت می خرم
 I will buy you clothes if you want
 هم قیابیت می خرم هم عبا،
 I will buy you garment and cloak
 این وکالت چون واجب می شود
 When I become a representative
 بیشتر پول مواجب می شود
 I will earn more money
 چون به مجلس من بیقیمت جلو
 When I enter the parliament
 تو بخور هر شب فسنجان با پلو
 You can have Fesenjan and rice every night

(ibid, p. 563)

Sayed Ashraf-Al-Din expects the representatives to make an attempt to establish justice and eradicate oppression. He declares that when the representatives of the parliament do their job properly the people will have no problems and Iran will prosper.

بیرق ظلم سست می گردد *Tyranny will collapse*
 کار ملت درست می گردد *The people's affairs will be well*
 بعد از این ظلم را نمی بینید *They will not see any oppression*
 غیر گل زین چمن نمی چینید *They will see nothing but flower in this field*
 عدل خواهان سوار قیل شدند *Justice seekers gain power*
 مال مردم خواران ذلیل شدند *The tyrants become degraded*
 بعد از این مرتفع لوا گردد *The grandeur will be glorious*
 خاک ایران چو کیمیا گردد *The territory of Iran will become valuable*
 بیرق معدلت کشیده شود *The flag of justice will be raised*
 ظالمان دریده شود پرده ظلم *The cruelty of tyrants will end*
 (ibid, p. 557)

C. Criticizing the People's Economic Poverty

Inefficiency of the Qajar kings, disgraceful anti-national contracts, imprudence in the nation's economic affairs, indifference of the authorities toward the living conditions of the people and business owners and absence of social security system had grave effects on the economic status of the people, the people who suffered hunger, famine, unemployment, cold, oppression and inflation (Varasteh far, et al., 2010).

آخ عجب سرماست امشب ای ننه *Ouch! It is very cold tonight*
 ما که میمیریم در هذالسنه *We will die in this year*
 تو نگفتی می کنم امشب الو *You did not say you will call tonight*
 تو نگفتی میخوریم امشب پلو *You did not say we will have rice tonight*
 دیدیم امشب نه الو نه پلو *We did not see either rice or call*
 سخت افتادیم اندر منگنه *We are extremely under pressure*
 آخ عجب سرماست امشب ای ننه *Ouch! It is very cold tonight*
 این اطاق ما شده چون زمهریر *Our room is very cold*
 بادی آید از هر سو چون ز صغیر *Wind is blowing everywhere*
 من ز سرمای زم امشب بغیر *I cry loudly from cold tonight*
 می روم از میسر بر میمنه *I run from left to right*
 آخ عجب سرماست امشب ای ننه *Ouch! It is very cold tonight*
 (Nasim-e-Shomal, 1984, p: 276)

As it is indicated, the theme of poverty and social class differences are presented in the poems of Sayed Ashraf-Al-Din to illustrate this gap:

در سفره ارباب پر مرغ و مسمن *The lord's table is full of chicken*
 غرقابه روغن قرقاول و جوجه، *Pheasant and chicken full of oil*
 اردک، گردیده فسنجان مرغابی و *Fesenjan full of duck's meat*
 بامزه قیمه، گوید به متجن *Tasty Gheimeh says to Motanjan*
 از ماهی آزاد، لذت حالا و قته *It is time to enjoy salmon*
 از لذت دنیا محروم دهاتی *The nomad is deprived from pleasure of the world*
 عریان برهنه مظلوم دهاتی *The oppressed nomad has no clothes*
 از سیلی فراتش، مغموم دهاتی *The nomad is doleful from the servant's slap*
 محکوم دهاتی بر حاکم ظالم، *The nomad is condemned to suffer from the tyrant's ruler*

The concept of food (Fesenjan, Mosama, Chelo, Gheimeh, etc) is mentioned 131 times and there is certain logic behind this striking frequency. Inflation and lack of the basics have deprived people of many things and the poet, who belongs to the people, is quite familiar with their problems and wishes. While talking about the common structures in the poems of Mashrooteh, Ajoodani states that in the poems of Ashraf, in addition to his religious style, he has used the names of many foods to create such combinations as spirit of apple, spirits of Fallodeh, ice cream and Halva. To my opinion, such combinations, apart from their ironic and even religious nature of Ashraf's work, indicate poverty in the life of this friendliest poet of the time. As written in one of the most eloquent and effective affidavits, biographies written in his name, (Varasteh far, et al., 2010): most of the days he had kebab and broth if we visited unexpected, he had broth or kebab ready. He also mentioned the name of various foods in his poems and you could not find any poem in which the word Fesenjan was not mentioned, but he never had Fesenjan. As he said:

دل گفت فسنجان خورش روح روان است *The heart told Fesenjan is the stew of the soul*
 ماه رمضان است ما هیچ نداریم *It is Ramadan and we have nothing*
 از مال وطن جز دل پر پیچ نداریم *We have nothing but an empty stomach*
 آنچه عیان است چه حاجت به بیان است *What is clear has no need to be expressed*
 (Ajoodani, 2003, p. 195)

The status and name of the jobs are mentioned in different parts of the collection (39 times). On the one hand, the jobs of the poor laborers that are being oppressed and on the other hand, the unfair merchants and frequently the representatives of the parliament (citing their opportunism and profit-seeking) illustrate the employment status of that time:

کار تمام کسبه نفع شد *All the businesses prospered*
مالیه از جمع شمارف شد *Tax was eliminated*
زحمت دولت ز شما دفع شد *The state's torment was prevented*
رنج بران مالیات از رفع شد *The sufferers were relieved from tax*
(Nasim Shomal, 1984, p. 110)

And about merchants:

اگر چه کاسب بازارکارشان زارست *Although the businesses are not flourishing*
ولی جماعت تجار بارشان بار است *The merchants are on the track*
(ibid, 429)

The inflation, unemployment and recession following the economic crisis in 1905, war between Russia and Japan and consequently Russian revolution, severely influenced the economic status of the people so that in the first three-month in 1905 the price of sugar and wheat rose by 33% and 90%, respectively in Tehran, Tabriz, Rasht and Mashad. As Sayed Ashraf-Al-Din describes the situation:

زمانه گشته مطابق پای تخت یزید *The world is very cruel*
جلای دین محمد در این زمانه تاراست *The Mohammad's religion is not promising*
روزگار خراب چه کاسبی و چه صنعتی چه *Business, industry and world are not good*
که زیر خاک به از روی خاک، طالاراست *The soil under is better than the soil on the top*
بیکاریست به هر که می نگرم ناله اش ز *Everybody complains about unemployment*
هر آن چه می نگرم اهل درد بسیار است *Everybody is full of pain and sorrow*

Of course, Ashraf uncovers the corruption:

مردمردانه و شیرانه بگویم یانه *Should I say manly and bravely or not*
آخ نگو من بمیرم *Do not wish me death*
میل داری بنویسم که چه ها بردی تو *Do you like me to write what you have taken*
پول ها را به کجا بردی بسپردی تو *Where you have taken the money*
یا که دیشب به سر سفره چه ها خوردی تو *or what you have had for supper last night*
زان شراب و خم و خم خانه بگویم یانه *Should I tell about the wine and winery or not*
آخ نگو من بمیرم *Do not wish me death*

(Nasim-e-Shomal, p. 285)

And to become the representative of the parliament:

بخوردم من این مال ملت تمام *I rubbed the people of all their properties*
چه باک مرا از حلال حرام *I do not care about lawful and unlawful*
چو شب شد فسنجان من حاضر است *When the night comes, my Fesenjan is ready*
به ایوان من حاضر است غذا *The food is ready in my home*
برای وکالت بسی پول ها *For my advocacy, a lot of money*
فرستادم پیش موکول ها *Was given to me by my clients*
(ibid, p. 471)

Although, during the Mozafaredin Shah reign, some amazing liberal policies such as opening travel to other countries, appointing Malkam to Iran's embassy in Rome, establishing trade and educational associations as well as emergence of liberalistic newspapers like *Hablolmatin* and *Parvareh* that were published in Cairo and Calcutta were implemented, the economic condition was still chaotic and anti-national. For instance, traders were forced to pay more tariffs and land taxes were taken from the previous owners. Increasing land tax, reducing the pension of the clergies and controlling the endowments were other policies that caused public economic dissatisfaction (Varasteh Far, et al. 2010).

D. Criticizing Constitution

نمی شد بود مشروطه به پا چه خوش *It was good if Mashrooteh was not founded*
در این مملکت شور غوغا به پا نمی شد *Excitement would not be made in this country*
چه خوش بود از خون پاک جوانان *It was so good if from the blood of the young*
چنین سرخ این کوه و صحرانمی شود *This territory would not become red*
چه خوش بود در پالمان بهر ملت *It was good if in the parliament for the sake of people*
وکیل طمعکار پیدا نمی شود *The greedy lawyer would not emerge*
(Nasim Shomal, 1983, p: 440)

Or elsewhere, he strongly criticizes the constitution for not being employed to provide welfare and justice in the society.

کیفیت مشروطه ایران به کجارت *Where is the quality of Iran's Mashrooteh*
گویا سر زار رفت *As if it disappeared on delivery*
گفتند مشروطه شود مملکت آباد *They claimed the country would flourish because of Mashrooteh*
رحمت به استبداد *Good for tyranny*

از حاصل مشروطه چه شد عاید ملت
 What did the people get from Mashrooteh?
 جز رنج مزالت
 Nothing but pain and abasement
 (ibid, p. 350)

E. Criticizing Tyranny and Dependency

One of the most important critical poetic grounds of Sayed Ashraf-Al-Din Gilani is disagreement with puppet and colonial states. When Iran was under the dominance of Germany, England and Russia, in his poems, Sayed Ashraf-Al-Din invited the people to unite and fight against colonialism, corruption and tyranny. This contemporary poet criticized.

دوش کردم به خرابیات گذر
 I went to pub last night
 تابه قلیان ز نم از بنگ شرر
 to smoke hookah
 بوق و تیر مرشدی دیدم با
 I saw a sheikh with an axe and a horn
 بر ز می خواند و پیک به قلیان زد
 He smoked the hookah and sang by heart
 خاک ایران شده ویران ز سه فیل
 Iran is destroyed by three phil
 صبح در کوچه جوانی دیدم
 I saw a youth in alley in the morning
 دامنش را ز عقب چسپیدم
 I grabbed his clothe from behind
 معنی فیل از او پرسیدم
 I asked him the meaning of phil
 لب تکان داد چنین فهمیدم
 He muttered, I heard
 خاک ایران شود ویرانه از سه فیل
 Iran would be destroyed by three ph
 روس فیل انگلوفیل آلمان فیل
 Russianphil, Englophil and Germanyphil
 (Nasim Shomal, 1884, p. 404)

The poet blames colonization for creating problems for the people and destroying Iran. He informs people of the present situation and invites them to unification and solitary against tyranny and corruption.

Other examples of these critical poems are frequently found in the poems of Sayed Ashraf-Al-Din Gilani that invite the young to fight against colonialism and tyranny.

بوم همت است ای جوانان وطن الیوم،
 You the youth of the country, today is the time to stand up
 ای هواخواهان دین امروز روز غیرت است
 You the supporters of religion, today is the time of bravery
 میرود ناموس آخر این خواب غفلت است
 Your honor will be tarnished, wake up from negligence
 دشمن بیگانه آمد بر سر بالین مرا
 Enemy is approaching us
 ای دریغا می رود هم مملکت هم دین ما
 Alas, both our country and religion will be ruined
 ای جوانان همتی این موقع جنگست جنگ
 You the youth, stand up, it is time to fight
 زندگی با این مزالت بهر ما تنگست تنگ
 Living with this dignity is a shame
 عرصه بر ما اهل ایران بعد از این تنگست تنگ
 We will be so much pressured afterwards
 (ibid, p. 412)

II. CONCLUSION

Frankfurt school considers the ideas of classical Marxism as incorrect and criticizes them. This school had established criticism of the society's chaotic situation as its most important component. The main objective for the proponents of this school was to make people aware of the disorders, objection and criticism.

In Iran too, literature and art experienced a new period with the advent of the constitutional movement. The poets of this era took commitment to art into consideration as a certain and necessary principle. They believed that the art that has no benefit for the wellbeing of people and promotion of political and social condition and is not used as a weapon against tyrant is not artistic and beautiful. In fact, the Iranian poets in this era distance from the previous poets and employ literature at the service of the people's ideas in social and political issues.

In this period, literature is used to serve the people and criticizes the society's disorders. Thus, there is a similarity between Frankfurt literary school and constitutional (Mashrooteh) movement in literature and art in terms of criticism of the people's troubled condition.

By analyzing the poems of Sayed Ashraf-Al-Din Gilani (Nasim-e-Shomal), this fact can be figured out that the Iranian critical poet of Mashrooteh age by writing simple, eloquent and interesting poems, that were published in Nasim-e-Shomal, considered citing the events and criticizing the problems and addressing the condition of the working class, criticizing the inefficient parliament, etc. as commitment of literature in order to make improvements in the life of the people.

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A Study on Designing and Evaluating Multimedia Courseware in EST Teaching

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Abstract—English for science and technology(EST) teaching is different from normal English teaching mainly due to students' lack of contact with the discussed topics in real life. And the feasibility of taking use of multimedia technology in EST class has been mentioned by many scholars. However, there are few papers referring to the way to design multimedia courseware for EST class and how to assess the effect of the designed courseware. This paper aims at sharing author opinion and experience on principles and steps of designing and assessing multimedia courseware for EST class.

Index Terms—EST teaching, Multimedia technology, Designing and evaluating

I. INTRODUCTION TO EST TEACHING AND MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGY

As Xu Youzhi (2005) mentions in his book, “our age is an age of machines, electronics and computers. With the development of science and technology, scientists and engineers exchange their ideas, discoveries and inventions, collect information and data, interpret concepts and theories, comment on the latest scientific advances and write reports based on experimental procedures, etc. hence the need for economical, efficient and impersonal ways of expression: the English of science and technology”. English for Science and Technology (henceforth EST) is a functional varying style. It is a scientific and technological register formed by scientists and technicians to meet the demands of scientific communication. It is a language used by the scientists and technicians in a special circumstance. And it would seem to be both an occupational and educational use of English: occupational when considering the needs of oilfield workers, engineers or computer programmers; educational (academic) when considering university students throughout the world studying physics, chemistry, math through the medium of English. EST learning concerns about the different aspect of this type of English such as its grammatical features, lexical features and semantic features, which necessarily increase the difficulty for learning it. Therefore necessary tools like multimedia are supposed to be used in the teaching for aid.

Multimedia technology, which is characterized by a combination of graphic, textual, audio and video functions, is superior to any other medium in its devastatingly huge mass of information, high speed of information exchanging and partaking of information resources, especially after the Internet comes out (Ahamad, 1985). Nevertheless, according to the author's investigation, the application of computer multimedia technology to the teaching of English for science and technology (henceforth EST) is still at an initial stage, which indicates the lagging in the teaching approach of EST as well. EST teaching requires an effective approach to present a great deal of authentic background information, which arouse learners' interest and establish a living background context. Undoubtedly, multimedia technology naturally becomes a good choice for language teaching. This is where the points of the paper lie in.

With the development of information technology, studies of the influences of learning model with multimedia application upon EST teaching are reasonable. Furthermore, the former researches on this aspect mostly focused on the theoretical principles or some teaching technologies, but not much has been done upon the practical functions, namely the effects of the concerned educational technology on the effect of the learners' study (Debski & Levy, 1999). Especially in the aspect of the multimedia and network technology-aided English learning model, little has been done. The study is an empirical research on the effects of the Multimedia application upon English for science and technology Learning and teaching model especially upon the third-grade learners, including their beliefs and behavior. The research questions to be addressed in the study are the following:

1. To what degree do Chinese English majors master EST through traditional way of teaching?
2. To what degree do Chinese English majors master EST effectively through improved teaching model?
3. Does the use of multimedia application substantially improve the effect of class?
4. What is the students' attitude toward EST learning under different teaching model?
5. What is the relationship between the multimedia use and the EST learners' English achievements?

II. PROBLEMS FACING EST TEACHING AND FEASIBILITY OF APPLYING MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGY IN EST TEACHING

As for the problems facing EST teaching, which are different from normal English teaching, are mainly the two aspects below: a) students' failure in understanding the stylistic features of EST; there are quite a lot of differences between the stylistic features of EST and those of other type of article, leading to many difficulties for the students to understand; b) and students' difficulty in fully comprehending the text, probably due to the lack of contact with the

topic in real life (Chapelle, 2001). For the EST is mainly about the scientific discoveries and inventions, new concepts, theories, comment on the latest scientific advances and reports based on experimental procedures, etc. those things mentioned above are comparatively difficult for English majors in china to understand. Secondly, the economical, efficient and impersonal ways of expression in the articles like mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, and so on are quite different from what the Chinese English majors used to read. c) Compared with articles learned in other classes, the articles of EST seldom present interesting stories that can intrigue students. Simply, sometime students' feedback showed that EST class was boring (Hainline, 1987).

The problems mentioned above strongly suggest that EST should be taught in the way different from traditional one. Hence, here comes the following discussion about the feasibility of applying CALL in EST teaching.

There is a very old-fashioned question, that is, should multi-media computer be used to aid EST learning? The answer is becoming clearer ever since researchers began to reach the study about it.

There are various studies which have shown the value of using computer in foreign language learning and teaching, especially in reading. Pusack & Otto (1997) investigated how reading comprehension can be facilitated with a multimedia application for language learning. They investigated the effects of a dynamic visual advance organizer on the macro level and the effects of multimedia annotations for single vocabulary items on the micro level. In addition, they examined the relationship between vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. From the results of their study can get the indications that the visual advance organizer does aid in overall comprehension and that annotations of vocabulary items consisting of both visual and verbal information assist more than verbal information only. Also, a moderate relation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension was detected. Pusack & Otto (1997) stated that the results support the dual coding theory and its extension to multimedia learning and lay emphasis on the significance of visual information in addition to verbal information to approve both top-down and bottom-up processing in reading in a foreign language.

In china, the classroom learning and teaching mainly constitutes three elements: teacher, students, and materials. Only when the environment presents appropriate conditions can learners achieve best. What can be called appropriate condition for learners? And how can we achieve the appropriate condition? Here comes the multimedia to rescue in this problem.

Among the special characteristics of multimedia, the promotion of autonomous learning is an important advantage. Learners who can take advantage of multimedia connections to explore explanations and peripheral information can somehow lower the teacher-centeredness of the classroom, for example, learner dependence on the teacher as the only source of information (Ruschoff, 2002). A well-formed multimedia database of materials can also assist those learners who lack skills in dictionary and library search.

As we mentioned above, there are a number of advantage of using multimedia in integrative CALL program. However, apart from those advantages there are also quite some disadvantages of the utilization of multimedia technology in integrative CALL (Tiene & Ingram, 2001). And all of those defects must be elaborated for the teachers who want to use multimedia application in EST teaching so as to curb the teachers to overstate the advantages of multimedia application.

In first place, nowadays, we can't get courseware or programs from the market which is enough for EST teaching. Even there are some coursewares or multimedia program can be used in the teaching, shortly after the use the teachers can easily prove them a failure to be qualified for the teaching due to its improper organization of the multimedia resources in it.

Secondly, there is a deniable fact that most teacher in EST teaching are not able to design multimedia courseware by themselves even though they are in good training for how to organize the materials for the students to learn.

Thirdly, multimedia courseware itself is of some kind of defects which mainly due to their failure in integrating all necessary skills concerning integrative CALL. Put simply, for the training of listening and reading, they can be easily realized in the multimedia courseware. While multimedia fails to achieve the communication environment to some extent which can be of no pity (Tiene & Ingram, 2001).

Fourthly, in terms of the evaluation function of multimedia technology, it's also of some defect. Simply, it can successively assess and judge the students' input by clicking the mouse or through the keyboard. However, the input in the form of voice or sound can be realized effectively.

III. HOW TO TAKE USE OF MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGY TO DESIGN COURSEWARE IN EST TEACHING

Highly structured materials need to be available to cater to the needs of those learners with a strong dependence on teacher direction. However, to cater to the differentially rapid development in the direction of autonomy, it is also necessary to provide the means whereby learners can take more control if they feel capable of doing so. This can be achieved by selecting different learning materials by teachers, but it's better for the teacher to design the multimedia application directed to the EST study. In this chapter, we are going to have a detailed study about this.

Basically, there are two options for the teacher's use while making the multimedia application, that is, macromedia Authorware and macromedia director. In order to make the software for teaching, the teacher needs to learn either Authorware or director. In this case, the author recommends director for its powerful function.

The newly released director offers several new features that enhance the capabilities of Macromedia Director and Shockwave movies. The main improvements are as follows:

1. Support for interactive three-dimensional (3D) graphics.
2. Enhancements to the Shockwave Multiuser Server and Xtra that enable server-side scripting, multithreading, and file access. Using server-side scripts can dramatically simplify your multiuser movies by placing most of the required logic on the server.

3. Support for Flash 5 and additions to Lingo that provide control over the new features of Flash 5 movies.

Before making the software, the maker needs to make sure that you have the following:

1. basic skills about how to work with a computer
2. macromedia director in your computer
3. Adequate material (images, sounds and so on) for the making of this software.

After learning the new improvements of Director, EST teachers can start making their own courseware. For making a qualified courseware, it usually involves the following ten steps: firstly, Set up the movie; secondly, Create cast member; thirdly, Import cast members; fourthly, Create sprites from cast members; fifthly, Create simple tweening animation; sixthly, Blend sprites; seventhly, Create frame-by-frame animation; eighthly, Attach behaviors to sprites; ninthly, Add sound; tenthly, Publish your movie in one step.

In the previous section, the reader can learn the basic skills of making a project. In this section, the main features of the software used in the study will be illustrated. The author of this thesis paid great effort in the designing of the software before it was employed in the study. In order to make it well-designed, the author made a wide range of survey of software with similar functions. Based on the guiding theory discussed above and the survey, the software was eventually designed and presented to the subjects after the author's half years' work. In the software, the author wants it bearing the following functions so as to improve the EST teaching.

1. Rich materials
2. Interactive function between computer and the user
3. Automatic study
4. Detailed analysis of stylistic features

In this software, rich material can be presented to the subjects in the form of both visual one and audio which, the designer believe, surely help subjects not only learn more background information but also understand the article better. The exercises are typical example to prove the strength of interactive function. The students can take the exercises for a form of testing. After they finish the tests, the software can give a accurate grade to the students. Another feature of the software is that it provides opportunities for the students to learn automatically either in class or after class. In addition, students can be divided into groups to discuss what they learned in the software. Another important feature of this software lies in its presentation of detailed analysis of the stylistic feature of the article, which, according to the survey before designing the software, never appeared in other software before.

IV. HOW TO EVALUATE THE COURSEWARE DESIGNED FOR EST COURSE

After using the courseware designed, we need to analyze the practicability of it. As to how to make the analysis, the author suggests the combination of test, questionnaire and interview. It involves the following steps:

Step 1: at the beginning of the study, the purpose of the study was fully elaborated to the students and a pre-test was done to the students in order to make contrast with the result of a post-test done at the end of the study.

Step 2: A Pilot study was conducted to make sure that the items in the Questionnaire are clear, suitable and enough, at the same time, to decide the Period of time needed for answering the questionnaire. After two rounds of revision, the questionnaire was administrated. And the Questionnaires were given to the subjects of different classes.

Step 3: The statistics of each section and each class were put into computer. With the help of SPSS or Microsoft Excel, the results were worked out for further analysis.

Step 4: In order to get further awareness of the subjects' attitudes towards EST learning under suggested multimedia teaching model, student volunteers were interviewed.

Step 5: The questionnaire result of two-group subjects' responses was analyzed. In addition, the comparison of effects of learning between the new teaching model and the traditional one was worked out for analysis.

Next will be one example for how to assess the courseware.

A. *Two Tests*

Before the application of multimedia courseware to the students, a test was held to get the average score of the students in terms of the relevant knowledge about EST learning. The purpose of the test is to discover whether there existed any difference in terms of the students' mastery of the EST language between the two groups. After the application of multimedia courseware to the students, the other test was held to see whether there is any effect on the students who take the application of multimedia courseware. The test is to find out whether there is any effect on the students who have attended the EST class with the application of multimedia courseware.

B. *A Questionnaire*

A questionnaire was designed to learn about students' attitude towards the application of multimedia courseware. The content of the questionnaire is made up of six parts as the followings:

- Part A: questions concerning the students' opinion about EST learning
- Part B: attitudes about EST learning with the application of multimedia courseware;
- Part C: questions with regard to students' use of computers;
- Part D: questions about the former and the suggested way of EST teaching;
- Part E: beliefs on cooperative work with the application of multimedia courseware;
- Part F: assessments of teacher's role.

C. Interview

After the administration and the initial analysis of the questionnaire data, a face-to-face interview was conducted, which centered on the items in the questionnaire. The interview with each subject was conducted in Chinese. Only twenty students and the teacher participated in the interview due to the limited time.

D. Data Analysis Method

The results were assessed by Microsoft Excel. Data analysis included two parts. In the first part, only percentage was calculated when the results of the questionnaire completed by all the subjects to show the overall tendency of the subjects' attitudes towards EST learning under two different teaching models. In the second parts, test was employed when comparison between two groups' subjects was made for clarity.

The qualitative data of interview were analyzed by organizing, summarizing and synthesizing so as to arrive at the results and conclusions of the research.

Data collection work was done in two different periods. Firstly, the pre-test was done at the beginning of the term; secondly, the post-test, questionnaire and the interview were done at the end of the semester after the application of the multimedia courseware. It should be an appropriate time as the subjects could provide more exact and objective comments on EST teaching.

E. Procedures

The First Period: before the application of multimedia courseware to the students, a test was held to get the average score of the students in terms of the relevant knowledge about EST learning. After the application of multimedia courseware to the students, the other test was held to see whether there is any effect on the students who take the application of multimedia courseware. After the test was held, the average score of both groups was worked out for the research. In the author's intention, if there is difference between the score of the two groups concerning the two tests held in different periods, there may be some effects of the application of multimedia courseware to the students. Otherwise, it will go the opposite direction.

The Second Period: The questionnaire was designed on the basis of the questions, such as, the students' opinions about EST learning; attitudes toward the application of multimedia courseware; questions with regard to students' use of computers; questions about the former and the suggested way of EST teaching; beliefs on cooperative learning with the application of multimedia courseware. The research was done in the classrooms. In that day, every student in the experiment got one sheet of paper with questions. In class, if the students have any question about the questionnaire, they can raise their hands. And then the teacher will come to their assistance. Because the aim of conducting the questionnaire is to learn about the students' understanding about the research and opinions about the application of multimedia courseware, the students were required to be extremely honest. As to the time limit in answering the question, the students are asked to take their time as they like before the end of that day to make sure the students have sufficient time in answer to the question.

The Third Period: In order to get more subjective information about the application of the courseware which can not be acquired through the analysis of the test and the questionnaire, the interview is conducted.

In this experiment, the students in both group are give the same period of time, that is, once a week. Under the condition that all of students are provided with the same EST topic and time limit, they were taught in different learning models, namely, the traditional model for the first group and the suggested cooperative model supported by the application of multimedia technology for the second group. In order to lower the influence caused by the teacher's ability in instructing and controlling the class, only one teacher was used to be responsible for both the first group and the second group. Thus the influence caused by the teacher is reduced to the lowest point.

As for the concrete way of teaching, the way in the first group extremely follows the traditional one. For example, the teacher is supposed to require the students to preview the text before the class begins. In class, the students are asked to read the text aloud, to translate the text part by part and to summarize the idea of each part and the whole text. Of course, the teacher is supposed to help the students when they have difficulties in understanding the meaning of specific word and that of the text. In addition, after finishing the study of one unit, the students will take part in a test to check the effects of study.

As far as the second group is concerned, the suggested cooperative teaching model is applied to the EST class. As is mentioned in the previous chapter, the multimedia courseware is designed for the application of the cooperative teaching model in the EST class for group two. In the multimedia courseware, all kinds of media are adopted, such as,

text, graphics, sound, movie, hypermedia and multimedia. There are five parts concerning the contents, namely, pre-reading, text analysis, stylistic features, exercise and reference. In the part of pre-reading, the students are divided into six groups for discussions on the basis of the text. In the part of text analysis, the explanations of difficult words, translation script, and the audio material of the text are integrated in this part. As for stylistic features, detailed illustration and typical example are presented to the students. In the part of exercise, two types of exercise, namely, blank filling and multiple choices, are incorporated. Finally, in the part of reference, rich materials in the form of text, graphics and video program are used in the assistance of the understanding for the students. In short, for the second group, a typical cooperative teaching and learning model is set up with the help of multimedia technology.

F. Results Analyses of the Test Scores

As mentioned above, there two tests carried out during the process of research. After the texts were finished, the average scores of students in the two groups were worked out to search for any possible differences existing between the two groups of data. The result is presented in the following table.

TABLE 1
N: NUMBER A: AVERAGE SCORE SD: STANDARD DEVIATION

| | The experimental class | | | The control class | | |
|-------------|------------------------|-------|-------|-------------------|-------|-------|
| | N | A | SD | N | A | SD |
| boys | | | | | | |
| First test | 9 | 81.06 | 18.96 | 8 | 81.33 | 20.66 |
| Second test | 9 | 89.35 | 17.62 | 8 | 83.54 | 27.48 |
| girls | | | | | | |
| First test | 48 | 84.23 | 19.23 | 49 | 84.68 | 24.75 |
| Second test | 48 | 91.46 | 15.88 | 49 | 85.72 | 28.36 |

Based on the results of the test score, the following conclusion can be drawn, that is, the students' average score of the second test in the experiment class is higher compared with that of the first test. This proves, to a certain degree, the cooperative way of EST learning and multimedia application help students' study. And the following analysis of the questionnaire will present us with more explanation.

G. Results Analyses of the Questionnaire

In the middle of the research, a questionnaire is conducted to the students. As mentioned above, the contents of the questionnaire mainly embrace six parts, namely, the students' opinions about EST learning; attitudes toward the application of multimedia courseware; questions with regard to students' use of computers; questions about the former and the suggested way of EST teaching; beliefs on cooperative learning with the application of multimedia courseware. In the author's opinion, the investigation of the students' perspective to the above six aspects will surely help the analysis about the effects of the application of multimedia technology.

The following table is a sample extracted from the analysis of the questionnaire, which show s the author way of analyzing the results and can also give us a clear image about the students' opinions of the follow aspects.

TABLE 2.
STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE MULTIMEDIA TECHNOLOGY APPLICATION IN EST LEARNING

| Question No. | question | choice | No. of responses | percentage |
|--------------|--|----------------------|------------------|------------|
| 2 | In your opinion, multimedia technology application in EST learning is | unnecessary | 5 | 4.31 |
| | | Not so necessary | 12 | 10.34 |
| | | necessary | 76 | 65.52 |
| | | Very necessary | 23 | 19.85 |
| 5 | You the teacher utilize multimedia in EST class. | dislike | 6 | 5.17 |
| | | Don't like very much | 11 | 9.48 |
| | | like | 35 | 30.17 |
| | | Really like | 49 | 42.24 |
| | | Extremely like | 15 | 12.94 |
| 6 | To what effect does multimedia courseware assist EST learning in your opinion? | bad | 3 | 2.59 |
| | | Not so bad | 16 | 13.79 |
| | | good | 40 | 34.48 |
| | | Very good | 48 | 41.38 |
| | | excellent | 9 | 7.76 |

From the sample we can see the positive effects of the use of multimedia technology.

According to the results of the questionnaire, there is an amazing agreement concerning the use of computer. The fact is that all the students can have access to the use of computer in the normal English learning. The second discovery is that all the students in the second group show great interests in the use of multimedia application. Furthermore, all of them stand up for the use of the application of multimedia courseware. Most (92%) of the students tick the choice of necessary or very necessary in terms of use of the courseware.. The third discovery is that 70% of the students consider the effects of the application of multimedia courseware are positive. More discoveries will be discussion in the following part and the part of conclusion.

H. Results Analysis of the Interview

The purpose of conducting the interview is to get more subjective information about the application of the courseware which can not be acquired through the analysis of the test and the questionnaire. For example, as for the students' impression, it is quite difficult to get detailed information from the test and questionnaire. Or in terms of the difficulties of learning EST, they can not be shown through the first two devices used before the interview was conducted. The design of the interview is on the guidance of compensating what has been left in the tests and questionnaires.

The following table shows most of the questions delivered to the students during the process of interviewing.

| |
|---|
| 1. What's your impression of the software used in the study? |
| 2. Can you name some strong points of the software? |
| 3. List some weak points of the software. |
| 4. What's the most important effect of the software upon your EST learning? |
| 5. List some difficulties in learning EST. |
| 6. Do you think the part of discussion plays very important role in class concerning the learning of EST? And support your opinion. |

According to the interview, the author got better understanding of students' points of view of EST learning with application of multimedia courseware in this study. Generally speaking, most students think EST is difficult compared with other English course. Their lack of experience is the main reason for the difficulties in learning EST. therefore, the visual materials presented in the multimedia application contribute a lot to better understanding of the article in that they provide real-life environment. In addition, the testing system in the software ensures their prompt awareness of their weak points in the understanding of the test. On the other hand, some students complain that the explanation of stylistic feature of the article is not adequate and this part should be strengthened. On balance, the students' attitude toward the teaching model with multimedia application is positive, since most of them admit that it does help their studies.

V. CONCLUSION

The feasibility of applying computer multimedia technology to teaching activities of EST is analyzed. As we know, the video programs are everywhere. If the teacher who teaches EST is not capable of designing multimedia courseware, he may combine several programs into a perfect one. But a high quality courseware for EST class is more than that. The author still stresses the importance on taking use of multimedia technology to make proper multimedia courseware for EST class by themselves. The convenience in the application of multimedia courseware is seen by every teacher.

The purpose of the paper is to figure out both a proper way to design EST courseware and an appropriate method to assess the effect of multimedia application in EST teaching. The designing process is fully illustrated in the paper for the reference of the peers. And a detailed description on the author's suggestion of assessing the effect of multimedia courseware for EST class was made aiming at sharing the author's experience and getting feedback from the peers. The author believes more accurate data should be obtained for the study and further study of the similar subjects need to be made from different aspects.

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A Review of the Studies on the Frequent Administrations of English Tests

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Abstract—The aim of this paper is to give a review of the studies which have been conducted on the role of the frequent administrations of tests. This includes studies on the effect of testing frequency on students' scores, anxiety, motivation, preparation, class participation, long-term retention of the materials, and the effect of the feedback which is given based on students' performance on these frequent tests. It also gives a brief summary of different types of test-anxious students and models of test anxiety.

Index Terms—testing frequency, anxiety, motivation

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the essential parts of every curriculum is evaluation. It helps us make sure whether our objectives have been fulfilled or not. One type of evaluation is to measure students' learning through paper and pencil tests. According to Bachman (1990), "a test is a measurement instrument designed to elicit a specific sample of an individual's behavior" (p. 20). In some educational contexts, teachers test their students so frequently that it becomes a weekly activity, whereas in other contexts tests may only be used at the end of the school year. Research has shown that frequent administrations of tests like weekly tests lead to better scores on the final exam. (e.g., Butler & Roediger, 2007; Deck 1998; Shirvani, 2009). Research has also indicated that frequent test administrations make students more motivated to study for their courses (e.g., Duckworth & Kenneth, 1986; Brookhart & DeVoge, 1999).

Frequent administrations of tests seem to be closely related to the notion of spaced or distributed practice method of memorization or what Dempster (1988) refers to as the 'spacing effect'. According to this notion taking different tests which include only a particular part of knowledge and are administered with a specific time interval compared with cases when a test includes different aspects of knowledge at a time can lead to a better learning.

In this respect, studies have shown that through frequent tests, students would be encouraged to keep up their study (Weimer, 2003). These results have further shown that frequent test administrations improve both grades and motivation.

In addition, Bangert-Drowns et al. (1991) in their meta-analysis of frequent administrations of tests showed that most of the studies on the effect of frequent testing report a positive effect of testing on achievement. While most of the studies show a positive effect on achievement, the effect size for this meta-analysis is not considerable.

Studies show that frequent administrations of tests can bring several advantages to the students. Dustin (1971) concluded that anxiety decreases through the administrations of frequent tests. A study by Clump, Bauer, & Alex (2003) showed that testing frequency increases students' class attendance. In addition frequent testing can provide students, teachers, parents, and schools with beneficial feedback on students' performance (Bangert-Drowns et al., 1991). On the other hand, there are other researchers such as Marshall (2007) who believe that taking too many tests does not lead to valuable learning because teachers put all of their efforts teaching the information which is needed for passing the test and students study those parts which are important for those tests. So, more studies are needed to investigate the role of frequent administrations of tests.

Moreover, frequent administrations of tests can influence the motivation of students both directly and indirectly: A direct effect is through increasing student's anxiety. Based on 'interference model' students do poorly on tests because they cannot avoid the irrelevant thoughts that is going on in their mind during taking a test (Zeidner, 1998). This anxiety can be a stable trait of that individual or something that only occurs as a result of a specific situation (Brown, 2007). An indirect effect can be through their effects on teachers and curricula (Harlen & Crick, 2002).

Zeidner (1998) in his book, test anxiety, mentions five types of test -anxious students:

A) Examinees with deficient study and test-taking skills: students' poor performance results from lack of adequate acquisition (encoding), organization/rehearsal (study skills), and retrieval/application during a test. These students are likely to do poorly in both evaluative and non-evaluative situations, because they do not organize the material well in the first stage (Paulman & Kennely, 1984). Examinees experience anxiety blockage and retrieval problems. This includes students who have adequate study skills, but suffer from anxiety blockage and cannot retrieve information well during an exam (Benjamin et al., 1981). These students cannot control the stress and pressure of an evaluative situation.

B) Failure accepting examinees: failure acceptors are those who have poor study skills and low academic ability. Because of the large number of repeated failures in the past, they accept low ability as the first explanation for their failures. These students do not struggle to keep their worth through ability and because of frequent failures, they are

sure of their incompetency (Covington, 1992). Failure acceptors neither become that much proud, when they succeed nor that much shameful, when they fail.

C) Failure-avoiding examinees: these students need success in order to establish a sense of self-worth by ignoring the probability of failure (Covington, 1992). These students think that, they should study very hard for an exam, because it increases the prospect of success. But this amount of study can be a danger for them, because the more they study, they see it as inadequate and this can create anxiety for them. This anxiety is because of this fact that students are scared of being evaluated as incompetent by others and this hurts the self-worth that they have provided for themselves.

D) Self-handicappers: self-handicapping strategies in an exam situation are defined as creating obstacles to performance, so that the student has an excuse for the potential failure or other negative consequences. So, test-anxiety might be used as an explanation for failure. When these students fail, they exaggerate the role of anxiety and deemphasize the role of effort and ability (Smith et al., 1982).

E) Perfectionistic overstrivers: these students have high academic standards, exaggerated expectations, and doubt about the quality of academic performance (Blatt, 1995 & Covington, 1992). According to Blatt (1995), two groups of perfectionists exist: 'adaptive' and 'nonadaptive' perfectionists. Adaptive perfectionists' hard efforts, gives them pleasure and when they succeed, a feeling of satisfaction arises in them. However, maladaptive perfectionists experience a feeling of fear that arises from not meeting the self-imposed or externally-imposed standards and forces them to self-defeating overstriving. For these students no effort is ever sufficient. Anything other than a perfect score is considered as complete failure and results in severe upset and self-criticism (Oliver, 1975). Hewitt and Flett (1991) also proposed two types of perfectionists: self-related perfectionists are characterized by high self-imposed unrealistic standards and they cannot accept flaws or failure. The second type is socially prescribed perfectionists which are characterized by the belief that they should fulfill others' expectations which are exaggerated, unrealistic, and difficult to meet. These expectations are externally imposed, uncontrollable, and lead to feelings of failure, anxiety, and hopelessness.

Zeidner (1988) also mentions different models of test anxiety which I briefly discuss them here:

Deficit models: these models explain test anxiety in terms of the lack of enough skills or attention. Here are some of these models:

Cognitive – attentional (interface) model: this model proposes that high test anxiety is the result of failing to direct one's attention to an evaluative situation and the task at hand. Based on this model low-anxiety test takers are successful in leading their attention to that test and have a better understanding of that situation (Weinstein, Cubberly & Richsrdson, 1982).

Sill-deficit models: these models postulate that lack of enough study skills and test taking strategies lead to the poor organization and intake of the material and consequently poor performance on the test (Paulman & Kennelly, 1984). According to this model because students are aware of the fact that their skills are not adequate enough, they become more and more anxious.

Contemporary cognitive-motivational models: these models explain test anxiety in terms of the actions which tests takers take to self-regulate their thoughts or to maintain their self-worth. Here are some of these models:

Self-regulation model: According to this model less anxious test takers are able to keep their confidence in an evaluative situation (to self-regulate), whereas anxious test takers fail to perform successfully and keep their confidence (Carver & Scheier, 1988).

Self-worth model: This model proposes that individuals try to maintain their self-worth and their positive image of themselves in a testing condition. Not being able to perform successfully in such situations would lead to harming this positive self-image and an increase in their anxiety (Covington, 1992).

Transactional models: In these models test anxiety is the result of several factors interacting with each other. Here are some of these models:

Spielberger's state-trait model: This model is based on the distinction between state anxiety and trait anxiety (Spielberger et al., 1978). State anxiety is a kind of anxiety that is related to a particular situation and is not stable. Trait anxiety is a kind of anxiety that is part of an individual's personality and is stable across different Situations. Based on this model test anxiety is a situation specific form of trait anxiety which occurs in a variety of situations. On the other hand state anxiety refers to a level of anxiety in a particular evaluative situation such an exam for the entrance of an important university and it does not happen in all situations. High test anxious students' experience is the result of high trait anxiety.

Transactional process model: According to this model test anxiety consists of different factors: a) personality variables and situational conditions (Spielberger & Vagg, 1995). b) The mediating emotional and cognitive processes involved. c) The correlates and short-term consequences of test anxiety d) various emotion-focused and cognitive-focused intervention strategies designed to help lessen the unfavorable consequences of test anxiety. Based on this model in a testing situation, test-takers will feel a certain amount of anxiety based on individual differences in test anxiety and situational factors. The situational factors include the subject of the test, study and test-taking attitudes and test-taking skills. Students who possess good test-taking skills will perceive a testing situation as less threatening. To the extent that a testing situation is appraised as threatening, state anxiety and its cognitive realizations such as self-centered and self-derogatory worry conditions and other irrelevant thoughts will increase.

Drive models: These models propose that when there is so much drive or arousal in a particular testing situation, performance is weakened, particularly if the performance is not simple (Spence & Spence, 1966 as cited in Zeidner, 1998). According to this model high anxiety will lead to a high drive level and consequently a competition among all possible responses, thereby leading to errors. This model assumes that an increase in the drive level strengthens both correct and incorrect responses. On the other hand when a test is easy, correct responses become dominant and drive levels increase the strength of these correct responses which has a facilitating effect.

The main source of anxiety in school is fear of failure and loss of self-Esteem (Hill & Wigfield, 1984). Anxiety impedes school performance in many ways (Skalvik, 1997). Students may have difficulty in transferring their Knowledge showing it on a test (Bandalos, Yates, & Thorndike-Christ, 1995). Some students are likely to be overly self-conscious and this can distract them from the task at hand (Tobias, 1992).

II. RELATED STUDIES

Research on the role of frequent testing began by the work of Ebbinghaus (as cited in Dempster, 1988). He found that the distribution of a large amount of material over a time space is more advantageous than the presentation of the whole material at once. Most of these studies are devoted to examining the effect of testing frequency on the scores of the students on the final exam. Here are some of these studies:

Shirvani (2009) conducted a study in which there were two experimental groups and two control groups. The experimental group took daily short quizzes and the control group took weekly quizzes. The participants in this study were Hispanic students in four geometry classes. He investigated whether daily quizzes had a significant effect on students' final exams scores and homework grades. The researcher found that daily quizzes had a significant effect on both of these dependent variables.

Momeni and Barinani (2012) investigated the effect of testing frequency on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' language achievement. This study consisted of two experimental groups and one control group. One of the experimental groups received weekly quizzes and the other bi-weekly quizzes. The control group took no quizzes. The results showed that those students who took quizzes outperformed those who took no quizzes and the group with weekly quizzes outperformed those with bi-weekly quizzes on the final exam.

Gholami and Moradi Moghaddam (2013) examined the effect of weekly quizzes on students' final achievement score. The participants of this study were selected from among high school students in grade two. These students were divided into two groups. One group only took the midterm exam and the other group weekly quizzes. The results showed that the students with weekly quizzes outperformed those with only the mid-term exam.

Deck (1998) examined the effects of frequency of testing on college students in a principle of marketing course. The results showed a difference between the groups with weekly and monthly tests with the group who took weekly tests performing better than the group with monthly tests. However, the final scores of both groups were not significantly different. Also, the self-reported study hours of both groups were not significantly different.

Some other studies examine the role of feedback. In these studies after each test the students are given feedback on their answers.

Marcell (2008) compared the performance of two groups in introductory Psychology. One group took time limited, out of class WebCT quizzes on daily readings and the other group took no quizzes. Analysis of the results showed that quizzes lead to more questions and comments at the beginning of the class. Also the results indicated that those students who took quizzes read the material before coming to the class. The feedbacks helped the students diagnose their areas of weakness.

In addition to leading to better scores on the final exam, tests also increase class participation and preparation. Here are some of these studies:

Zarei (2010) examined the effect of quiz frequency on course performance and class attendance of Iranian university learners of English. This study consisted of five groups. Group 1 received no quizzes, group 2 received a mid-term exam, group 3 took monthly quizzes, group 4 took a quiz every other week, and group 5 received weekly quizzes. The results showed that more quizzes lead to a more successful course performance. The results also revealed that more frequent quizzes results in less absences from the class.

Dineen, Taylor and Stephens (2010) examined the effect of testing frequency upon the achievement of Students in high school mathematic courses. In this study one group of the students took daily quizzes and the other group weekly quizzes. The students with daily quizzes showed improvement, but this improvement was not significant.

Tests not only influence the scores of the students on the final exam, they also long-term retention of the information.

Butler and Roediger (2007) investigated the effect of testing on long-term retention in a simulated classroom setting. In this study three groups of participants were presented with three lectures. After the lectures participants were presented with three post lecture activity. One group studied a lecture summary. Another group took a multiple-choice test and the last group received a short answer test. Half of the responses of the multiple choice test and the short answer test were provided with feedback. One month later a final comprehensive short answer test was administered. The results showed that studying a lecture summary or tanking a short answer test was better than doing no activity for long-term retention of the material. Taking a short answer test had the most effect.

Hancock (2001) examined the effect of learner characteristics, test anxiety and threat of evaluation on the achievement and motivation of students. The participants in this study were post-secondary students. One group of the students were placed in a high-evaluative condition. The results showed that all the students especially the test-anxious students when placed in a high-evaluative condition performed poorly and are less motivated.

Yamin (1988) examined the effect of frequency of testing on achievement, test anxiety, and attitudes toward science. The participants in this study were 278 Students of chemistry at the university technology of Malaysia. The students took a pre-test and post-test in achievement, test anxiety and attitudes toward science. State Trait Anxiety Inventory, Science Attitude Questionnaire, frequent tests and conventional tests were used as instruments to gather the data of this study. The experimental group took frequent tests, while the control group took conventional tests. The results indicated that frequent tests lead to better achievement and lower anxiety than conventional tests. The results also revealed that there is no significant difference between the control and experimental group in terms of their attitude toward science.

Dustin (1971) conducted a study in which there were two groups. One group took four parts of an exam in four weeks. The other group took all the four parts one month later. The results showed that the weekly-exam group gained a higher score in 3 out of 4 exam and experience less anxiety in each exam than the monthly-exam group. The results also revealed that the weekly-exam group gained a higher score in a delayed retention test.

Basol and Johanson (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of the studies which investigated the effectiveness of frequent testing over achievement. This consisted of 78 studies which were done until the year 2003. These studies were categorized into low, medium, and high frequent testing. The results indicated that the difference between the mean effect size for these categories was not significant. Overall, the findings showed that frequent administrations of tests improve academic achievement.

Phelps (2011) also conducted a meta-analysis on the effect of testing on achievement. This included studies which were done until the year 2009. The results indicated that testing followed by feedback has the strongest positive effect on achievement. Also, tests with high stakes strongly affect achievement. Overall, the result indicated that the effect of testing on achievement is moderate to strong.

III. CONCLUSION

In this review several studies on the role of frequent administrations of tests on students' motivation, anxiety, and the scores on the next tests were reviewed. Although most of our studies showed a positive effect for frequent administrations of tests, there were also some studies like Deck(1998), Dineen, Taylor, & Stephens (2010), and Johanson's meta-analysis (2009) which showed that the effect of these frequent tests on study hours and students' scores is not significant or moderate (Richard ,2011). So, more studies are needed to confirm or disconfirm the effect of frequent administrations of tests.

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The Necessity of Comparative Ellipsis—Refuting Lechner’s Claim “Comparative Ellipsis Can Be Dispensed with”

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Abstract—The main aim of this paper is to examine Lechner’s (2001)^[1] proposal—his CR Hypothesis (Conjunction Reduction (hereafter CR)—that Comparative Ellipsis (hereafter CE) can be dispensed with and reductions of comparative clauses can be entirely explained by operations independently needed for reducing coordinate structures. I argue against this hypothesis and claim that Comparative Ellipsis is necessary. I discuss two special phenomena which can only be analyzed by Comparative Ellipsis, that is, the deletion of the whole complement clause in the *than*-clause which includes the compared phrase, and the phenomenon of the deletion of the whole *than*-clause except for a part of the subject.

Index Terms—CR-hypothesis, Comparative Ellipsis, stripping

I. TYPES OF COMPARATIVE ELLIPSIS

In this part, I review the basic properties of CE. In section (1), I focus on the definitive properties of CE. In section (2), a special kind of reduced comparative clauses is explained, which will later serve to support the view that CE is necessary. In section (3), I discuss the Identity Condition on CE.

A. The Definition and Properties of Comparative Ellipsis

There are three major types of comparative reductions in English comparatives, that is, CE, VP-deletion and Pseudo-gapping, among which I will pay attention mostly to CE here, since it is related to the theme of this paper. Pinkham (1982, p.92ff)^[2] defines Comparative Ellipsis as an optional deletion rule that elides the verb and all other recoverable constituents inside the *than*-clause.

- (1) John wrote more letters to Mary
a. than he wrote to Jane.
b. than _ to Jane.

The operation of changing (1a) to (1b) is called Comparative Ellipsis. More examples follow:

- (2) a. It is better to say too little than (to) say too much.
----Thomson and Martinet 1980, p311^[3]
b. Optically such eyes work just as well out of water as _ in it.
c. Far more effort is required to epitomize facts with clarity than _ to express them cloudily.
d. Mary writes postcards to her sister more often than _ letters_.
----Pinkham 1982, p99^[2]

The basic properties of Comparative Ellipsis are as follows:

A. CE must delete the verb of the *than*-clause. When the verb of the main clause is different from the verb of *than*-clause, CE cannot apply, as shown in (3):

- (3) a. Mary can swim better than she can float.
b. Mary can swim better than * _ float.
---- Pinkham 1982, p99^[2]

The underlying form of this sentence is “Mary can swim better than she can float [x well].”

B. CE cannot elide the verb which is flanked by contrastive elements.

- (4) a. Harry buys books more often than Joe buys records
Joe does _ records. (Pseudo-gapping)
* Joe _ records.

---- Pinkham 1982, p100^[2]

- b. Otto let his fingernails grow longer than Dorothy did _ her toenails _.
*Dorothy _ her toenails __.

-----Levin 1979, p.100^[4]

In other words, Gapping is not possible in a *than*-clause. However, some scholars seem to accept such sentences (cf.

Jackendoff (1971, p.22^[5]), Doherty and Schwartz (1967, p.921^[6]). Therefore, there seems to be an idiolectal difference here.

C. CE applies only “rightward,” that is, the elements of the main clause which correspond to the deleted part of the *than*-clause must be to the left of the *than*-clause.

- (5) a. * More dresses [than _ by that company] were sold by us.
 b. More dresses were sold by us [than (were sold) by that company].

---- Pinkham 1982, p.108^[2]

Notice that Gapping in English obeys the same directionality condition. (*John _ apples, and Mary ate oranges). (Hankamer 1971^[7])

B. The Deletion of the Whole Complement Clause Including the Compared Elements

When the compared phrase is deleted by CD, the deleted phrase is not allowed to be in the subject of the *than*-clause, like in (6b):

- (6) a. The issues are more complex than people generally believe [they are _].
 b. * The issues are more complex than [that they are _] is generally believed.
 c. The issues are more complex than it is generally believed [that they are _].

(6b) is ungrammatical, probably due to the Subject Condition (e.g. *What did [stories about_] surprise John?). So this phenomenon is not restricted to comparatives.

When the whole embedded clause including the compared phrase is identical to the content of the main clause, the whole embedded clause can be deleted by CE, as in (7a, b). However, when the subject of the embedded clause is the expletive *it*, if the embedded clause is deleted *it* must also be deleted, as in (7b).

- (7) The issues are more complex
 a. than people generally believe.
 b. than is generally believed.
 c. *than it is generally believed.

(8) illustrates the same point:

- (8) ... the giant ant-eater is less harmless than might at first appear.

The *than*-clause of (8) derives from “than it might at first appear [that it is [x harmless]]”. I will return to sentences of this type later, as evidence for the necessity of CE.

C. The Identity Condition on CE

Because of the general Identity Condition on deletion, when CE applies, the deleted part must be “identical” to the corresponding part of the main clause. The “identity” here is a technical notion and is not the same as literal identity.

Thus, in (9), the difference between the present tense and the past tense doesn't impede CE.

- (9) ... writers in general *can* make a living much more easily than _ when I first started in the 1930's, ...
 [_ =they *could* make a living]

Similarly, the difference between the past tense and the past perfect tense does not matter for CE, as in (10):

If anything, the squabbling between Maurice and Rosy *was* more bitter than _ before the visit to Cambridge. [_ =it *had been*]

Moreover, it is possible to combine *will/would* and *shall/should* with the simple tense. For instance:

- (10) a. You'll enjoy it more than (you *did*) last year.
 b. His speech *was* more interesting than I expected (it *would be*).

-----Quirk *et al* 1972, pp. 771-772.^[8]

However, sometimes the difference of the tense can affect CE. According to Pinkham (1982, p.129^[2]), (12a) can be interpreted as (12b) and (12c) but not (12d).

- (11) a. Elizabeth will be taller than Adam.
 b. ... than Adam will be.
 c. ... than Adam is.
 d. *...than Adam was.

Although the combination of tenses in (12a) is the same as that in (11a), which combines *will* with the simple past tense, (12a) cannot be interpreted as (12d). It seems that the difference of tenses can be ignored, only when the original tense of the *than*-clause can be recovered from the remnant. In (11), the past tense can be recovered through “last year”, but we can't recover the past tense through *Adam* in (12a). If this is correct, then the reason that (12a) can be interpreted as (12c) should not be due to CE: (12a) interpreted as (12c) should be generated as a phrasal comparative.

The existence/ nonexistence of the complementizer *for/to* can also be ignored, as in (13) and (14):

- (12) He stood up and *walked* as far around the desk as the telephone cord allowed.

(13) And by removing some of the shading leaves and bringing the bunches into the open, I think I will be able to make *them mature* earlier than is usual.

The deep structures of the above examples are: [as the telephone cord allowed [*him to walk* [x far] around the desk] and [than it is usual [*for them to mature* [x early]]], respectively.

In summary, this section has reviewed the basic properties of CE. Some of the sentence patterns reviewed are

particularly relevant to the theme of this paper, for example, *than*-clauses in which just two remnants occur, and ones in which a whole embedded clause has been deleted together with the expletive *it*. I will return to them below.

II. THE NECESSITY OF COMPARATIVE ELLIPSIS

It appears that most linguists agree with the view that CE is necessary. But Lechner (2001) [1] proposes a new view that CE can be dispensed with, and he presents evidence to prove that *than*-XP clauses can be treated in the same way as *and*-clauses. Contrary to Lechner's opinion, however, in what follows, I will try to prove that CE is necessary. In section 2.1, I will take up special kinds of sentence pattern in *than*-clauses to prove the necessity of CE and show that these kinds of sentential form can only be explained by CE, not CR. And then in section 2.2, I will analyze a phenomenon, i.e. the deletion of all material from a *than*-clause except for a phrase in the subject. The coordinate construction corresponding to this special type of comparative will be Stripping. So I will examine whether Stripping sentences can be formed in the same way as in the *than*-clause in question. In both cases I will support my claims with many examples I have found on BNC or Google.

A. 'Than I Thought/Expected' Clause and 'Than Is Generally Believed' Clause

Lechner(2001)^[1] claims that CE can be dispensed with, namely, reductions in comparative clauses can be explained by rules applying to coordinate structures. Hence, this view will be seriously challenged if there are reduced comparative clauses that do not have counterparts in *and*-sentences. I will argue here that there indeed are such comparative clauses, namely, the types exemplified by '*than I thought*' and '*than is generally believe*'. I will argue that these special comparative clauses can only be explained as CE, not CR.

According to section 1.2, such comparative clauses as '*than I thought/expected*' or '*than is generally believed/imagined*', like (6) and (7) from part I, repeated here in (15), are special cases of CE:

- (15) a. The issues are more complex than people generally believed [they are x complex].
 → The issues are more complex than people generally believed _.
 b. The issues are more complex than [it] is generally believed [that they are x complex].
 → The issues are more complex than _ is generally believed _.

In (a), because the content of the compared material in the embedded clause is identical to the content of the matrix clause, the whole embedded clause can be deleted. This way of deletion is the same as that of CE (all recoverable elements should be deleted if CE applies), so we can consider the reduction of this special comparative as an instance of CE. In contrast with (a), in (b), all recoverable elements are deleted, which is according with the definition of CE. But the expletive *it* is necessary in subject position at some stage in the derivation, since according to grammatical principles, the deletion of the compared material by CD cannot be done within the subject of *than*-XP clause, like in (16):

- (16) * The issues are more complex than [that they are _] is generally believed.

If the formal subject *it* is not deleted, example (b) will be ill-formed.

- (17) *The issues are more complex than **it** is generally believed_.

Some more examples from BNC follow:

- (18) It is a lot more complicated **than I thought** _ . (_ = it was x complicated)

He was even richer **than I thought** _ . (_ = he was x rich)

He's much taller **than I expected** _ . (_ = he was x tall)

I finished my business sooner **than I expected** _ . (_ = I finished my business x soon)

According to Lechner's CR-Hypothesis, such reduced comparatives should have corresponding *and*-clauses. Thus, such sentences like 'It is very complicated and I thought.' should be well-formed. In fact, however, when I searched for "...and I thought/expected" on BNC, I could not find any hits satisfying the requirement, that is, there were no sentences in which the string '*...and I thought/expected*' comes at the end of the sentence. So we can say that such sentences like (18) are only explained by CE, not CR.

Although I have not been able to find sentences ending with '*... and I thought/expected*.' , sentences ending with '*...and I thought/expected so*' are easy to find. Some examples I found on Google Books follow:

- (19) a. She thinks it is improper, **and I think so** too.

b. I got the last number, and I showed it to my grandmother, and she said that it would teach me more than going to school, **and I think so** too.

c. It was believed that he would supply goods to that amount, and I expected so too.

d. As a young mother I felt my daughter was brilliant, gifted, and exceptional, **and I expected so** much.

When I searched for '*...than I thought/expected so*' on BNC and Google Books, there were no matches for these queries. It further illustrates the point that the sentential form '*...than I thought/expected*' can only explained by CE, not CR, which falsifies Lechner's CR-Hypothesis.

The other type of embedded clause we consider here is the sentence pattern "...*than is generally believed/imagined*", as in (20) or "...*than I thought likely/...than you would imagine _ to be possible/...than seems likely*", as in (21). The common feature of this type of embedded clause is that at some underlying level such comparatives must use the formal subject *it* in the *than*-clause.

(20) a. There are other features that may have much earlier origins **than is generally believed**. (BNC)

b. There is in the world more poverty than **is generally imagined**. (BNC)

The underlying form (at some stage of the derivation) of (20a) is ‘There are other features that may have much earlier origins **than [it] is generally believed [that they have x early origins]**. The underlying form of (20b) is ‘There is in the world more poverty than [it] is generally imagined [that there is in the world [x much] poverty]’.

(21) a. And the physics major has helped me more **than I thought likely**.

b. Dates often assume more importance **than you would imagine to be possible**.

c. Unless wages rise more slowly or output picks up faster **than seems likely**, Germany faces higher inflation and a growing deficit in foreign trade.

The underlying form of (a) is ‘And the physics major has helped me more than I thought [it] likely [that it would help me [x much]].’ The underlying form of (b) is ‘Dates often assume more importance than you would imagine [it] to be possible [for them to assume [x much] importance]. The underlying form of (c) is ‘Unless wages rise more slowly or output picks up faster than [it] seems likely [that wages will rise [x slowly] or output picks up [x fast]], Germany faces higher inflation and a growing deficit in foreign trade.’

To prove that the above examples can only be explained by CE, we should demonstrate that such special comparatives can not be treated as kinds of *and*-clauses. When I searched for the sentence pattern “...and is generally believed/ imagined” on BNC, there were no hits for my queries. Also, when I searched for “...and I thought likely”, “...and you would imagine to be possible” and “...and seems likely” on BNC, there were no hits of sentences ending with “...and I thought likely”, “...and you would imagine to be possible” and “...and seems likely”. So, it is obvious that these special types of comparatives cannot be considered as belonging to coordinate structures and that they can only be explained by CE.

In summary, the way of reduction in the special comparatives, like “...than I thought/expected” or “...than is generally believed/imagined” agrees with the definition of CE, so we can consider such sentences as special cases of CE. According to Lechner’s CR-Hypothesis, it should be possible that such special comparatives can be treated as a kind of *and*-clause, but the above examples present sufficient evidence to support the view that such special comparatives can only be explained by CE, not CR. So, as it stands, Lechner’s CR-Hypothesis is not tenable.

B. The Deletion of a Part of the Subject in Than-Clause

This section takes up a special kind of comparative clause: a comparative clause in which all the material in the *than*-clause has been deleted except for a part of the subject. I will argue that such comparative clauses are well-formed. And then I will consider whether such comparative clauses can only be explained in terms of CE or not.

Consider the comparative sentences in (22):

(22) a. Books on linguistics are more expensive than books on mathematics are _.

→ Books on linguistics are more expensive than books on mathematics _.

→ Books on linguistics are more expensive than _ on mathematics _.

b. Working together is more efficient than working alone is _.

→ Working together is more efficient than working alone _.

→ Working together is more efficient than _ alone _.

We notice that in the last examples of (22a) and (22b) only a part of the subject in the *than*-clause is left. On the basis of the definition of CE, that is, CE is an optional operation that deletes all recoverable constituents from the comparative clause; we can say that the reduction of the *than*-clause down to a part of the subject is an instance of CE. However, because this kind of reduction is very rare, one might doubt the grammaticality of the above examples. So more examples, found by searching on Google, are given below:

(23) a. Reading books on an electronic paper display is more comfortable than reading books on active matrix display is _.

→ Reading books on an electronic paper display is more comfortable than reading books on active matrix display _.

→ Reading books on an electronic paper display is more comfortable than _ on active matrix display _.

b. Sufficient evidence is also available to contradict the cultural belief that the appearance of female is more important than the appearance of males is _.

→ Sufficient evidence is also available to contradict the cultural belief that the appearance of female is more important than the appearance of males _.

→ Sufficient evidence is also available to contradict the cultural belief that the appearance of female is more important than _ of males _.

c. Travelling in a group is more fun than travelling alone is _.

→ Travelling in a group is more fun than travelling alone _.

→ Travelling in a group is more fun than _ alone _.

d. Six-minute walk distance is greater when performed in a group than when performed alone is _.

→ Six-minute walk distance is greater when performed in a group than when performed alone _.

→ Six-minute walk distance is greater when performed in a group than _ alone _.

Moreover, in order to confirm the well-formedness of such comparative clauses, I asked a native speaker of English,

my New Zealand friend, for help. He judged that these special comparatives in (22) are acceptable.

If we analyze the last examples of (22a, 22b) from the perspective of Conjunction Reduction, we can say that the corresponding reduction process in coordinate structures is Stripping. The crucial question is whether Stripping should be permitted to generate such reduced *and*-clauses as (24a, b):

- (24) a. ?Books on Linguistics are expensive, and _ on mathematics _too.
 b. ?Working together is efficient ,and_ alone _too.

Hankamer and Sag (1976)^[7] define Stripping as ‘a rule that deletes everything in a clause under identity with corresponding parts of the preceding clause, except for one constituent, (and sometimes a clause-initial adverb or negative). Some examples of Stripping are given in (25):

- (25) a. Jane gave presents to John, but not _ to Geoff.
 b. John ate an apple, and also _ an orange.
 c. Jane loves to study rocks, and _ geography too.
 d. Jane loves to study rocks, and John _ too.
 e. John studied rocks but not Jane _.
 f. Flowers grow well here and sometimes herbs _.

---Anne, Lobeck (1995)^[9]

We see in (25a-c), that the gap is not clause-final. In examples (25d-f), however, the gap is clause-final, suggesting that Stripping can apply either leftward or rightward.

Also, it is important to note that Stripping fails in complex NPs, which suggests that unlike rules like VP-Ellipsis, Stripping obeys the Complex NP Constraint:

- (26) Jane knows lots of people who play the piano,
 a. but not very well.
 b. *but I know a man who not very well.
 (27) This is the place where we grow flowers,
 a. and sometimes herbs.
 b. *and that is the place where sometimes herbs.

According to the definition of Stripping, example (24a-b), where there is only one constituent left in the *and*-clauses, should be well-formed. Example (24a, b) are repeated here in (28):

- (28) a. *Books on linguistics are expensive, and _ on mathematics _ too.
 b. *Working together is efficient, and_ alone _ too.

I asked some native English speakers whether these sentences were well-formed or not, their answer was that they were ill-formed. Considering that Stripping obeys the Complex NP Constraint, this is natural. We can assume that Stripping obeys island constraints in general and that it violates the Subject Condition in (24a, b).

Ogata (forthcoming)^[10], however, reports that such Stripping clauses as in (29) are accepted by a native speaker of English

- (29) a. People in Sapporo are happy, and _in Nagoya _ too.
 b.*People in Sapporo are happy, and _ Nagoya_ too.
 c. People in Sapporo are happy, but not _ in Nagoya_.
 d. *People in Sapporo are happy, but not _ Nagoya_.

Comparing (24a) with (29a,c), we can see that they have basically the same structures. But (24a) is ill-formed whereas (29a) is well-formed. Why? In my own opinion, maybe there are two reasons causing this apparent conflict. On the one hand, the *on*-PPs in (24a) function as the complements of NP and are not adjuncts.

Furthermore, the *in*-PPs in (29a) are locative adjuncts. In (29a), the underlying form is “People in Sapporo are happy, and (people) in Nagoya (are happy), too.” We notice that this sentence is virtually the same in meaning with “People are happy in Sapporo, and (people) (are happy) in Nagoya, too.” So it is conceivable that a speaker may sometimes unconsciously convert the former structure, to which Stripping cannot apply presumably because of the Subject Condition, into the latter and accordingly judge sentences like (29a) as acceptable. I therefore tentatively conclude that examples (24a, b) are ungrammatical and that we should put aside examples (29a,c) when we consider how Stripping works. We take the ungrammaticality of examples (24a, b) as evidence that Stripping cannot apply in such a way as to leave just a part of the subject behind.

In summary, there are comparative sentences which, if Lechner’s CR-Hypothesis is correct, Stripping should be able to generate, namely, sentences in which only a part of the subject of the *than*-clause appears on the surface. However, Stripping cannot produce corresponding *and*-clauses. If so, the phenomenon of the wholesale deletion in a *than*-clause except for a part of the subject can only be explained by CE, which means that CE is necessary. Lechner’s view that CE can be dispensed with is seriously challenged here.

There is, however, one important theoretical question left unsolved.

As Merchant (2006)^[11] notes, “the remnant in a reduced clausal or phrasal comparative uniformly shows island sensitivity in English comparatives, as noted by Reinhart (1991) and Lechner (2001; 2004)^[1].”

- (30) a. *More people live in the country that Putin governs than Bush.
 (≠ than live in the country that Bush governs)

- b. *Nikos saw more movies when Nana recommended them to him than Elena. (\neq than Nikos saw when Elena recommended them to him)
- c. *That the dean is going to invite the cleaning lady is more noteworthy than Maria. (\neq than that the dean is going to invite Maria)
- d. *More people know someone who lives in Russia than in Tibet.
(\neq than know someone who lives in Tibet)
---Merchant Jason (2009)^[10]

This fact is usually taken as supportive evidence for the movement analysis of comparative clause reduction; for example, Hankamer(1973)^[7] and Kennedy(1999; 2002)^[12] posit that reduced clausal comparatives involve movement of a phrase to a clause-external position followed by clausal ellipsis, as in (31):

(31) More people live in Russia than [[PP in the US]_i ([live *t*]])].

According to the movement analysis, we can explain all examples in (30) as straightforward cases of island condition violations.

For now, let us continue to use the term “Comparative Ellipsis” irrespective of whether it involves movement or not. Of all the examples in (30), particularly disturbing for our analysis is (30c), which seems to show that CE obeys the Subject Condition. Example (32) may be taken another case illustrating the Subject Condition, but because it also involves a complex NP, it is difficult to tell whether the Subject Condition is really relevant here.

(30c) *That the dean is going to invite the cleaning lady is more noteworthy than Maria. (\neq than that the dean is going to invite Maria)

(32) *People who drink coffee everyday live longer than tea.

(33) a. Books on Semantics are more expensive than on Phonology.

b. Working together is more efficient than alone.

Now, the question we face is why (33a,b) are acceptable while (30c) and (32) are unacceptable. If CE is subject to the island conditions, in particular the Subject Condition, then (33a,b) should be ruled out just like (30c) and (32). Unfortunately, at present, I have no explanation for this disparity. Maybe, different reduction rules are involved here--one using movement of the remnant and another just using deletion. Maybe, the differences in the categories of the remnants play a role. I am not ready to offer answers to such questions and I leave the matter for future study.

Finally, it should be emphasized that though the theoretical questions discussed above remain open, the claim made above that Lechner’s CR Hypothesis is contradicted by linguistic facts remains valid. The native speakers of English I asked all found the examples in (34) unacceptable while accepting (33a,b).

(34) a. *People who drink coffee everyday are healthy, and tea, too.

b. * Books on Semantics are very expensive and on Phonology, too.

c. * Working together is efficient, and alone, too.

So although we don’t know how to characterize it, the reduction process operative in (33a, b) is peculiar to comparative clauses and the CR Hypothesis as it stands is not tenable.

III. CONCLUSION

Lechner’s CR Hypothesis claims that CE can be dispensed with in favor of Coordinate Structure Reduction, i.e. the operations independently needed for reducing coordinate structures. I arrived at the conclusion that the CR Hypothesis is not tenable and that CE is necessary to account for reduced comparative sentences. To prove that CE is necessary, I presented two pieces of evidence, that is, the deletion of the whole complement clause in the *than*-clause which includes the compared phrase; and the phenomenon of the deletion of the whole *than*-clause except for a part of the subject.

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The Learner's Side of Foreign Language Learning: Predicting Language Learning Strategies from Language Learning Styles among Iranian Medical Students

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Abstract—The purpose of the study is to examine whether certain language learning styles are predictive of certain language learning strategies among Iranian EFL medical students. Unlike many studies which have investigated isolated dimensions of learning styles, this study applies a broadly focused learning styles indices as predictors of achievement in the use of language learning strategies. The study presents two kinds of data: quantitative and qualitative. In the quantitative study, the participants consist of 265 EFL second-year undergraduates. Two self-reported inventories, the Persian version of Learning Style Questionnaire (E&L LSQ) (Ehrman & Leaver, 2002), and the Persian version of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990) were used. Semi-structured interviews have been performed among 34 high and low achievers in the qualitative aspect of the study. The analyses indicate that the synoptic language learning style significantly predicts more language learning strategies than ectenic style, thus turning out to be the more influential language learning style variable affecting learners' language learning strategy choices. Unlike low achievers, high achievers are synoptic driven in style, and capable of exercising more frequent and sophisticated strategies in general and compensation strategies in particular. The pedagogical implications of the study are discussed.

Index Terms—synoptic style, ectenic style, language learning styles, language learning strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most satisfying experiences afforded by intellectual pursuits comes from the discovery of distinction between things that are superficially alike. The two concepts of learning styles and learning strategies are interrelated concepts since they both indicate specific ways learners carry out learning tasks (Dornyei, 2005). Reid (1995) provides a standard definition for learning styles as: "an individual's natural, habitual, and preferred way(s) of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills" (p. 121). Keefe (1979) also defines a learning style as "cognitive, affective and physiological behaviors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with and respond to the learning environment" (p. 197). On the other hand, Cohen (1998) defines strategies as "learning processes which are consciously selected by the learner" (p. 162). Oxford (1999) offers a comprehensive and currently the best definition of learning strategies as: "Specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques that students use to improve their own progress in developing skills in a second or foreign language". (p.163)

Sternberg and Grigorenko (2001) emphasize the difference between the degree of consciousness involved in styles and strategies: Styles work without individual awareness, whereas strategies demand a conscious choice of alternatives. Oxford, Ehrman and Levin (1991) stress the importance of learners' discovering strategies that suit their learning styles; the authors advocate style-flexing and using a wide variety of strategies to enhance proficiency in the target language. Reid (1987), who has reported on the learning style preferences of a large sample (N = 1,234) of ESL students studying in intensive English programs in American universities, found that the differences in the strategies used by second language learners could be attributed to the differences in their learning styles preferences. Reid reported that ESL students typically prefer kinesthetic and tactile learning styles, although students who had been in the United States for more than three years showed a marked preference for an auditory learning style. Ehrman and Oxford (1989) conducted a study of seventy-nine foreign language learners at a large language institute. They administered Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning, and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to learners. They found that 1) extroverts reported using more social strategies than introverts; 2) sensing (concrete) learners liked memory strategies, while intuitive learners liked compensation strategies; 3) thinkers liked metacognitive strategies while feelers liked social strategies; and 4) perceivers (flexible learners) liked affective strategies, which judgers (closure-oriented learners) rejected.

Although the linkage between strategies and styles has been established, most studies concentrated on either quantitative or qualitative method in exploring the relationship between learning styles and strategies. Many also investigated isolated dimensions of learning styles, or they employed the most widely used personality type inventory, Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) when measuring learning styles. Even when employing a learning style measurement, most of the studies in the L2 field employed scales of learning styles that are language-independent, as evidenced by the fact that most of the items in the style batteries could be used for any subject matter (not just for English language learning). Hence, this study could be the first that attempts to identify the nature of the linkage between language learning styles and strategies, employing a L2 specific measure of learning styles: Ehrman and Leaver Learning Style Questionnaire (E&L LSQ) (2002).

A study of this kind would throw new lights on the current teaching and learning situation in Iran. Once language learners get to know their language style preferences, it may be easier for them to see why they prefer using certain strategies and not others. This awareness would help learners develop the flexibilities to cope with different learning contexts and ultimately achieve learner autonomy.

Accordingly, an attempt was made to find an empirically justified answer to each of the following questions of the study:

1. Are language learning styles significant predictors of language learning strategies?
2. Is there any significant difference between learners with either synoptic or ectenic language learning style, in their application of language learning strategies?
3. What are the qualitative differences in language learning styles between high achievers and low achievers?
4. What are the qualitative differences in language learning strategies between high achievers and low achievers?

To remain conservative, the researcher estimated null hypotheses as follow:

1. Language learning styles are not significant predictors of language learning strategies.
2. There is no significant difference between learners with either synoptic or ectenic language learning style, in their application of language learning strategies.

Questions three and four are descriptive and do not pose any relation or interaction among variables. Hence, no hypothesis was stated for them.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study is a kind of descriptive, mixed method study, having both quantitative phase and then follow-up qualitative interview phase, adding flesh to the bones. Language learning styles were taken to be the independent variables and language learning strategies considered as dependent variables. To determine the significance of the statistical results of the research questions of the study, the standard level of $p \leq .05$ was considered. Three computer databases, namely, Excel, SPSS, and MATLAB were used for statistical analyses.

A. Participants

A total of 265 EFL undergraduate Iranian university students studying General English as part of English for academic purposes in medical curriculum at Tehran University of Medical Sciences participated in this study. Students were randomly selected from medical fields of: speech therapy, audiometry, optometry, technical orthopedics, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, radiotherapy, surgical technology and laboratory science. They were sophomores and already passed two prerequisites English courses to be prepared for general and then academic English. The participants included 190 female and 75 male students, ranging in age from 18 to 25 ($M=19.5$, $SD=.92$). The group was not controlled for gender, age, or any other variables except the variables of the study.

Moreover, for the qualitative phase of the study, 34 sub-sample students were selected based on stratified sampling for in-depth study; branching questionnaires respondents into two groups of high achievers ($n=17$) and low achievers ($n=17$). Students' reported scores on the objective questions of the final English test in the second semester of their first academic year were used as the indices of the students' language learning outcomes and the basis for their division in this study. The test items consisted of listening comprehension, reading comprehension, cloze and vocabulary, administered by English Center of Tehran University of Medical Sciences. The reliabilities of the final test scores ranged from .84 to .90. In this study, those with the final score of 17- 20 (out of 20) were considered as high achievers and those with the final score of 10- 13 (out of 20) were considered as low achievers.

It is also important to note that English learning of medical university students at Tehran University of Medical Sciences has been under constant scrutiny to respond to the diverse learning needs of these students as well as various demands of the society. The study, further, focused on undergraduate students to pave the way for understanding the process of learning foreign language in its startup. Although Iranian university students, when beginning their higher education, they have already studied English for seven years in the middle school and high school, it seems that most students when entering university lack skills necessary for learning language. Therefore, the first years of their university study are in fact the beginning of their higher-educational learning of a foreign language that demands improving even after seven years of instruction at school.

B. Instrumentation

Two paper-and-pencil instruments were used for the quantitative phase of the study as follow.

- *Ehrman and Leaver Learning Style Questionnaire (E&L LSQ)*

It contains 30 items using a 9- point semantic differential scale format and provides a rich set of data about an individual language learning styles which has the advantage of generality and specificity. This complex battery has an elaborate underlying theoretical construct and has undergone extensive field-testing and validation at the Foreign Service Institute. The instrument reorganizes a number of established style dimensions under a new, comprehensive construct with the two poles labeled *Synopsis* and *Ectasis*. The main difference between the two extremes is that a *Synoptic* learner allows more preconscious or unconscious processing whereas an *Ectenic* learner demands conscious control over the learning process. The complete system is made up of 10 subdimensions as follow:

1: Field sensitivity_ field insensitivity, 2: Field independence_ field dependence, 3: Leveling-sharpening, 4: Global-particular, 5: Impulsive-reflective, 6: Synthetic-analytic, 7: Analogue-digital, 8: Concrete-abstract, 9: Random-sequential, 10: Inductive-deductive.

This study, however, applied the general aspects of E&L LSQ: namely Synoptic and Ectenic language learning styles indices as predictors of achievement in the use of language learning strategies. While, Synoptic pole includes the first one of each opposing pair, Ectenic pole includes the second part of each pair. In this study, Cronbach alphas of .91 and .92 were found for synoptic and ectenic language learning styles respectively.

- *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)*

It contains a 50-item four-Point Likert-Scale ranging from 'never' to 'always' used to assess a broad range of L2 learning strategies. It consists of six strategy categories, each of which corresponds to a specific set of strategy items. It measures the frequency with which a student uses memory, cognitive, compensation (under direct class), metacognitive, affective and social language learning strategies (under indirect class). The SILL is the best-known strategy scale and is utilized widely for its high reliability and validity. The internal consistency of SILL ranges from .89 to .98 in various studies (Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). Tahmasebi (1999) found Cronbach alpha of .77 for Persian version of SILL. In this study Cronbach alpha was found to be .93.

C. *Qualitative Interview Part of the Study*

In qualitative part of the study, semi-structured interviews were performed branching questionnaires respondents into two groups of high achievers and low achievers. The whole interview protocol fell into two parts searching for more in-depth analyses of the variables of the study.

Part one, was intended to find out whether the students were aware of their own learning styles and the effects of the learning styles on their English learning. Questions such as "imagine today is holiday and you are to study English, do you prepare yourself immediately or it takes time to call forth your attention? How?"; "Are you learning new words as you are reading the text through context or you need to check the meaning of the words in the dictionary to be sure? What's your experience?" deserved the interviewees' answering. To Ehrman (1996) common styles dimensions are sequential- random, field sensitive- field insensitive and concrete- abstract, all of which covered in the interview part.

Second part, was interested in gathering data about the participants' strategies in learning English. Typical questions addressed were: "you have been successful in learning language, what did you do that lead you to success?" asked from high achievers; "It seems you did not get a deserving score in English last term, what did you do that lead you to failure?" asked from low achievers. It needs noticing that most of low achievers have already failed once in final test.

Results of styles and strategies obtained from high achievers in the qualitative data were compared against those of low achievers. The interview results of high and low achievers were checked against their quantitative statistics and found to be compatible.

D. *Procedure*

Ehrman and Leaver Learning Style Questionnaire (2002), with the consultation of experts in both field of applied linguistics and psychology was translated into Persian to prevent the impact of English language proficiency and to make sure about the students' understanding of the items in the questionnaire. Pilot study (n=50) was run and consequently revisions were made.

The coded batteries of the questionnaires were administered to 265 undergraduate Iranian university students studying General English at Tehran University of Medical Sciences. Detailed instructions were given by the researcher on how to respond to the batteries. The purpose of the questionnaires and the potential significance of the results were communicated to the students. The participants were guaranteed anonymity of their responses. It contributed to the honesty of respondents' answers. However, they were asked to keep the written code on the first page of the batteries of questionnaires for the volunteer follow up interview. Completing the coded packet of instruments typically required 30 minutes.

To make the meaning of style preferences clear, participants were asked to do simple exercises such as crossing their arms and writing their names with their subdominant hand. Which arm someone put on top is (an unconscious) preference. At the same time, while writing with the dominant hand is fast and easy, writing with the other hand could be slow and difficult. Language learning styles are similar to our hands. Just as we have a preferred hand for writing and doing most other things _ a dominant hand_ so we have preference for how to learn on any of the many learning styles. For example, if we prefer to learn sequentially, it will come relatively automatically, whereas learning randomly with

no set agenda from outside will be slow, awkward, and very tiring until we get practiced at it, and the product will probably not be as mature.

The researcher also pointed out that no one voluntarily uses only one hand all the time. Just as we use the dominant hand for many tasks (taking note), we also need the non-dominant hand for other tasks (at the same time, speaking on the phone) and to support the work of the dominant hand. We are quite literally crippled without both hands. Similarly, a person who prefers to learn inductively (discovering rules from data) most of the time sometimes needs _ or even wants_ to learn deductively (learn rules first), depending on the time available.

Further, to point to the interest, curiosity, and engagement as the qualities of the state conducive to learning and understanding, the participants were provided with a picture of a young lady to find hidden picture of an old lady within the first (Fig. 1).



Figure 1: Picture provided to draw students' attention to the language learning styles notion

It was an attempt to see the picture from different angles; or to see both trees and the forest. They were asked "How many of you see the pretty girl? How many can see the old lady? You can't see them both at the same time. How many saw the old lady first? Anybody not got the old lady? Here's her mouth, her chin, her big nose. Students were looking at the picture, trying to see the hidden pattern for minutes; and sometimes few got almost desperate to see the hidden one. However, every now and then someone would shout "I see it!" and the others would work even harder.

The researcher also asked the participant if they remember those coloring books they pored over as a child, a picture of a forest scene with exotic trees and flowers, and a caption saying, "Find the hidden monkeys in the trees". The ability to find those hidden monkeys hinged upon our field independent style: the ability to perceive a particular, relevant item or factor in a 'field' of distracting items. In general, however, there are positive characteristics to both field independence and field dependence. That is, too much field independence causes us to see only the parts and not their relationship to the whole. Thus, each style is worthy.

Finally, with consultation with experts in psychology and applied linguistics a careful planning of interview questions were made followed by some piloting, to ensure that the questions elicit sufficiently rich data and run smoothly. It is important to mention, interview as an exploratory tool reveals much more about the individuals in the study than that of a written questionnaire. Here, the researcher can find much more of the personality, interests, worries problems and real learning process of the respondents. Again, in the process of the interview which took about 15 minutes for each student, the interviewees were told that the interviews would be highly confidential and used for research only. The interviews were audio taped and notes were taken on them for further analyses.

III. RESULTS

Normality of the data was checked by using Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, used to decide if a sample comes from a special population or not. In other words, it tests whether the distribution of data is normal. The test was run for the SILL, and E&L LSQ as presented in Table 1.

TABLE I.
MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS AND KOLMOGOROV-SMIRNOV INDICES FOR THE SUBSCALES OF
SILL AND E&L LSQ FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE (N= 265)

| Measure | M | SD | Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---------------|------|-----|----------------------|-----------------|
| SILL | | | | |
| Memory | 2.47 | .50 | .96 | .31 |
| Cognitive | 2.42 | .47 | .89 | .39 |
| Compensation | 2.31 | .55 | 1.50 | .06 |
| Metacognitive | 2.79 | .58 | 1.31 | .06 |
| Affective | 2.07 | .46 | 1.62 | .06 |
| Social | 2.22 | .64 | 1.61 | .06 |
| E&L LSQ | | | | |
| Synoptic | 3.76 | .64 | 1.03 | .23 |
| Ectenic | 3.47 | .67 | 1.29 | .70 |

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for the subscales of all three questionnaires indicated the sample of the study was distributed normally and was not found to be different from the population. Hence, parametric statistics were legitimately applied.

Concerning the descriptive statistics of the SILL, the mean of the individual strategy items ranged from 2.07 (for affective) to 2.79 (for metacognitive), with an overall mean of 2.42, indicating low (mean values between 1 and 2.4) strategy usage overall. As Phillips (1991) maintains, beginning L2 learners might possess little in declarative knowledge regarding their second language learning, and much less procedural knowledge about how to effectively apply learning strategies. Metacognitive strategies found to be the mostly applied ones used by 52.5% of students with medium frequency. Among the other strategy categories, memory and cognitive strategies were also applied approximately in medium range, while compensation and social strategies were employed in low range, and affective strategies found to be the least used. It is in line with Hong-Nam and Leavell's (2006) study investigating language learning strategies of both beginner and intermediate international ESL students. They also found that the students preferred to use metacognitive strategies most, whereas they showed the least use of affective strategies. The overall mean strategy use for female students ($M = 2.44$, $SD = .44$) found to be a little bit more than that of male students ($M = 2.41$, $SD = .40$).

For the E&L LSQ, the interplay of 10 bipolar dimensions of the scale made it possible for an individual to have both synoptic and ectenic tendencies, expressing more inclination toward one of them or adopting one as the dominant style. Thus, mean scores of both styles were calculated for the individuals in the sample. The participants reported higher preference for synoptic language learning style ($M = 3.76$), indicating more interest toward subconscious processing or contextual learning of the language. The dominant style of both gender was found to be synoptic, with female indicating more inclination ($M = 3.80$, $SD = .64$) than male students ($M = 3.67$, $SD = .64$).

Further, concerning students' sensory styles of learning language, while, 50% of them favored visual style as their major style, 28% favored auditory as the first, 16% liked kinesthetic and the least favored was that of tactile style with only 6% of students. In other words, students reported learning language better by reading (or seeing) than listening to someone. Implicitly, it could be challenging for them to be asked by the teacher to close the books and just listen.

A. Answer to Research Question One

To answer the first research question of the study linear regression was utilized to examine the association between language learning styles and strategies. Due to multicollinearity effect, a condition that can be problematic in regression analyses, leading to inaccurate results, multiple regression was not employed to answer this research question.

Results of the relationships between E&L LSQ scales (synoptic and ectenic) and each of the 6 language learning strategies were synthesized into Table 2.

TABLE II.
INTERCORRELATIONS AMONG THE E&L LSQ AND SILL FOR THE TOTAL SAMPLE (N= 265)

| Independent Variables | Dependent Variables | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------|--------------|---------------|-----------|--------|
| | Memory | Cognitive | Compensation | Metacognitive | Affective | Social |
| E&L LSQ | | | | | | |
| Synoptic | .14** | .097* | .05 | .15** | .05 | .11* |
| Ectenic | .14** | .004 | -.096 | .12* | .01 | .05 |

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$

The above preliminary correlation matrix indicated that 6 out of the 12 correlation coefficients were statistically significant. The intercorrelations, however found to be low. It is important to refer to Hatch and Farhady (1981) who suggested not depending on figures without applying logical reasoning, meaning that a correlation coefficient might be fairly low and still meaningful. In fact, low predictability, could be due to taking generality (rather than specificity) aspects of styles.

Synoptic style found to be significantly related to memory, cognitive, metacognitive and social language learning strategies, whereas ectenic style found to be significantly related to just memory, and metacognitive language learning strategies. Further, in order to investigate the regressions between language learning styles and strategies, the six learning strategy subscale scores were regressed on each of the two E&L LSQ predictor scores (synoptic and ectenic).

Each of the six subscale scores from the SILL served as one criterion variable per regression analysis. The results are summarized in Table 3.

TABLE III.
LINEAR REGRESSION OF EACH PREDICTOR VARIABLES (SYNOPTIC AND ECTENIC LANGUAGE LEARNING STYLES) ONTO EACH COMPONENT OF SILL LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES; ONLY SIGNIFICANT ASSOCIATIONS ARE DISPLAYED (N= 265)

| Criterion Dependent Variables | Significant Predictor(s) | F | SEB | β |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|------|-----|-------|
| Memory | Synoptic | 5.69 | .04 | .14** |
| | Ectenic | 5.81 | .04 | .14** |
| Metacognitive | Synoptic | 6.51 | .05 | .15** |
| | Ectenic | 3.88 | .05 | .12* |
| Social | Synoptic | 3.78 | .06 | .11* |

*p≤ .05, **p≤ .01

Linear regression was conducted to determine the best linear association of synoptic and ectenic language learning styles for predicting SILL strategies. Both style variables significantly predicted memory strategies F= 5.69 for synoptic and F= 5.81 for ectenic style. Both of the language learning styles also significantly predicted metacognitive strategies F= 6.51 and F= 3.88 respectively. But, it was just synoptic style which significantly predicted social strategies, F = 3.78. The beta weights, presented in Table 3, suggested that synoptic style contributed the most to predicting metacognitive strategies. Ectenic style also predicted metacognitive strategies, but with lower beta weight than that of synoptic style. Both ectenic and synoptic language learning styles had almost the same contribution to the use of memory strategies, with F= 5.81 of ectenic style having a little bit more predictive value than that of synoptic style for memory strategies. Finally, synoptic style had the least significant contribution just to the social strategies. In sum, of the two predictor style variables, both of them were a significant predictor of two types of language learning strategies (memory and metacognitive). The synoptic style was also a significant predictor of just one type of language learning strategies (social).

B. Answer to Research Question Two

To answer the second research question of the study or handling the first research question of the study from different perspective to find more exact picture, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was utilized to examine the differences among language learning strategies employed by learners with different language learning style dominances. When there is more than one independent variable (in this study: synoptic and ectenic styles) and several related dependent variables (subscales of strategies) MANOVA is useful. The major assumption of MANOVA include: homogeneity of variance/covariance matrices. Table 4 presents numbers of students with different dominant language learning styles, and the mean strategy use of the two groups.

TABLE IV.
NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN EACH OF THE TWO DOMINANT STYLES AND THEIR PERFORMANCE ON SILL

| Dominant Style | N | Dependent Strategies of SILL | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|-----------|-----|--------------|-----|---------------|-----|-----------|-----|--------|-----|
| | | Memory | | Cognitive | | Compensation | | Metacognitive | | Affective | | Social | |
| | | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD |
| Synoptic | 176 | 2.47 | .50 | 2.46 | .46 | 2.36 | .54 | 2.81 | .56 | 2.10 | .47 | 2.28 | .62 |
| Ectenic | 60 | 2.44 | .51 | 2.33 | .46 | 2.15 | .57 | 2.72 | .61 | 1.98 | .40 | 2.10 | .64 |

176 participants were more synoptic, and 60 ones were more ectenic in style. However, out of 265 students, 29 had the same mean score for both styles and thus removed from the analysis of the second research question of the study. As Table 4 indicated the means strategy use of synoptics in all six subscales of the SILL were more than those of the ectenics.

Since the numbers of students in the two groups with the dominant styles were not approximately equal, Box's Test was run to check the assumption of homogeneity of covariances of the six dependent strategies across the two language learning styles groups. Here, the larger group (synoptics: N= 176) was 2.93 times larger than the smaller group (ectenics: N= 60), so Box test was checked and found not to be significant (p= .72). Thus, the assumption of homogeneity of covariances was not violated. Levene's test was also checked to see if variances of each variable are equal across groups. Variances were also found not to be significant for any group of strategies. Thus, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not violated as well.

Then a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to assess if there were differences between the two learning styles groups on a linear combination of six language learning strategies, analyzing all dependent variables together. No significant difference was found, Wilk's Lambda = .96, F (6, 229) = 1.53, p= .16, multivariate Eta squared η²= .03, indicated no significant general differences on the interaction of the six subscales of SILL for the two language learning styles groups. However, to check if there was any trend of difference, since means strategy use of synoptics in all six subscales of the SILL were more than those of the ectenics, follow-up univariate analyses of ANOVAs were measured as well.

Consequently, two separate univariate one-way ANOVAs (or follow up tests of between subject effects) were run to determine whether the style groups differed on each of the six strategy variables, examined alone. It is important to notice that unlike MANOVA which can handle multiple dependent variables, ANOVA only handle one dependent variable at a time. Significant effects were found for compensation strategies ($p = .01$, $F(1, 234) = 6.35$, $\eta^2 = .02$), with effect size of .14 (the square root of .02), and for social strategies ($p = .05$, $F(1, 234) = 3.72$, $\eta^2 = .01$) with effect size of .1, which both could be considered low effect sizes. The ANOVAs helped to understand which variables, separately, differed across two styles groups. Both η^2 s squared in between subjects analysis and weighted Bs in parameter estimates indicated higher effect or weight for compensation strategies between the two style groups, with synopsis to contribute more to compensation strategies and then to social strategies respectively. Table 5 presents the results of ANOVAs.

TABLE V.
SUMMARY OF UNIVARIATE ANALYSES OF VARIANCES FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN THE TWO GROUPS OF LEARNERS WITH EITHER
DOMINANT LANGUAGE LEARNING STYLES OF SYNOPTIC OR ECTENIC

| Source | Dependent Variables | MS | F (1, 234) | η^2 |
|---|---------------------|------|------------|----------|
| Language Learning Style Synoptic vs. Ectenic | Memory | .43 | .16 | .00 |
| | Cognitive | .74 | 3.48 | .01 |
| | Compensation | 1.94 | 6.35** | .02 |
| | Metacognitive | .37 | 1.12 | .00 |
| | Affective | .57 | 2.76 | .01 |
| | Social | 1.47 | 3.72* | .01 |

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$

So, there found to be trends of differences in compensation and social strategies. In other words, synoptics found to use these two strategies significantly more than ectenics, but not to the extent that to make the MANOVA meaningful.

C. Qualitative Differences in Language Learning Styles between High Achievers and Low Achievers

To answer the third research question of the study the interview data were analyzed according to the comments related to specific language learning styles namely: field sensitive- field insensitive, sequential- random, concrete-abstract, as reported by Ehrman (1996) as common styles dimensions as well as leveler- sharpener which FSI experience suggested to play important roles in language learning (Ehrman & Leaver, 2003).

In deep analysis of the subscales of language learning style, it was revealed that 94% of high achievers were field sensitive (subscale of synopsis), preferring to address material as part of the context or learning new words through context while reading the text. In contrast, 78% of low achievers were found to be field insensitive (subscale of ectesis) and made little or no use of the context and felt the need to check the meaning of new words in the dictionary as they were reading the text.

Both groups favored sequential learning, a subscale of ectenic style (all high achievers, and 76% of low achievers) in that they preferred a systematic, externally provided order of processing (such as orderly following the units in the textbook).

In contrast to 70% of high achievers who reported that they would prepare themselves for leaning language as soon as possible without delay and they were quick to take action (a synoptic characteristic), 64% of low achievers reported it took time for them to prepare themselves for study and they should have planned to study from last night (an ectenic characteristic).

Unlike high achievers whose natural learning strength lied in concrete experience (a synoptic subscale), tending to work by trial and error, and were more comfortable with even sought ambiguity through engaging in direct experience of language with English conversation in the classroom, low achievers found to be abstract learners (an ectenic subscale) and liked the grammatical system or abstract rules underlying language more than conversation.

Finally, the groups displayed their differences in language learning style, by their tendencies to either leveling, seeing similarities and merge things together to form a generalized image (a synoptic subscale) or sharpening, noticing differences and retrieving details (an ectenic subscale) in that 64% of high achievers appreciated leveling and 71% of low achievers tended toward sharpening style.

In sum, high achievers were identified by being field sensitive, sequential, concrete, and leveler, all of which (except sequential) are characteristics of synoptic style. That is, they inclined more toward synoptic style with a layer of sequential ectenic style. It is important to note that good language learners, besides having synoptic features would be more successful by orderly pursuing language learning. Such learners seldom miss important points, because they make sure that all the material is covered (Ehrman, 1996).

However, low achievers were identified by being field insensitive, sequential, abstract, and sharpener, all of which are characteristics of ectenic style. The major tendency of low achievers found to be toward ectenic style, concerning the four common styles of language learning.

D. Qualitative Differences in Language Learning Strategies between High Achievers and Low Achievers

To answer the fourth research question of the study the interview data were analyzed according to the comments related to language learning strategies coded according to Oxford's (1990) strategy classification. Table 6 summarizes the learners' choice of strategies in both groups.

TABLE VI.
STRATEGY USE OF HIGH AND LOW ACHIEVERS

| | Memory | Cognitive | Compensation | Metacognitive | Affective | Social |
|----------------|--------|-----------|--------------|---------------|-----------|--------|
| High Achievers | ++ | +++ | +++ | +++ | + | ++ |
| Low Achievers | +++ | ++ | 0 | + | 0 | + |

+++ = described as positive, comfortable, or liked by almost all of the students in this group.

++ = described as positive, comfortable, or liked by most of the students in this group.

+ = reported as positive, comfortable, or liked by few of the students in this group.

0 = not reported at all by the students in this group.

Table 6 presents that low achievers reported more use of memory strategies than high achievers. Indeed, the only clearly preferred set of strategies was memory strategies among low achievers. When asked "what did you do that you did not receive a deserving score last term?" almost all low achievers pointed their attention at the memorization of the Persian meanings of the English vocabularies: "I learn by rote". In contrast, high achievers believed that they could have been more successful if they had applied memory strategy of reviewing well and zoomed less on memorization and more on understanding of the materials.

Cognitive strategies favored more by high achievers. Varied profiles of cognitive strategies employed by high achievers. These were: practicing language at language institutes, learning vocabularies in context, extensive reading, listening to music and watching films, translating academic texts, summarizing, English self talk, and practicing conversation in group ... However, low achievers reported cognitive strategies of reading English course books, watching films, applying English words in Persian sentences.... As it was, the range of cognitive strategies worked out by high achievers found to be higher than that of low achievers.

High achievers and low achievers were opposite with respect to use of compensation strategies. High achievers used such strategies easily; low achievers rejected such strategies (or used them in rare instances with significant effort). These strategies were applied by high achievers through techniques such as guessing the meaning of the unknown words while reading and listening, speaking slowly, using synonyms and simple words in speech. However, almost no one in low achiever group referred to these types of strategies rather they felt forced to look up the meaning of every word in the bilingual dictionary than guessing and kept silent in classroom discussions unless felt obliged.

Further, unlike highly appreciated metacognitive strategies of planning for study and seeking practice opportunities among high achievers, low achievers reported low planning for study and a few also mentioned they studied just the night before the exam. Despite, most of low achievers spent more time on studying, evidenced by the reported mean time study of 3.7 in a week for this group, opposed to the lesser mean time of 3.4 for their counterparts, their study was not strategic through linking with already learned materials or even setting goals and objectives. The mean spent time for study in both groups clearly indicated the fact that quality outweighed the quantity.

In terms of affective strategies, the two groups were also found to be somehow in opposite. While, few high achievers reported choice of affective strategies such as laughing at oneself while speaking, imagining speaking fluently in their mind, speaking slowly to keep calm, consciously taking risk to speak even if one makes mistakes, low achievers did not imply any sort of these strategies in the interview. They reported that their fears of making mistakes often kept them from trying speaking.

The other difference between two groups was found in social strategies. High achievers were more interested in developing cultural understanding by speaking to native speakers, cooperating with teacher and peers. However, fewer numbers of low achievers were interested in these strategies as half of the low achievers favored individually practicing language rather than group work.

IV. DISCUSSION

Distinct as the two concepts of language learning styles and strategies are, they found to be interrelated concepts as suggested by a number of researchers in the field (Ehrman, 1996; Ehrman & Oxford 1989; Ehrman & Oxford, 1990), and corroborated by the findings of this study. Indeed, synoptic style significantly predicted memory, metacognitive, and social strategies, whereas ectenic style predicted less number of strategy categories, namely memory and metacognitive.

Therefore, the first null hypothesis of the study was rejected for synoptic style to be the predictor of memory, metacognitive, and social. In other words, synoptic style significantly predicted these strategies (though with small effect size or beta). However, the first null hypothesis of the study was maintained for synoptic style predicting cognitive, compensation, and affective strategies. In other words, synoptic style found not to be significant predictor for these strategies.

The first null hypothesis was also rejected for ectenic style predicting memory and metacognitive strategies. In other words, ectenic style found to be significant predictor for these strategies (again, though with small effect size or beta).

However, the first null hypothesis of the study was maintained for ectenic style predicting cognitive, compensation, social and affective strategies, or ectenic style found not to be significant predictor for these strategies.

Low predictive power of language learning styles for language learning strategies in this study could be due to taking generality (rather than specificity) aspect of styles. Future studies, focusing on detailed underneath styles could result in stronger predictability power as studies in the literature maintained.

Further, having non-significant equations (such as synoptic with affective strategies or ectenic with cognitive) could also indicate that some sort of mismatch existed between the styles and strategies of the students. In other words, since they were pre intermediate, not majoring in English, they were not expected to have good command of either styles or strategies.

The E & L construct theory (Ehrman & Leaver, 2003) characterized synoptics as people who subconsciously preferred to separate some aspect of experience to prioritize it, and showed responsiveness to the surrounding background. In this study, synoptics' preferences for metacognitive strategies by centering their learning in an efficient way, channeling their energy in the objectives and goals they set, indicated that synoptic learners were in a favorable position. Particularly, their preference for metacognitive strategies was in accordance with the characteristics of good language learners noted by O'Malley et al. (1985) and Oxford (1990). Besides, their application of social strategies by cooperation and empathizing with others indicated a great advantage for these students. They also employed memory strategies, though less than their ectenic counterparts, by creating mental linkages and applying images and sounds and employing action to be more strategic learner of the language.

With regard to Ehrman and Leaver's (ibid) account of ectenic learners, these learners tended to be systematic and focusing too much on details. The memory strategies adopted mostly by these groups of learners emphasized that they worked on particularities and could put pressure on themselves by consciously focusing on every details to the cost of losing the overall view. However, they were also users of metacognitive strategies, though less than memory strategies, by evaluating their learning and logical analysis of their language learning. Ectenic learners, by means of metacognitive strategies, tended to construct a formal model of learning approach in their minds and created reflective and analytic general rules for English learning.

Concerning the second null hypothesis of the study, MANOVA found not to be significant, indicated no general differences for the two language learning styles groups on the interaction of the six subscales of SILL. That is, in general, the second null hypothesis of the study was maintained, indicating there found to be no significant difference between learners with either synoptic or ectenic dominant style in their application of language learning strategies. That is, both styles used strategies as frequently as each other. However, further analysis, applying univariate analyses of ANOVAs revealed significant detailed trends of differences in compensation and social strategies. Looking from this angle, synoptic style once more found to be in favorable position causing application of important strategies of compensation and social for communication of language. Compensation strategies could help synoptic learners to compensate for gaps in their knowledge of the target language through guessing or using circumlocution and synonyms. Social strategies could also serve them to seek opportunities to use language.

Qualitative differences between high achievers and low achievers in terms of their language learning style indicated high achievers to be synoptic driven, whereas low achievers were ectenic. Ehrman and Leaver (2003) also reported synoptics as the best language learners, because they were often both field independent and field sensitive; because they could see what was most important, and they could pick up language globally by being exposed to it.

Moody (1988) theorized that, because language is primarily symbolic, second language learning is more appealing to students who like variety, who dislike repetition, who are imaginative, and who are more adept at learning new concepts (synoptics in E & L Construct) than it is to students who rely on memorization as their foremost learning strategy, and who are more logical (ectenics in E & L Construct).

Qualitative differences between high achievers and low achievers in language learning strategies revealed outperformance of high achievers in all strategies in general and compensation strategies in particular. Chamot and Rubin (1994) maintained, "the good language learner cannot be described in terms of a single set of strategies but rather through the ability to understand and develop a personal set of effective strategies" (p. 372). In addition, Rubin (1987) identified successful language learners as the ones who employed compensation and social strategies because these strategies allowed the learners to remain in the conversation.

Finally, two key factors strengthening good language learners in this study found to be synoptic style, and general use of all strategies and specific use of compensation strategies. However, low achievers were mainly ectenic in style, and almost desperate candidates for compensation strategies.

V. CONCLUSION

The major findings presented in this study on the relationship between language learning styles and strategies are as follows:

1. Language learning styles provide some significant evidences for prediction of language learning strategy choices. Synoptic style positively predicts the use of more number of language learning strategies (memory, metacognitive, and social) than ectenic style (memory and metacognitive), thus turning out to be the more influential language learning style variable affecting learners' language learning strategy choices.

2. Although, there is no significant difference between students with either synoptic or ectenic dominant language learning style, in use of language learning strategies, there exist a trend, indicating synoptics apply more compensation and social language learning strategies.

3. High achievers contrast with low achievers in terms of language learning style, in that high achievers are more synoptic driven (tending to play their way through language learning, feel relaxed, and take risk in this process), whereas low achievers are more ectenic driven (tending to be meticulous about language learning, dislike ambiguity, and safeguard themselves by avoiding tentative steps).

4. High achievers contrast with low achievers in that high achievers are more frequent and sophisticated users of a large number of language learning strategies. They affectively compensate their shortcomings in language learning, whereas low achievers are good at memorization. In other words, low achievers are limited in the number and quality of their strategies use, and at the same time they are out of touch of affective and compensation strategies.

The results indicate that teachers could also help students discover and get familiar with their own learning styles in order to help them become self-aware learners. Strategy training based on learning styles would prepare instructors for dealing with learners of different learning styles. At the same time, teachers could also encourage students to experiment with extending their preferred styles by explicitly explaining to the students the importance of tapping strategies of other styles in order to help students work on the development of the style areas they feel less comfortable with. For instance, ectenic learners, who tend to concentrate on details and often avoid more free-flowing communicative activities, and are interested in rule-learning and dissecting words and sentences; could be encouraged to use compensation strategies like paraphrasing when they do not know a particular word, or to guess without looking up the information in the dictionary, or to have sufficient social conversational practice. In contrast, synoptic students, who use socially interactive, compensatory strategies, emphasizing the main idea over details, could be encouraged to notice to delicate details and grammatical accuracy.

Psychologically speaking, no one is entirely synoptic or ectenic in style. Students can access their less preferred style (and with them 'cross-type strategies'), just as they can use their less preferred hand (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990). Encountering students with complexity- the space between order and chaos- and shaping their zone of proximity or zone of learning would help in stretching or flexing their styles to be able to encounter different tasks in the classroom.

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- Sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and neurolinguistics
- Discourse analysis
- Stylistics
- Language and culture, cognition, and pragmatics
- Language teaching and psychology, anthropology, sociology
- Theories and practice in related fields

Special Issue Guidelines

Special issues feature specifically aimed and targeted topics of interest contributed by authors responding to a particular Call for Papers or by invitation, edited by guest editor(s). We encourage you to submit proposals for creating special issues in areas that are of interest to the Journal. Preference will be given to proposals that cover some unique aspect of the technology and ones that include subjects that are timely and useful to the readers of the Journal. A Special Issue is typically made of 10 to 15 papers, with each paper 8 to 12 pages of length.

A special issue can also be proposed for selected top papers of a conference/workshop. In this case, the special issue is usually released in association with the committee members of the conference/workshop like general chairs and/or program chairs who are appointed as the Guest Editors of the Special Issue.

The following information should be included as part of the proposal:

- Proposed title for the Special Issue
- Description of the topic area to be focused upon and justification
- Review process for the selection and rejection of papers
- Name, contact, position, affiliation, and biography of the Guest Editor(s)
- List of potential reviewers if available
- Potential authors to the issue if available
- Estimated number of papers to accept to the special issue
- Tentative time-table for the call for papers and reviews, including
 - Submission of extended version
 - Notification of acceptance
 - Final submission due
 - Time to deliver final package to the publisher

If the proposal is for selected papers of a conference/workshop, the following information should be included as part of the proposal as well:

- The name of the conference/workshop, and the URL of the event.
- A brief description of the technical issues that the conference/workshop addresses, highlighting the relevance for the journal.
- A brief description of the event, including: number of submitted and accepted papers, and number of attendees. If these numbers are not yet available, please refer to previous events. First time conference/workshops, please report the estimated figures.
- Publisher and indexing of the conference proceedings.

If a proposal is accepted, the guest editor will be responsible for:

- Preparing the "Call for Papers" to be included on the Journal's Web site.
- Distribution of the Call for Papers broadly to various mailing lists and sites.
- Getting submissions, arranging review process, making decisions, and carrying out all correspondence with the authors. Authors should be informed the Author Guide.
- Providing us the completed and approved final versions of the papers formatted in the Journal's style, together with all authors' contact information.
- Writing a one- or two-page introductory editorial to be published in the Special Issue.

More information is available on the web site at <http://www.academypublisher.com/jltr/>.

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