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## TEACHING ENGLISH TO NON-NATIVE LEARNERS OF ENGLISH WITH MILD COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT

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### Abstract

As the field of English language teaching (ELT) to cognitively impaired learners is neglected, this paper aims to contribute to this field by introducing Talking Tactile Technology (T3) as a means of teaching English to non-native learners of English with mild cognitive impairment. Therefore, after discussing the characteristics of the ideal foreign language classroom for learners with special learning needs, this paper introduces a case in Turkey for applying T3 to teach English as a foreign language (EFL) to learners with mild cognitive impairment described by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4th ed., text rev.; *DSM-IV-TR*; American Psychiatric Association, 2000) as educable individuals whose IQ scores range from 50 to 70. In this study, ten T3-based beginner level English lesson content materials were created. These materials were tested by candidate and practicing English teachers as well as special education teachers. Their opinions about T3 and the T3-based materials were collected immediately after they tried the technology in the training sessions organized by the researcher. Their opinions led to the conclusion that T3 can be used to teach some Basic English to learners with mild cognitive impairment. It is hoped that this study will trigger more research studies focusing on different ways to learn and to teach English to these learners.

**Key words:** Talking Tactile Technology, ELT, Cognitively impaired learners

### Background to the Study

It is common knowledge that learners with learning disabilities are disadvantaged by their disability and tend to have problems in accessing and communicating information. More specifically, because of their repeated failure at school, it is likely these learners to have the feeling that their academic success is beyond their control and to perceive themselves as less competent than their peers (Ntshangase, Mdikana, & Cronk, 2008). To be able to create an ideal teaching-learning process for these students, it is suggested that we should realize how these learners can mentally focus on classroom tasks more effectively (Anderson, Klassen, & Georgiou, 2007). As pointed out by Londono-Patino and Aguilar-Gutierrez (2012), these learners need special conditions to learn a new skill. For instance, they argue that entertaining activities activate their attention and memory in addition to optimizing the development of their bodies and senses. Games are also considered to be effective because they raise participation in class activities, minimize the anxiety related to classroom situations and encourage cooperation as well as peer communication.

Specifically, if we want to teach some basic foreign language to learners with special education needs, there are some ways to create an ideal classroom atmosphere. Whether they are at special education schools only accepting these learners or inclusive education schools where mainstream and learners with special education needs are placed in the same classroom, these learners should be approached differently to teach them some foreign/second language. For instance, Roseberry-McKibbin (2002) argues that activities like drawing, painting, grouping; labeling, pointing, selecting, and matching should be incorporated into the language classroom. In a similar way, Eibeed (2000, cited by Al Yaari, Al Hammadi, & Alyami, 2013) underline the importance of touching textiles and other materials as a useful way of presenting language components to cognitively impaired learners.



On the other hand, audio-visual aids are believed to be effective means of introducing a foreign language skill in an entertaining way (Al Yaari et al., 2013). Believing in the merits of special multisensory techniques aiming to teach students through all sensory channels (i.e., visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile), Schneider (1996) underlines that speech sounds can be taught through repetitive drills addressing to different senses. Furthermore, Schneider and Crombie (2003, p. 17) summarized their motto of multi-sensory techniques with the words 'hear it, see it, say it, write it, act it out', through which they believe learning can be activated. Moreover, Holešinská (2006) exemplifies multi-sensory techniques by referring to the tactile drawings requiring learners both to see the symbols and to feel their shapes as a way to help learners make the connection between the symbol and its sound. For some researchers (Savic, 2007; Schneider & Crombie, 2003), teachers can help children with special education needs by giving them the chance to practice the newly learned language by repeating it as many times as needed; in addition, not interrupting these learners, being patient, praising their effort, encouraging them and building their confidence are important points to take into account when teaching these learners. On the other hand, Rodriguez (2001) highlights the need to activate these learners' prior knowledge and avoid presenting unfamiliar concepts in the language classroom. Roseberry-McKibbin (2002) also thinks that providing a high amount of various experiences, centering teaching on surrounding events and enabling learners to do things themselves are among strategies applicable for learners with special education needs.

As argued by some researchers (Rondal, 2000; Sands, Kolzeski, & French, 2000), learning a language has to be functionally-oriented and functional daily life skills as well as concrete and real-life teaching materials should be used in the language classroom. Besides, for an effective language classroom atmosphere, the need for collaboration of teaching professionals and families, the application of assistive technology, and the adaptation of curriculum are emphasized (Bryant & Seay, 1998). Furthermore, Schneider and Crombie (2003) argue that the presentation of foreign language instruction should be carried out at a slower pace and with regular breaks as their attention span is not as long as the mainstream students.

If necessary conditions as discussed above can be created, many researchers (Kay-Raining Bird, Cleave, Trudeau, Thordardottir, Sutton, & Thorpe, 2005; Baker, 1995; Woll & Grove, 1996; Feltmate & Kay-Raining Bird, 2008; Londono-Patino & Aguilar-Gutierrez, 2012; Nicoladis & Genesee, 1997) hold the idea that it is possible for learners with cognitive impairment to learn a foreign/second language in addition to their mother tongue and enjoy many benefits arising from the familiarity with another language and culture. Still, despite the fact that English is now a recognized international language used for international communication by a great number of people who do not share a native language (Mauranen, 2003; McKay, 2002; Jenkins, 2005), research studies have focused largely on the first language acquisition process of the cognitively impaired learners (Rondal, 2000) and have thus neglected the issue of foreign language learning and teaching for these learners (Krapez, 2012). Unfortunately, as claimed by Londono-Patino and Aguilar-Gutierrez (2012), the shortage of information, research studies and special educators in the field of ELT for these learners make them even more disadvantaged in learning a foreign language. What is worse is that teachers do not feel sufficiently trained to discover the potentials of these learners and manage classes effectively (Sawka, McCurdy, & Manella, 2002).

In order to contribute to the neglecting field of ELT for cognitively impaired learners, this study aims to introduce and evaluate Talking Tactile Technology (T3) as a way of presenting beginner level functional English for learners with mild cognitive impairment in Turkey. Ten audio-haptic T3 overlays aiming to teach these learners basic functional English concepts like numbers and clothes were created by the researcher for piloting purposes and tested by candidate and practicing English teachers as well as special education teachers who took part in the study. These participants were provided with training about how T3 works by using the created overlays. Now that the primary aim of this research study was to make a special case for applying T3 in teaching English to learners with mild cognitive impairment in Turkey and to investigate its usefulness in ELT from the perspective of the participants, the following research question was formulated: "How useful is T3 in teaching beginner level English to learners with mild cognitive impairment?" Before giving information about

the methodology of the study and analyzing the evaluative opinions of these participants to give an answer to this research question; a short introduction to T3 and its benefits are presented, and ten audio-haptic T3 overlays tried and tested by the participants are illustrated.

### **Introduction to T3**

As can be seen in Figure 1, T3 hardware is a lap-top sized, portable, touch sensitive device that is connected to a standard computer, activated by touch when a tactile overlay is placed on the pressure sensitive regions. It is a multi-media, audio-haptic system that enables access to complex graphic material. The technology comprises a pressure sensitive talking tactile tablet on which a specially constructed overlay is placed. When the overlay is touched, the pressure pad is activated and the information for that point is spoken. By applying touch to certain regions of the tactile overlay the audio file comes into operation and can provide up to 10 layers of information. Wherever the diagram is touched, the computer speaks recorded information for that point.



*Figure 1: T3*

T3 has a number of benefits for various disadvantaged groups in the society. Although originally developed for visually impaired users, it would be fair to claim that T3 is suited to cognitively impaired learners as well because it gives equal access to graphic information embedded in lesson content material. It uses a combination of touch, sound and learns systems called audio-haptic pedagogy through the creation of tactile overlays carrying layers of information that can be vocal, musical or other audio sounds. Moreover, thanks to T3, learners can learn at their own pace once they familiarize themselves with how the technology works, and thus the learning process can be reinforced without further teacher input. Besides, the visual presentation of edited diagrammatic material in T3 is reproduced with high contrast, exaggerated color and high relief tactile format with integrated and merged sound files, which adds to the quality of foreign language instruction for learners with cognitive impairment.

It is assumed that the standard visual representations in ELT materials are largely inaccessible to cognitively impaired learners. Thus, the use of T3 is believed to be a solution in that images are simplified and made accessible by combining a tactile diagram with integrated and merged sound-files. Another benefit of T3 for these learners is that the ICT approach in T3 encourages cognitively impaired learners to develop ICT skills. These learners tend to have problems in accessing and communicating information and they are not always able to take advantage of developments in

technology. Therefore, T3 can be a solution as an assistive technology minimizing the negative influence of their disability.

In addition, T3 encourages learners to learn independently, which allows the teacher to spend more time on developing the lesson where graphic and visual material dominated rather than by being encumbered by the fundamentals. It is common knowledge that in traditional English language teaching, the teacher determines the pace of teaching, and sometimes a learner might fall behind and his/her progress slows down. However, the use of T3 assumes continuous learning for each talking tactile used with the learner working at a self-determined pace. In other words, it reduces the need for the teacher to repeat information, which the learner can gather independently from the talking tactile overlays. Thus, the learners' confidence is built up and they perceive participation in education as something more enjoyable. Thanks to its independent learning feature, T3 can also increase cognitively impaired people's self-esteem, employment skills and their capacity to adapt to the competitive business world dominated by the English language. Finally, it is known that there are insufficient English teachers skilled in the foreign language requirements of learners with cognitive impairment, and T3 is expected to help these teachers to cope with these requirements.

Before the application of this technology in teaching basic English to learners with mild cognitive impairment, T3 had also been successfully implemented to teach English to visually impaired learners with the project funded by the Prime Minister's Initiative, UK in 2009 (Coşkun, 2013). Through projects coordinated by the Royal National College for the Blind (Hereford, UK), T3 was also used to teach other subjects to visually impaired learners. RNC received funds from the EU to produce talking tactile overlays through the AHVIIT-ACCESS (Audio Haptics for Visually Impaired Information technology) project. The following talking tactile overlays aiming to teach different subjects to visually impaired learners in partnering countries were developed at the end of the project: Sports massage (Netherlands), basic computer awareness and operation (Germany), food hygiene and basic cookery skills (UK).

Another project coordinated by RNC was TrAHVIIT (Transfer of audio-haptics for visually impaired information technology) which aims to transfer the AHVIIT project to new countries in the European Union and to new subject areas. As the major outcome of this project which also paved the way for the current study, T3 overlays dealing with introduction to economic theories (UK), introduction to music theory (Bulgaria), access to public spaces (Romania), tourism in Malta (Malta) and planets and their satellites (Austria) were produced considering the needs of the sensory impaired people while overlays to teach beginner level functional English (Turkey) were developed for learners with mild cognitive impairment. At the end of all these projects, it was realized that T3 is applicable to teaching various subject matters to various disadvantaged groups with special learning needs.

### **Audio-Haptic Overlays**

To be able to investigate how useful T3 is for teaching English to learners with mild cognitive impairment, ten T3-based audio-haptic lesson content materials referred to as overlays in this study were produced. A number of different participants attended the training sessions to be familiar with the T3 and the overlays. During these sessions, they piloted the overlays.

By developing new resources for T3, this study also aims to support the curriculum for special education schools and for other schools applying the inclusive model in which all the students regardless of their disabilities are placed into the same classroom.

Within the scope of this study, it was thought that learners with mild cognitive impairment should start learning English with beginner level functional English made up of useful lexical items and functions. It was also kept in mind that overlays for these learners should be simple, memorable, and unambiguous with scope for much repetition of key images and ideas. Thus, ten overlays some of which were illustrated below were created on the basis of the following ten topics covered by any beginner level English course book written for EFL learners: electrical household appliances, transportation vehicles, clothes, accessories, numbers, telling the time, fruits, household appliances, kitchen utensils and animals.

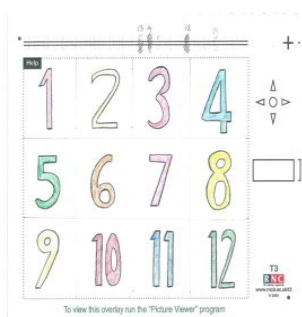


Figure 2: Numbers

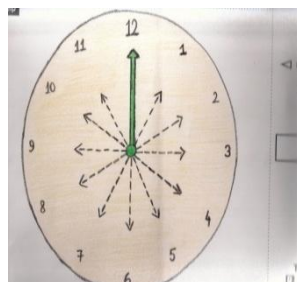


Figure 3: Telling the time

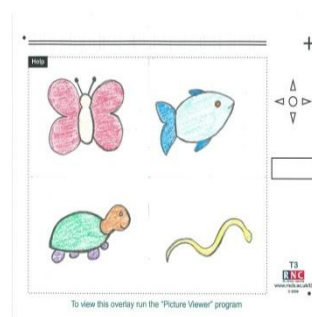


Figure 4: Animals

For example, the overlay illustrated in Figure 2 aims to teach numbers in English while the overlay in Figure 3 shows the numbers as well as a clock. In the overlay with a clock learners hear how to tell the time in English when they press on the pictures over the talking tactile overlay first and then Turkish equivalent of those words for their next press. They are asked to repeat the time expression in English when they press the picture for the third time. The same procedure holds true for all the overlays created for the study. The overlay in Figure 4 shows animals. Learners hear the words in English when they press the pictures over the talking tactile overlay first and then Turkish equivalent of those words for their next press. They are asked to repeat the word in English when they press the picture for the third time.

### Method of Research

The data for the evaluation of the usefulness of T3 in teaching English to non-native learners of English with mild cognitive impairment was collected from a total of 53 participants selected on the basis of convenience sampling. All the participants attended the training sessions introducing T3 and its use in ELT in the city where the study was conducted. 28 candidate English teachers, 10 practicing English teachers and 15 special education teachers took part in the training to test the technology and the T3 overlays dealing with some beginner level functional EFL content (e.g., clothes, time, household appliances and animals). Each trainee group was first given the training booklet including the pictures of the overlays in addition to an introduction to T3 and was later provided with an approximate 50-minute training session organized separately for each group by the researcher. Immediately after the training sessions, participants, who had hands-on experience about how T3 could be integrated into teaching English, were asked to reflect on their perceptions about the usefulness of T3 in teaching English to learners with mild cognitive impairment. They were asked to respond to open-ended and six-point Likert-type (i.e., excellent, very good, good, fair, poor, very poor) questions. Each Likert-type question was followed by a "comments" part so that the participants could give more detailed answers to these questions. The qualitative data was analyzed by applying content analysis to reveal common trends in the participants' responses. All individual responses were analyzed and similar responses were grouped as central comments formulated by the researcher as representative comments embodying other similar comments. On the other hand, the analysis of the quantitative data was done through SPSS.

### Results

As a result of the analysis of the data collected from practicing and candidate English teachers as well as special education teachers, it was realized that the positive comments about T3 were found to overwhelm the negative ones. While the majority of the participants made positive comments, a few of them voiced some of their concerns about the use of T3 for learners with mild cognitive impairment.

As for the reason why they were interested in using the overlays, nearly all the participants thought that the overlays could somehow be integrated into their classes in order to teach basic English to the

cognitively impaired learners. When asked to share their reflections about the usefulness of T3 in teaching English to the target group, most of the participants (n=37) made positive comments while some participants (n=16) voiced their concerns. Considering the list of benefits formulated by the researcher in line with the comments made by the participants, it would be fair to conclude that most of the participants believe in the usefulness of T3 in ELT for the target population:

- T3 provides audio-visual support for them (n=12).
- It helps them to improve their eye-hand coordination (n=9).
- It gives them the chance to learn at their own pace and actively engages them (n=7).
- T3 is good for their self-study (n=7).
- T3 is fun and can motivate them (n=5).
- A creative teacher can produce limitless number of overlays his/her student needs (n=5).
- T3 can be adapted to teach other subjects (n=3).
- Students without any impairment can also benefit from T3 (n=3).

Despite these positive comments, the following central issues were raised by some participants as problems related to the use of T3 to teach English to learners with cognitive impairment:

- They cannot use T3 without the assistance of an adult (n=8).
- Those with severe cognitive impairment cannot use T3 (n=6).
- T3 is good for practicing, but not for teaching (n=6).
- One can only teach concrete nouns with T3 (n=5).
- T3 is better suited to learners with visual impairment (n=5).
- T3 is not practical as state schools in Turkey might not afford it (n=2).

As far as the participants' perceptions about the clarity of the diagrams are concerned, it would be fair to suggest that there was a high level of satisfaction with how the graphical symbols are related to the content with which it was associated. To illustrate, out of 53 participants, 40 marked either "good" or "very good" while 12 thought that the diagrams were excellent in terms of their clarity. In terms of the question seeking an answer to whether it was easy for the participants to distinguish the lines, infill and points, it can be stated that nearly all the participants evaluated the diagrams positively by marking "excellent, very good or good". Similarly, the clarity of the sound was considered to be good by a vast majority of the participants while only 5 of them evaluated this aspect negatively by marking either "fair, poor or very poor".

Regarding the clarity of the diagrams and the voice recorded for the overlays, a few participants made the following comments in the space provided under the relevant question:

- "The diagrams could be bigger"
- "Some diagrams do not look realistic"
- "A native speaker English teacher should have done the recording"
- "The pitch of the voice should be higher"

When it comes to the relevance of the overlays to the subject matter, while the majority of the participants (n=46) expressed that they were pleased (excellent, very good, good) with the level of relevance of the overlays to the topics, only a few of them (n=7) evaluated the relevance aspect of the overlays as poor or very poor. In addition, regarding the way in which the information was divided into layers on these overlays, most of the participants (n=45) agreed that it was either good or very good. Only 4 of them marked "excellent" for this aspect and the same number of participants held the idea that the division of the layers was poor.

With regards to the usefulness of the Training Booklet, many of the participants (N=44) indicated that the booklet was either very good or good whereas the remaining participants expressed their concerns about the usefulness of the booklet by marking either "fair" or "poor". Also, some of the participants made comments focusing on the simplicity and practicality of the content of the booklet. When asked if the participants plan to use T3 in their future work, almost all of them marked "yes". Likewise, about the overlays on the specific topics, most of the participants (n=41) expressed their willingness to use them. Some of them even favored the idea of opening in their schools a separate T3 unit which students could get access to in their free-time and use the overlays whenever they want.

Regarding the content of the overlays, it can be stated that most of the participants (n=39) had positive attitudes towards their contents as they mainly marked “excellent, very good or good” while only some of them (n=14) evaluated the quality of the content of the overlays negatively by marking “fair, poor or very poor”. Similar to their views about the content of the overlays, they held positive attitudes towards the didactic methodology of delivering information through the overlays created for the current study. To exemplify, except for three participants marking “poor” for the methodology of the delivering, all the others expressed their positive opinions about the issue by marking “excellent, very good or good”. Among few of the comments made by the participants about the content and the methodology of the delivery, the one about the need for more layers in the overlays was also emphasized by 6 participants.

### **Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to introduce T3 as a way of teaching some beginner level English to learners with mild cognitive impairment and evaluate its usefulness by collecting data from candidate and practicing English teachers as well as special education teachers. The data indicates that the overlays that were developed during the study had a relevant impact on the target group. In addition, T3 was believed by the majority of participants to have potential usefulness in teaching and learning the English language although some technical problems and concerns were revealed by some participants as problems to be dealt with for a more effective application of T3.

From the perspective of practicing and prospective teachers, among strong points of the technology are that it has audio-visual support, improves eye-hand coordination, enables learning at the learners' pace, activates learners' engagement, encourages self-study, has a fun nature, can be adapted easily by the teacher to other subjects and for mainstream students as well. On the other hand, participants voiced their concerns associated with the usefulness of T3 to teach beginner level English to learners with mild cognitive impairment. Some participants drew attention to the fact that learners with serious cognitive impairment cannot use T3 and T3 is more suited to learners with visual impairment. Furthermore, some of them believed that T3 is only good for practicing purposes rather than teaching or learning a new skill, and some argued that only some concrete nouns could be presented through T3. Finally, some participants claimed that T3 is not practical as state schools in Turkey might not afford it.

T3 overlays for this study were designed in line with the pedagogy described in the “Background to the Study” part of the paper. For instance, T3 is known to be an assistive technology to facilitate learning for cognitively impaired learners and such technologies are praised by researchers such as Bryant and Seay (1998). Also, T3 overlays developed for the current study presented the vocabulary items and functional language components such as telling the time in an entertaining way. According to Londono-Patino and Aguilar-Gutierrez (2012), entertaining activities are believed to increase participation in class activities and minimize cognitively impaired learners' classroom anxiety. As the use of T3 requires touching, it would be fair to claim that the technology also contributes to their language learning process by facilitating the learning process (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2002).

T3 overlays in this study were also rich in their audio-visual illustrations. It is argued that audio-visual aids are indispensable in teaching English to cognitively impaired learners (Al Yaari et al., 2013). Besides, the overlays centering on functional topics ranging from fruits to clothes depend upon the idea that these learners can learn the language more easily when they are exposed to surrounding events (Roseberry-McKibbin, 2002) and objects in their surroundings. Similarly, as suggested by some researchers (Rodriguez, 2001; Rondal, 2000; Sands et al., 2000), these learners should not be taught by using unfamiliar concepts; instead, the language they need to learn should be functionally oriented and directly related to their daily life. Concepts such as numbers and animals presented in the overlays illustrated in this study were considered to be already existent in the learners' prior knowledge and are directly related to their daily life. In addition, now that Savic (2007) argues that these learners should be given plenty of time to practice language they learn by repeating it as many times as they need, the repetitive nature of T3 can be considered to be a useful way of enabling learners to practice the language at their own pace.



As suggested by many researchers (Baker, 1995; Kay-Raining Bird, et al., 2005; Felmate & Kay-Raining Bird, 2008; Woll & Grove, 1996; Nicoladis & Genesee, 1997; Londono-Patino & Aguilar-Gutierrez, 2012), cognitively impaired learners can learn a second/foreign language provided that necessary conditions as explained above can be created. However, the issue of foreign language learning and teaching for these learners are neglected (Krapez, 2012). Thus, there is an urgent need for more research studies focusing on different ways of teaching foreign languages to cognitively impaired learners in different contexts to bridge this wide gap in this neglected field of ELT. It is hoped that studies like the current one will trigger more research studies and projects focusing on T3 and many other ways to create the ideal foreign language learning and teaching atmosphere for cognitively impaired learners.

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## AN INVESTIGATION INTO IRANIAN STUDENTS' TRANSLATION STRATEGIES BASED ON GERLOFF'S MODEL OF THINK -ALLOUD

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### Abstract

The present study tended to investigate different strategies applied by Iranian B.A students of translation. The researchers used Gerloff's (1986) model of TAP in order to review the procedures applied by such students during the process of translating a text from English into Persian with special reference to literacy genre. To begin with, using the model of TAP in question, each and every recorded action done by the translators were categorized under their possible classifications. Then, applying the Chi-Square procedure, the differences between the frequencies of such students were investigated. The results indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the frequencies of the TAP strategies applied by the participants while dealing with translation of literary genre from English into Persian. The findings also revealed that 'extra-textual or language use & task monitoring (LUTM)', 'Editing (ED)', and 'text contextualization (TC)' were the most frequently used strategies among the seven main strategies introduced by Gerloff (ibid.).

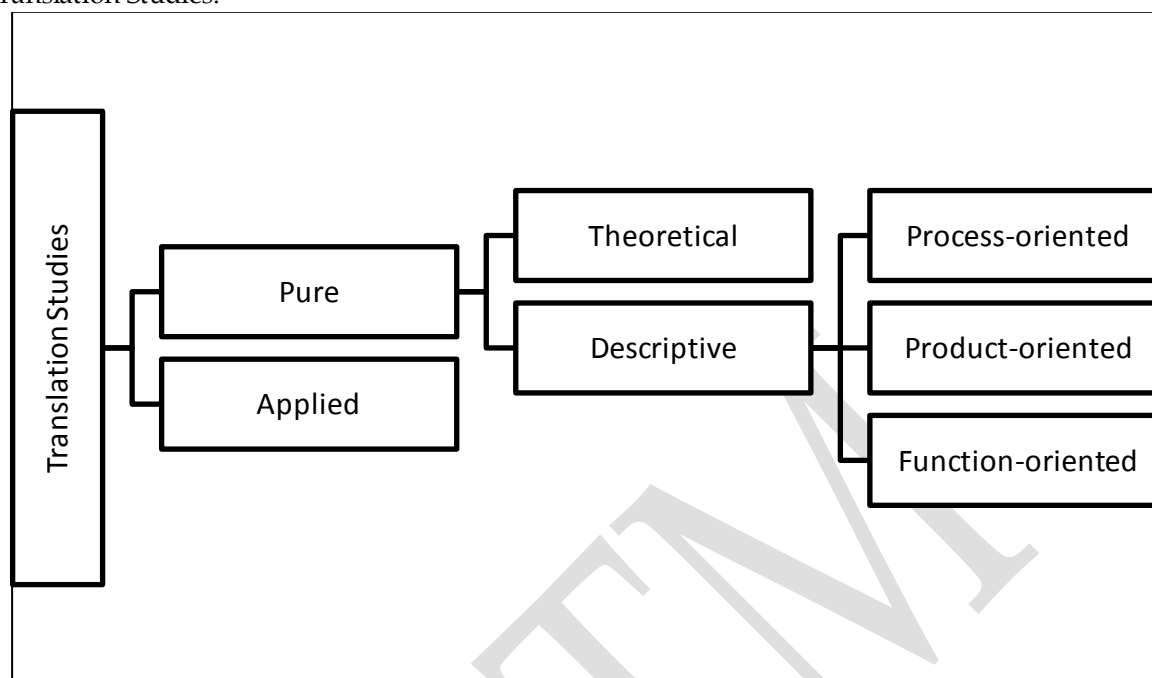
**Key Words:** Think-Aloud Protocol, Translation Strategies, Literary Genre, Gerloff (1986).

### 1. Introduction

During the history of translation, there have been a lot of theories, models and procedures introduced by several scholars in order to understand the phenomenon of translation better. Although Translation Studies has not been treated as an academic field of science (Munday, 2008) and thus has not been studied in isolation within the academic context, the history of translation shows that many attempts have been made without noticing the academic issues in this field of science. Recently, it has been a core topic of discussion to investigate into different aspects in a translation project in order to know what really takes place from the very beginning steps while translating a text. In doing so, a considerable number of scholars have already categorized different aspects of translation. One of the most tangible one, was made by Holmes (1988). In his "map" of Translation Studies (henceforth TS), he (ibid.) divided the TS into two main categories namely pure and applied TS. The pure branch further is subdivided into theoretical and descriptive TS. The present study relates to the Descriptive Translation Studies (henceforth DTS). Its different sub-divisions are given a brief introduction as follows:

1. Product-oriented DTS: examines existing translations. In most cases, a comparison is made between a translated text with its original one.
2. Process-oriented DTS: is related to the psychology of translation and seeks to find out what happens in a mind of a translator (Munday, 2008, p.11).
3. Function-oriented DTS: is the study of context rather than the text. It examines which books were translated when and where, and what influences they exerted (Munday, 2008, p.10).

Figure 1. gives a more tangible overview on what has been referred to as Descriptive Translation Studies:



*Figure 1. TAPs Are Categorized Under The Process-oriented DTS.*

During 1990s, an increasing attention was given to process-oriented DTS research, as Holmes (1988) termed it, where the mental activity of translating is studied. Empirical data were collected through “think-aloud protocols” (henceforth TAP), where translators were asked to verbalize their thinking during or immediately after the translation process (see Lörscher 1996; Fraser 1996). These studies have observed translators at various levels of expertise, both trainees and professionals. As Venuti (2004, p.339) points out, “some research emphasizes psycholinguistic procedures; some aims to improve training, especially by giving it a stronger vocational slant, approximating current trends in the profession.”

Think-aloud protocols are beset by a number of theoretical problems that must be figured into any use made of their data. According to Venuti (2004, p.339) “verbalization won’t register unconscious factors and automatic processes, and it can change a mental activity instead of simply reporting it. Similarly, subjects are sometimes instructed to provide specific kinds of information: description, for instance, without any justification.”

TAPs tend to document the practices that translators perform during the process of translation. As Séguinot (1996, p.77) believes, TAPs are “useful to test theories in the light of concrete data” (as cited in Venuti, 2004, p.339). These protocols not only include abstract mental processes, but also could discuss specific intercultural dimensions of translating and this was meant to be the main significance of the present study, i.e. to delve into the process in search for any cultural issues. In addition, a better understanding on the most and least frequent strategies could be found out while rendering a Source Text (henceforth ST) into a Target Text (henceforth TT).

The present study aimed at investigating the steps taken through the process of translation by a group of translators in order to see which strategies are the most frequent and which are the least ones through using its related methodology based on Gerloff’s (1986) model of TAP. Although the present study was related to psychological aspects of translation, the trainees and professionals were among the ones to benefit from the results of this study. It could also be of a great help to the professors and instructors dealing with TS.

The following research question was formulated in order to be dealt with during the steps taken in the present investigation:

- Is there any statistically significant difference between the frequencies of the strategies proposed by Gerloff (1986) taken by Iranian undergraduate students of Translation while translating from English to Persian?

## 2. The Literature on TAPs

TS faced a turning point in the 1990s, as the tendency towards the then-general topics of debates faced a gradual move from issues like equivalence to other ones. As Venuti (2004) points out, in the 1990s increasing attention was given to the “process-oriented” research, dealing with the mental activity of translating (p.339). In order to deal with this sub-branch of TS, “think-aloud protocols” were used to see what was going on in the mind of a translator. In this regard, the translators were asked to verbalize their thinking and a decision-making procedure during the process of translation or right after it was dealt with.

Venuti (2004) also believed that TS research in 1990s was manifested through a diverse mixture of the theories and methodologies which characterize the previous decade. In Venuti’s (ibid.) opinion, 1990s was the time for other sub-branches of TS to enter the realm of research. In fact he pointed out that “theoretical approaches to translation multiply, and research, which for much of the century has been shaped by traditional academic specializations, then fragmented into subspecialties within the growing discipline of translation studies” (p.333). In this regard, TS scholars and researchers were interested to see what really happens in the mind of a translator to choose or not to choose a translation procedure. This was previously discussed under the category of “process-oriented DTS”, introduced in Holmes’ (1988) map of TS, in order to refer to the stages and processes involved during the process of translation. To begin with, the author provided some existing models of TAP as follows:

### 2.1. Related Models on TAPs

First, it seemed crucial to have a look on the related models of TAP introduced previously. Although these models were few in number, each tended to delve into specific aspects of translation in general, and translating in partial.

#### 2.1.1. Lörscher’s (1996) Model

A brief search into literature provides the researchers with few systematic models of TAPs, one of which was introduced by Lörscher (1996), who defines translation strategies as procedures that the subjects employ in order to solve translation problems. He (ibid. pp.27-8) adds:

Accordingly, translation strategies have their starting-point in the realization of a problem by a subject, and their termination in a (possibly preliminary) solution to the problem or in the subject’s realization of the insolubility of the problem at the given point in time. Between the realization of a translation problem and the realization of its solution or insolubility, further verbal and /or mental activities can occur which can be interpreted as being strategy steps or elements of translation strategies.

Lörscher’s (1996) model is as follows:

*Table 1. Lörscher’s (1996) Model of TAP*

Strategy	Definition
RR	Realizing a translational problem
VP	Verbalizing a translational problem
SP	Search for a (possible preliminary) solution to a translational problem
SP	Solution to a translational problem
SP a. b. c...	Parts of a solution to a translational problem
SP Ø	A solution to a translational problem is still to be found (Ø)
SP = Ø	Negative (Ø) solution to a translational problem
PSL	Problem in the reception of the SL text

The first step involves the act of translator realizing a problem while dealing with the process of translation. Then, the translator begins to saying the discovered translational problem out-loud. In the next stage, the translator begins to look for the most primer solution to the problem in question in order to find a suitable answer to that question. Although this solution may not be the final one, it might provide the translator with some basic components to understand the final answer to the problem faced. As Lörcher's (1996) points out, this stage will then lead to one of the five possible endings listed as follows:

- a. The translator finds the final solution to the translational problem;
- b. The translator will partly find the final solution to the translational problem;
- c. The translator has not yet found the final solution to the translational problem;
- d. The translator could not find the solution to the translational problem; and
- e. The translator faces a problem in the reception of the SL text.

In addition to these original elements of translation strategies, Lörcher (1996, p.28) proposes other potential elements which consist of:

*Table 2. Other Potential Elements Introduced by Lörcher (1996)*

Strategy	Definition
MSL/MTL	Monitoring (verbatim repetition) of SL- & TL- text segments
REPHR SL/TL	Rephrasing (paraphrasing) of SL- & TL- text segments and other potential elements of checking solutions and mental organization of SL- TL- text segments

### 2.1.2. Kring's (1986) Model

Another systematic model concerning TAPs was introduced by Krings (1986). This model offers eleven features in order to achieve a model of translation strategies, which is the main topic of discussion in TAPs. These features are as follows:

*Table 3. Kring's (1986) Features existing in a Model of Translation Strategies*

Strategy	Strategy and Sequence
1	The subjects' explicit statement of problems. On this very first stage, the subject states the faced translational problem explicitly.
2	The use of reference books (i.e. dictionaries). On this stage, the translator begins to look up the components of the translational problem in the related reference books. These may include dictionaries, encyclopedias, grammars, online data-bases or through the use of IT applications.
3	The underlining of source-language text passages. On this stage, a possible understanding of the translational problem in the SL might be discovered by the translator.
4	The semantic analysis of source-language text items. On this stage, the translator begins to analyze the SL text items semantically.
5	Hesitation phenomena in the search for potential equivalents. On this stage, the translator hesitates in choosing the final suitable equivalent for the SL text items.
6	Competing potential equivalents. On this stage, the translator begins to weigh the probable potential equivalents available in the TL.
7	The monitoring of potential equivalents. On this stage, the translator monitors the potential equivalents in the TL to choose the best ones.
8	Specific translation principles. On this stage, the translator chooses the specific principles needed to decide which equivalent to be chosen and why.
9	The modification of written target-language texts. On this stage, the translator confirms the equivalents chosen through modifying the written TL texts.
10	The assessment of the quality of the chosen translation. On this stage, the

	translator assesses the quality of the equivalents chosen during the process of translation.
11	Paralinguistic or non-linguistic features (i.e. groaning and sighing). This stage involves the act of translator taking into consideration the paralinguistic or non-linguistics actions taken place during the process of translation, generally known as the extra-linguistic components of translation.

What all these models seem to have in common is their systematicity in the steps taken during the process of data analysis while being applied. In fact, they mostly start with the ST comprehension and finally lead to TT production.

## 2.2. Empirical Work Based on TAPs

Viewing translation mainly as a problem-solving process, some TS scholars have put forward the suggestion that it should be possible to study it by means of TAPs, and have set up experiments to test their hypotheses. Most early TAP studies were conducted with foreign language learners or translator trainees. As Bernardini (2002, p.244) pointed out, this was mainly due to "the availability of subjects and to the pedagogic concerns of the experimenters". However, the hypothesis was also put forward that the verbalizations produced by professionals would be less informative than those produced by non-professionals, due to their more Think-aloud protocols in translation research "automatized" processing styles. In her pilot study named "Using Think-Aloud Protocols to investigate the translation process: methodological aspects", Bernardini (ibid) tended to survey the breakthroughs as well as the limits of the growing body of literature dealing with TAPs in TS, and pointed at the necessity to take issues of experimental, theoretical and environmental validity more seriously. This study also attempted to address some of these issues, at the levels of experimental design/administration, data analysis and report. It was claimed that the risks involved in the adoption of a lax experimental methodology in TAP studies had been underestimated in the past, and that the generalized lack of concern with it can invalidate not only the results obtained in the single projects, but the validity of the approach itself.

In another study, Hubscher (2004) investigated the influence of personalities on translator behavior and discovered links between attitudes, performance and creativity in the target text. The fieldwork of her study consisted of a translation test from French into English which was administered to twenty postgraduate translation students, and in which they verbalized their thought processes and explained their choices, thereby expressing certain revealing attitudes and behaviors. The experiments were analyzed with different methods, and correlations were made between results found which gave credence to the idea that translators' personality characteristics, which were reflected in their attitude towards their work influenced, and were apparent in their performances. The students' different qualities (resourcefulness, originality, creativity...) were also displayed in varying degrees in the experiment and helped create patterns in the target texts.

In their "Think-Aloud Protocol Analysis in Translation Studies", Kussmaul and Tirkkonen (1995) reported on think-aloud protocol research in Finland and Germany. They also discussed some methodological issues including choice of subjects, TAPs in a language-learning and in a professional context, monologue and dialogue protocols, and the use of models provided by psycholinguistics. Two types of processes - successful and less successful ones - were distinguished and specified as to the subjects' comprehension and re-verbalization processes, their focus of attention, decision-making, monitoring, flexibility, creative thinking and attitude toward the task. Some tentative results of the research going on in Germany and Finland were presented, too and the results were expected to serve as hypotheses for the teaching of translation.

Lörscher's (2005) 'The Translation Process: Methods and Problems of its Investigation' is an empirical attempt towards the issue of translation processes. In this research, after the introductory remarks made about the analysis of mental translation processes and an outline of the investigation reported on, the methodology used was presented. It consisted of the methods for data elicitation, as well as

for data analysis and evaluation presenting a strategic analysis of translation processes carried out on three levels: the level of the elements of translation strategies, of the strategies themselves, and of the translation versions. The paper ended with a brief comparison of professional and non-professional translation processes.

In another study carried out by Lörscher (1996), he takes a psycholinguistic approach towards the translation processes. This article outlined a project in which translation processes were investigated empirically on the basis of a corpus of translations. After a description of the methodology used, a model for the analysis of translation processes was presented followed by a brief comparison of professional and non-professional translation processes. In the concluding section, considerations were made regarding implications of translation process analysis for translation teaching. Empirical studies of the translation process have used think-aloud protocols to provide a window into the mental activity which is not directly observable. In this regard, Séguinot's (1996) paper reported on a protocol study in a natural discourse situation involving two professional translators and discussed the relevance of the data to the debate on the use of verbalization as a methodology. The protocol provided evidence of translation strategies and pointed to the need for a dynamic model of the translation process that takes into account activation, suppression, and attending mechanisms. Mental constructs and processes in general and translation processes in particular have been the focus of much research in the past three decades. Among the techniques used in studying such cognitive processes and strategies, the use of TAPs has extensively been proposed. As Eftekhary and Aminizadeh (2012) claim, though much has been written on the use of TAPs in recognizing the mental processes translators experience, very little if any can be found to address the mechanisms and mental processes they undergo while translating a piece of literary text. The purpose of their study was to investigate the strategies senior translation students of Islamic Azad University, Bandar Abbas Branch applied while translating literary texts using TAPs. To achieve this end, 12 senior translation students of Islamic Azad University, Bandar Abbas Branch participated in the study. Participants were chosen according to the convenience sampling method. The subjects then were asked to translate four literary texts and while translating verbalize whatever goes on in their mind within a TAP framework. The "think aloud protocols" were categorized based on the frequency table and the translations were analyzed qualitatively. The data was analyzed to reveal the strategies used by the respondents. In the analysis of the strategies, just the types of strategies were of importance to the researcher though the frequency of each strategy was also collected and reported. Based on the findings, fourteen strategies were detected with Look-up was as the most frequent strategy used by the subjects in the study. Using imagery and Paraphrasing were the second and third most frequent strategies used by the subjects respectively. Switching to L1 while translation was found the lowest strategy as reported in TAPs by the subjects. Deductive reasoning strategies were the second lowest strategy reported. Such strategies as Resourcing and referencing, evaluating and monitoring, problem solving and co-text recourse stood in between.

According to Hansen (2005), in empirical process-oriented translation research with different kinds of introspection, two important questions are raised repeatedly: 1. does concurrent verbalization, like Think-aloud, have an influence on the translation process and 2. What do we actually learn from introspective methods like think-aloud and retrospection? Based on ideas from modern psychology and brain research, Hansen (ibid.) argued that think-aloud must have an impact on the translation process. Furthermore, it was suggested that it was not only spontaneous, unmodified thoughts about the actual task that were verbalized, but also memories, reflections, justifications, explanations, emotions and experiences.

TAPs have often been used to study the cognitive aspect of translation. On a paper, Künzli (2009) showed the usefulness of TAPs for investigating the linguistic aspect of translation. Examples are drawn from material collected in forty think-aloud sessions over several years. The participants were professional translators or trainee translators. The language pairs involved are French-German and French-Swedish. The translational linguistic problems discussed fell into the following categories: a) grammatical (the interpretation of French participial clauses), b) textual (the use of connectors), c) functional (different realizations of one and the same linguistic function in French on the one hand,



and in German and Swedish on the other), and d) sociolinguistic (the rendering of the formal vous into Swedish by the more formal ni or the less formal du).

### 3. The Study

#### 3.1. Participants

Six Iranian undergraduate students formed the participants of this study. As in analyzing the data, every single word and gesture was important and all had to be recorded and taken into account. This procedure was very time consuming so the number of participants was limited to the aforementioned sum. These students were chosen from senior students in the last semester of B.A program studying Translation at Islamic Azad University, Shiraz Branch. The reason of choosing senior students was that they were at the last semester of their educational program and it was assumed that they were completely familiar with the strategies in translation and they had been exposed enough to different strategies in their technical courses during their education. The participants were selected through simple random sampling, out of a class consisting some 40 students. In order to avoid any interfering issues during the process of data collection e.g., the interviewer's confirmations, approvals or disapprovals, the data were drawn out from the dialogues between pairs of three students rather than monologues.

#### 3.2. Materials

The selected material was in literary genre. Three paragraphs selected from one page of a short story by Richard Connell with the title of *The Most Dangerous Game* were prepared for the participants according to its syntactic and semantic complexity to fit their knowledge. The participants were supposed to translate the text into Persian in about twenty minutes.

### 4. The Model

The text was given to the groups of students in order to be translated into Persian. The translators were then asked to verbalize what they were thinking about. As a simple word could possibly have an impact on the results of the study, all the conversations were tape-recorded and then carefully analyzed.

To begin with, each and every step was given its related issue based on Gerloff's (1986) model of TAP. This model is based on ST comprehension and TT production strategies which is detailed as the following table:

*Table 4. Gerloff's (1986) Model of TAP*

Strategy Type	Characterization
Problem Identification (PI)	A subject identifies a word as unknown or current difficulty as being due to a mistranslated word from the previous paragraph. This also includes linguistic analysis of syntactic and lexical structures.
Storage and Retrieval (SR)	A subject searches memory for SL or TL equivalents, identifies a word as remembered or never seen before, or waits for word to "emerge into consciousness." This also includes dictionary use.
General Search and Selection (GSS)	A subject repeats pronunciation of linguistic units in SL or TL, gives synonyms, alternative meanings or tentative meanings, uses fillers or skips them. He compares the two languages as language systems.
Inferencing and Reasoning Strategies (IRS)	A subject uses general world knowledge or personal experience to question, hypothesize or declare a meaning.

	He also refers to author intent to question, hypothesize or state a meaning. He explains the text, having constructed an interpretation from use of other contexts. He uses text structure.
Text Contextualization (TC)	A subject restates prior information obtained from the text. He uses sentence, paragraph or larger contexts.
Editing (ED)	Immediate correction or alteration/selection of meaning choices before writing. Congruity assessment A subject checks to see if the translation makes sense; maybe before writing the product or after. He checks punctuation marks. Product quality assessment A subject makes overt reference to the quality of his own translation and makes changes, additions, deletions, etc.
Extra-textual or Language Use & Task Monitoring (LUTM)	A subject makes discovery comments, offers personal opinion on information in the text or comments on self as a learner, Task Monitoring laughs sighs, groans, etc. or refers to experimenter directly.

#### 4. Results

After gathering the required data, they were categorized and placed within Gerloff's (1986) model of TAP. As discussed before, this model is based on the participants' verbalizations of what they are thinking about and what they do. Table 5. provides some primary information on the data gathered. In this table, the students were divided into two pairs. This was justified before as each and every gesture, movement, saying, etc., of the participants mattered and might have a possible impact on the output of the research. The recorded data were then analyzed carefully and the strategies applied, along with their frequencies of usage were extracted and then presented in Table 5.

*Table 5. Some Primary Information on the Data Collected*

	1 <sup>st</sup> Pair				2 <sup>nd</sup> Pair				Total
	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Total	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Total	
Problem Identification (PI)	9	5	4	18	8	7	6	21	39
Storage and Retrieval (SR)	5	8	8	21	7	8	4	19	40
General Search and Selection (GSS)	6	4	8	18	5	9	7	21	39
Inferencing and Reasoning Strategies (IRS)	12	8	3	23	7	11	0	19	42
Text Contextualization (TC)	12	10	7	29	8	14	9	31	60
Editing (ED)	17	9	11	37	14	13	9	36	73
Extra-textual or	15	11	13	39	10	19	12	41	80

Language Use & Task Monitoring (LUTM)									
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What really mattered here was the total number of the two pairs of students participated in the study. In other words, these students were of the same educational levels. The only reason for making this type of division was to have more control over the data observed during the process of research. The recorded data were then analyzed and the frequencies of the strategies applied by the participants were put into consideration. This was shown in Table 5. Then, concerning the statistical differences between the frequencies of the strategies used by such translators, the Chi-Square procedure was used. The related statistical data concerning the frequencies of the strategies pointed out by Gerloff (1986) are presented in Table 6.:

Table 6. Statistical Information on the Frequencies of the Strategies Pointed Out by Gerloff (1986)

Type of the Strategy	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
PI	39	53.3	-14.3
SR	40	53.3	-13.3
GSS	39	53.3	-14.3
IRS	42	53.3	-11.3
TC	60	53.3	6.7
ED	73	53.3	19.7
LUTM	80	53.3	26.7
Total	373		

Concerning the results of Table 6., the total number of each strategy occurrence formed the observed frequencies. While the expected one would be the frequencies in case there were no statically significant differences among the frequencies of the strategies. To see whether these differences were of any statistically significance, the Chi-Square procedure was used. The result of this test is shown in Table 7:

Table 7. The Results of the Chi-Square Test on the Significance of the Differences Between the frequencies of the Strategies Used by the Translators

	Strategies
Chi-Square	34.895 <sup>a</sup>
df	6
Asymp. Sig.	.000

Concerning the level of significance observed (Asymp. Sig. < .0005), the results of the Chi-Square test revealed that there were statistically significant differences among the frequencies of the TAP strategies pointed out by Gerloff (1986).

## 5. Discussion

The results of the Chi-Square test showed statistically significant differences between the frequencies of the seven TAP strategies presented in Gerloff's (1986) framework. Thus the research hypothesis concerning the differences among the frequencies of the strategies applied by the participants was supported and it could be stated that Iranian B.A students of translation use the TAP translation strategies with a statistically significant level of difference based on Gerloff's (ibid.) model. Figure 2. illustrates the differences between the frequencies of the strategies applied:

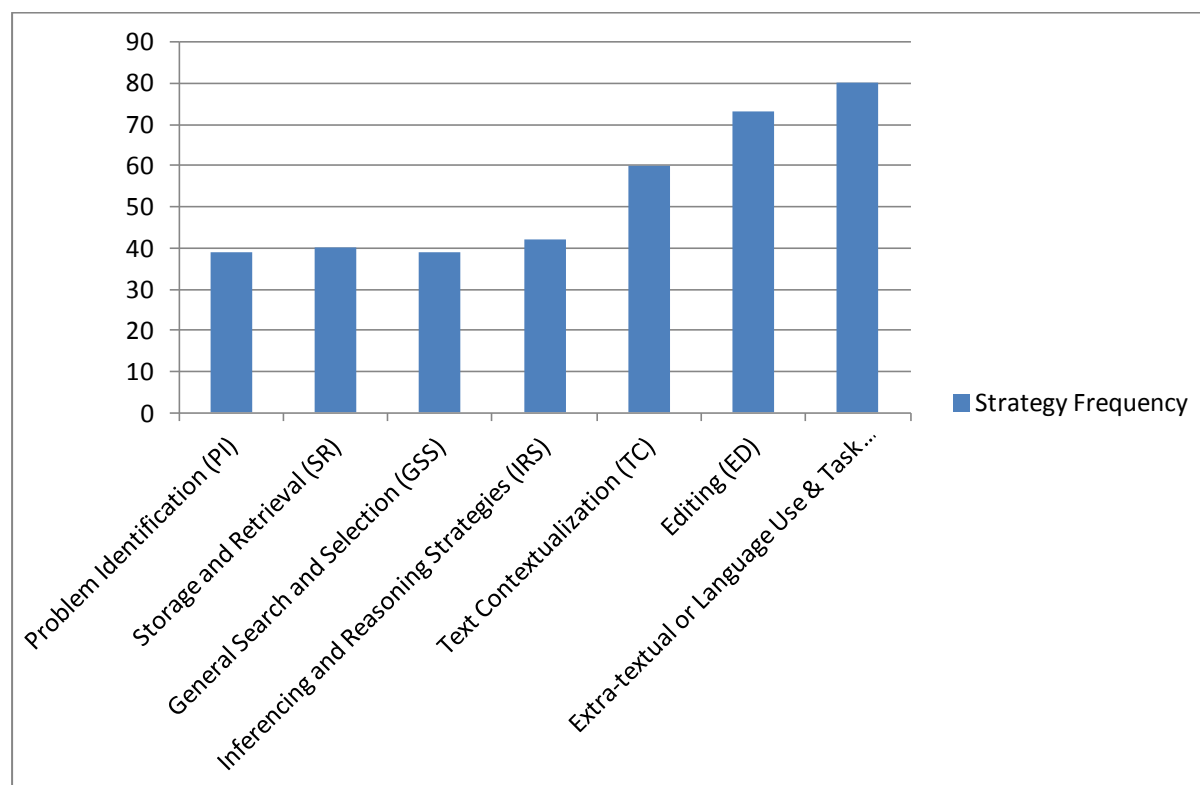


Figure 2. The Frequencies of the Strategies Applied by Iranian B.A Students of Translation Based on Gerloff's (1986) Model of TAP

It is important to point out that the participants sometimes tended to employ a variety of strategy types while handling the same source text or target text segment. Specifically, within the context of solving one translation problem, the participants tended to employ more than one strategy, often with a cluster of strategies. When a translation problem is being identified, the participants employ strategies of source text processing for comprehension such as re-reading, repeating pronunciation of a problematic ST segment, giving alternatives or tentative meanings for it in either the source or the target text. Thus, they inferred a tentative selection of meaning choices and did immediate self-corrections. Then and almost simultaneously, they would check the proposed target text segment (i.e., product) by constructing explanatory context either on the basis of personal experience, world knowledge or sentence context. They also tended to go back to a source text segment in the preceding sentence or phrase to ascertain the appropriateness of their proposed target text segment. Yet, they would quite often leave the proposed TT segment unchecked in order to move forward to handle a new source text segment, thinking it will provide more insights into what they had already proposed. In line, this would be interesting to mention that the course of the translation process is actually spiral, comprising a tripartite hierarchical structure using three strategies: source text comprehension strategy leading to a prospective target text segment that is checked and re-checked through the employment of a target text monitoring strategy based on inference and reasoning. Lörcher (1986, p.287) refers to this non-linear, discontinuous translation process course as:

The translational process of problem solving which manifests itself largely as a retrospective-prospective process can thus be compared to a chain of spirals. Although it generally proceeds in a prospective way, what proceeds is not of a purely linear kind. Rather it can be seen as a chain of loops with both retrospective and prospective elements.

Concerning the frequencies of the strategies applied by the participants while dealing with the research program, three of the strategies, namely 'extra-textual or Language Use & task monitoring (LUTM)', 'Editing (ED)', and 'text contextualization (TC)' were the most frequently used strategies among the seven main strategies introduced. In fact, these segments held the frequencies of 80, 73 and

60 respectively. Hence, it could be concluded that the last stages of a translation process are more and more in favor of Iranian B.A students of translation while translating literary texts from English into Persian.

The results obtained were in line with those obtained from Atari's (2005) "Saudi Students' Translation Strategies in an Undergraduate Translator Training Program", having a translation training course on the several aspects of the translation process carried out by the participants.

In the early studies by Königs (1987), Krings (1986a and 1986b) and Lörscher (1986), who used foreign language students as their participants, general comprehension, re-verbalization and monitoring strategies were recognized. Inferencing as a type of comprehension strategy was used when reference books turned out to be of no help.

It appeared predominantly when the source text was in the foreign language. Spontaneous and fixed inter-lingual associations as a type of retrieval, i.e., re-verbalization strategy, appeared when no problems occurred. Königs (1986a, p. 268) found that these associations often resulted from learner-induced one-to-one correspondences and could lead to erroneous translations as they did not allow for the context to be sufficiently taken into account. If inter-lingual associations could not be recalled, subjects used semantically related items such as both target and source language rephrases (Lörscher, 1986, p. 282), paraphrases, super ordinate terms, etc., or they made use of bilingual dictionaries in order to find equivalents. Their choice of dictionary equivalents, however, was often rather superficial; for instance, if there was more than one equivalent, they usually took the first one (Krings, 1986b, p. 273).

As far as monitoring is concerned, perhaps the most interesting form of behavior observed was where the compared individual target language items with source language items, and if they found they did not match, they rejected the item, usually without taking the context into account (Krings, 1986a). In none of these early studies, however, the participants were not trained to become professional translators. Furthermore, the researchers usually refrained from evaluating what their participants had produced. They, thus, did not observe the relationship between translation strategies and successful or unsuccessful results (Kusmaul and Tirkkonen-Condit, 1995). Still, we may draw some pedagogical conclusions from their observations. It seems that their subjects' behavior was often governed by lack of reflection (fixed associations and naive use of dictionaries) and that they would have benefited from an awareness of what they were doing, so that in the training phase translating would have become a more conscious and rational activity.

## 6. Conclusion

As Newmark (1986) points out, translation is not the mere replacements of the elements of the source text into the target text. It is rather a complicated process involving several issues to be observed and considered. Only through all these systematic steps taken during the process of translation, an acceptable piece of translated text would be achieved (Larson, 1998).

Concerning the nature of the present work, there were seven main strategies pointed out by Gerloff (1986). The frequencies of usages over these types of strategies showed that 'extra-textual or Language Use & task monitoring (LUTM)', 'Editing (ED)', and 'text contextualization (TC)' were the most frequently used strategies among the seven main strategies introduced with the frequencies of 80, 73 and 60 respectively.

Getting more acquainted with the steps involved during the process of translation (Gerloff, 1986), the researchers, professors, students of translation, etc., could be aware of the strategies applied by the Iranian translators while translating a literary text from English into Persian. Thus, the results of the present work are assumed to act as a great tool to the ones working in the fields of education, English language teaching, translation, etc.

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## AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE STRATEGIES APPLIED TO PERSIAN TRANSLATION OF THE NEOLOGISMS CREATED IN PERSIAN ACADEMY

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### **Abstract**

The present study aimed at investigating the different strategies applied by Iranian translators to Persian translation of the neologism created in Persian Academy words. To begin with, four volumes out of eight volumes of Persian Academy translation were selected randomly. To do so, some one-thousand words containing English to Persian translations were selected randomly and all of the neologisms created in them were collected and classified based on Newmark's (1988) typology of neologisms. Each neologism was paired with its Persian equivalent provided by corresponding Iranian translators. The Persian equivalents were analyzed on the basis of Newmark's (ibid.) model for the translation of neologisms. The Findings indicated that the selected Iranian translators used twelve different strategies only ten of which have been mentioned in Newmark's (ibid.) model. The "literal translation" was the most frequently used strategy and the least frequently one was "borrowing". Applying the Chi-square test, it was also found that ten strategies have been used in a way that their frequencies were of statistical significance. Moreover, the analyses revealed that the model in question was applicable to Persian translation of the neologisms created in Persian Academy words.

**Key Words:** Translation, Neologism, Source Language, Translation Strategy, Word Formation

### **1. Introduction**

Neologisms form a highly relevant linguistic category for many reasons: they are the elements that make a language living and dynamic rather than dead, they are indicative of language change, they form a serious obstacle in computational analysis and translation and they help to show productive morphology of a language. Neologisms (newly-coined words or new senses of an existing word) are constantly being introduced into a language (Algeo, 1980; Lehrer, 2003), often for the purpose of naming a new concept. Domains that are culturally prominent or that are rapidly advancing (current examples being electronic communication and the Internet) often contain many neologisms, although novel words do arise throughout a language (Knowles & Elliott, 1997). Fischer (1998, p.35) gives the following definition of neologism: "Aneologism is a word which has lost its status of a nonce-formation but is still one which is considered new by the majority of members of a speech community."

There are two main goals in the linguistic observation of neologisms. On the one hand, updating existing lexicons and dictionaries with the newly arisen words and on the other hand, the analysis and description of the neologisms themselves in terms of distribution over word-classes, statistics on derivational methods, statistics on loan word origination, etc. One of the best attempts at a definition of a neologism is given by Rey (1975/1995), who concludes that there are no objective criteria for being a neologism. Furthermore, there is a classification of neologism definitions formulated by Cabré



(1999): a psychological definition, a lexicographic definition, a diachronic definition and a definition based on a word exhibiting systematic signs of formal or semantic instability.

According to Newmark (1988), a major source of neologism is the emergence of new objects and processes in technology. He (ibid.) also believes that new ideas continually introduced in the media are in fact another source of neologisms. However, all of the neologisms come from the media or technology.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

Considering the above-mentioned issues, some scholars such as Newmark (1988) have developed practical models for the translation of neologisms in order to satisfy the needs of translators and the bridge the gap between theory and practice. Therefore, among the problematic issues involved in the translation of the Neologisms Created in Persian Academy, this study was concentrated on the translation of neologisms and specific strategies used for rendering them based on Newmark's (ibid.) model.

### **1.2. Significance of the Study**

Translation and culture are interrelated i.e., translation is considered as the method through which the people of a specific culture can get access to other cultures. Most often, the differences that block comprehension in translation are of a cultural mismatch. Another important issue regarding the significance of the present study is that much of materials of this study could be an incentive for further studies by linguistics in general and translators, in particular.

### **1.3. Objectives**

The aim of the present study was to identify the strategies mainly adopted by Iranian translators while rendering the neologism created in Persian Academy; and also to find any significant differences between the frequencies of strategies employed by such translators. As the main focus of this study, different strategies suggested for the translation of neologisms were used. Due to the fact that a neologism may have several meanings, misuse in its translation tends to increase with the frequency of use. A single neologism has multiple senses which are related to one another, in some way or other.

### **1.4. Research Questions**

In line with the aforementioned discussions, the present study attempted to find a reasonable answer to the following research questions:

1. What are the strategies used by Iranian translators for translating neologisms created in Persian Academy words?
2. Which strategies are the most frequently used by Iranian translators of Persian Academy?
3. To what extent are neologisms in Source language (henceforth SL) translated into neologisms in Target Language (henceforth TL)?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Related Theoretical Studies**

#### **2.1.1. Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams' (2003) typology of words.**

Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams' (2003) believe that the lexical and morphological rules of every language involve some limitations determining the possibility and impossibility of the occurrence of a word which is to be regarded as a neologism in that language. They classify all sequences of sounds into three groups:

- a. Existing words
- b. Impossible words
- c. Possible but non-occurring words

#### **2.1.2. Hudson's (2000) typology of word formation processes.**

Hudson (2000) categorizes word formation processes in to three groups, naturally resulting in the emergence of three types of new words:

- a. New forms for old meanings;
- b. New forms for new meanings; and
- c. New meanings with old forms.

Hudson (ibid.) introduces four word formation processes which yield new forms for old meanings including clipping, acronyming, blending and wrong cutting.

According to Hudson (2000), language users can employ two words formation processes in order to get new forms for new meanings. These include Invention and Borrowing. Finally Hudson(2000)present seven processes of new-word formation in which new meaning are given old or established forms. These include derivation, zero-derivation, compounding, extension, narrowing, bifurcation and backformation.

### **2.1.3. Newmark's (1988) typology of neologisms.**

Newmark (1988, p.140) states that "neologisms cannot be accurately qualified since so many hover between acceptance and oblivion and many are short lived, individual creations." He classifies neologisms in two main categories, each comprising its own subcategories are:

- a. Existing lexical items with new senses; and
- b. New forms.

According to Newmark(1988), the first category of neologisms consists of two subcategories:

- a. Existing words with new senses; and
- b. Existing collocations with new senses.

He believes that the existing lexical items do not refer to new objects or processes, but are assigned to new meaning and, therefore are rarely technological. An example given by Newmark (1988, p.141) is "the term 'wet' in the sense of '(relatively) left-wing Tory opponent of Mrs. Thatcher's policies'." As such, the word wet as an existing English word is used in a new sense. He also instances the well-known English collocation quality control which in its new sense is assigned to the 'theory of probability applied to sampling'. Then, he classified the second main category, i.e. new forms, into ten subcategories namely new coinages, derived words, abbreviations; collocations, eponyms, phrasal words, transferred words, acronyms, pseudo-neologism and internationalisms.

### **2.1.4. Newmark's (1988) model for the translation of neologisms.**

Newmark (1998, p. 140) defines neologisms as "newly coined lexical Units or existing lexical units that acquire a new sense". Usually, they have one meaning because they emerge in a response to a need, but later they gain new meanings, in addition to the old one. Newmark's model which has been used as the theoretical framework for the analysis of data in this study includes eleven strategies for the translation of neologisms. These strategies are the following:

- 1) TL Neologism
- 2) TL Derived Word
- 3) Transference
- 4) Naturalization
- 5) Recognized TL Translation
- 6) Descriptive Equivalent
- 7) Functional Equivalent
- 8) Literal Translation
- 9) Through- Translation
- 10) Translation Procedure Combinations (couplets, triplets, etc.)
- 11) Internationalism

## **2.2. Related Empirical Studies**

Damaskinidis (2004) conducted a study on the way in which neologisms and other compounds and complex English words can be problematic for a Greek translator. Particularly, he studied the translation of technical neologisms from English to Greek. He concluded that the starting point for translating a neologism and a complex/ compound word should be the identification of two important elements, i.e. the macro structure and its modifier(s). Moreover, before attempting to translate technical texts, it is necessary, to read an extensive amount of related ST and TT, in order to familiarize oneself with the field and its neologisms.

Khutyze (2005) studied the translation of neologisms from English into Russian that has acquired a large number of English neologisms as a result of economic and technological growth. Her study revealed that some of English neologism did not have close Russian equivalent. She identified 'Borrowing' and 'Explanation' as the two main strategies employed by Russian translators for rendering English neologisms.

An investigation into the strategies applied to English translation of Arabic neologisms coined during the two Palestinian Intifadas was conducted by Alwneh (2007). He detected 'Transference' as the most frequently used translation strategy for English translation of such neologisms. Other translation strategies identified by him are 'Explanation', 'Paraphrase', 'Descriptive Translation', 'Expansion', and 'Word-for word Translation'. He also found that 'Literal Translation' had not been an effective strategy for communicating the meaning and the function of the neologisms coined during the Intifadas.

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1. Materials**

To achieve the final goal of this study, the following materials were used: Four volumes of eight volumes of Persian Academy translation were selected randomly having English to Persian about 1000 words containing English to Persian from these volumes were selected randomly. These materials used are listed as followings:

- 1) Fifth volume Persian words and Latin equivalent and vice versa (2009);
- 2) Sixth volume Persian words and Latin equivalent and vice versa (2009);
- 3) Seventh volume Persian words and Latin equivalent and vice versa (2009);
- 4) Eighth volume Latin words and Latin equivalent and vice versa (2009).

There were good reasons for the selection of the above-mentioned materials. Firstly, they are brimful of neologisms which are the focus of this study. Secondly, they have been translated into a large number of languages and their literary values are generally accepted throughout the world. Thirdly, the researchers aimed at selecting words of different themes. Regarding the Persian translation of the selected volumes, it should be mentioned that the translations were done by translator of Persian Academy.

#### **3.2. Data Collection Procedures**

The data for this study comprised the English neologisms created in the selected randomly words from the four volumes, as well as their equivalents in the selected Persian translations. The data were collected at lexical level. Such data were classified on the basis of Newmark's (1988) typology of neologism. To gain this aim and understand the original writers' intended meaning, a number of sources were used. Employing such sources would minimize the probability of making mistake in distinguishing and categorizing the neologisms created in the selected translation of Persian Academy words. These sources are listed as the followings:

- 1) Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (1993);
- 2) Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2000);
- 3) Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2003);
- 4) Aryanpour Kashani's (2004/1383) Progressive English-Persian Dictionary.

#### **3.3. Data Analysis Procedures**

This is a text-analysis study in which the collected data was analyzed based on Newmark's (1988) model for the translation of neologisms. This model includes eleven strategies for the translation of neologisms. Due to this potentiality, this model was used as the theoretical framework for data analysis in the present investigation. He (ibid.) has also proposed a typology of neologisms, which was presented in the previous chapter.

The following steps were taken to analyze the collected data. Firstly, the type of each identified neologism was determined according to the typology of neologisms proposed by Newmark(1988),and then the detected neologism was classified based on his typology. Secondly, the

translation strategies used for rendering each identified neologism was determined according to Newmark's (1988) model. Then the frequencies of different strategies used by Iranian translators were counted and tabulated. This was done in order to get a general view of various strategies employed by Iranian translators and to identify the most and the least commonly used ones. Finally, the frequencies of strategies were subjected to the Chi-square test in order to check for any significance in the observed differences. Therefore, the research comprises both qualitative and quantitative analyses.

#### 4. Findings and Results

Table 1. displays some examples of the one-thousand neologisms identified in the four selected volumes. The English neologisms are listed in the first column. The second column displays the type of each neologism. The corresponding Persian equivalents used by translators' Persian Academy are presented in the third column. Finally, the specific translation strategies employed by their, are provided in the last column.

*Table 1. Some Examples of the One-Thousand Neologisms Identified in the Four Selected Volumes*

English Neologism	Type of Neologism	Persian Equivalent	English Transliteration	Translation Strategy
Parasail	Transferred Word	آبچتر	/ aabechatr/	Recognized TL Translation
Stand-by	Phrasal Word	آماده به کار	/ Aamadeh be kaar/	Literal Translation
Convention room	New collocation	تالارگردهمایی	/taalaregerdehamaee/	Functional Equivalent
Organe	Derived Word(from France)	ترجمان	/tarjomaan/	Existing TL Word
Save as	Phrasal Word	با نام حفظ	/hefz baa naam/	Descriptive Equivalent
Make-up test	New Collocation	چهرآزمون	/chehrazmoon/	TL Neologism
Curve marker	New Collocation	قوسنما	/ghoasnamaa/	Through Translation
Falange	Eponym	فالانژ	/faalaanzh/	Transference
Censure	Derived Word	سانسور	/saansor/	Borrowing
Off-line processing	New Collocation	پردازش برون خط	/pardaazeshe boron khat/	TL Derived Word

Analyzing the data based on Newmark's (1988) model, it was found that the Iranian translators have employed ten strategies for rendering the identified neologisms. Eight of these strategies have been proposed in this model. These are: 1) Literal Translation, 2) Transference, 3) TL Neologism, 4) Functional Equivalent, 5) Descriptive Equivalent, 6) Through-translation, 7) TL Derived Word and 8) Recognized TL Translation.

However, the strategies of Naturalization, Translation Procedure Combination and Internationalism have not been used by Iranian translators. Moreover, two strategies identified in this analysis, have not been proposed in Newmark's (1988) model. These strategies are the following:

- 1) Existing TL Word: applying this strategy, the translator renders a SL neologism into an ordinary word or lexical item which already exists in the TL. In fact, the TL equivalent given by the translator has no specific novelty for the TL receivers. For example, پشیمان which is an existing and ordinary word in Persian, has been used by translators, as the equivalent for the English neologism Back up.
- 2) Borrowing: this strategy involves direct transference of SL neologism into the TL. It differs from the transference strategy proposed in Newmark's (1988) model in that, borrowing does not involve translation.

A borrowed neologism will not be transliterated and will preserve its original written form and pronunciation in the TL, while Newmark's (1988) transference strategy necessarily involves transliteration. For instance, translator has directly transferred "Ceres" from the English text into his translation and has used this neologism as a borrowed equivalent. Regarding the main focus of this study, Table 2 displays the frequencies of different strategies applied by the Iranian translators for Persian translation of the neologism created in Persian Academy words. In the first column of Table 2, the translation strategies are arranged in descending order based on their total frequencies. Different types of neologisms are presented in the first row. Finally, the total frequencies of the translation strategies; are provided in the last two columns, in terms of number and percentage.

*Table 2. Frequencies of the Strategies Applied by the Iranian Translator for Persian Translation of the Neologisms Created in Persian Academy Words*

Type of Neologism	NL	NL (C)	NC	DR	EX	AC	EP	AB	PS	PH	Total Frequency	
Translation Strategy											NO	%
Literal Translation	488.6	1.3	1.3	49.8	1.3	66.2	17	8.5	0.7	20.3	655	65.5
TL Neologism	73.1	0.2	0.2	7.4	0.2	9.9	2.5	1.3	0.1	3	98	9.8
Existing TL Word	64.9	0.2	0.2	6.6	0.2	8.8	3.8	1.1	0.1	2.7	87	8.7
Recognized TL Translation	30.6	0.1	0.1	3.1	0.2	4.1	1.1	0.5	0	1.3	41	4.1
Through-Translation	24.6	0.1	0.1	2.5	0	3.3	0.9	0.4	0	1	33	3.3
Functional Equivalent	21.6	0.1	0.1	2.2	0.1	2.9	0.8	0.4	0	0.9	29	2.9

<b>Transference</b>	20.1	0.1	0.1	2.1	0.1	2.7	0.7	0.4	0	0.8	27	2.7
<b>Descriptive Equivalent</b>	12.7	0	0	1.3	0.1	1.7	0.4	0.2	0	0.5	17	1.7
<b>TL Derived Word</b>	6.7	0	0	0.7	0	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.1	0	9	0.9
<b>Borrowing</b>	3	0	0	0.3	0	0.4	0.4	0.1	0.1	0	4	0.4

Note: In the first row, NL stands for New Collocation, NL(C) for New Collocation (Compounding), NC for New Coinage, DR for Derived Word, DR(B) for Derived Word (Blending), EX for Existing Word with a New Sense, AC for Acronym, EP for Eponym, AB for Abbreviation, PS for Pseudo-neologism, PH for Phrasal Word.

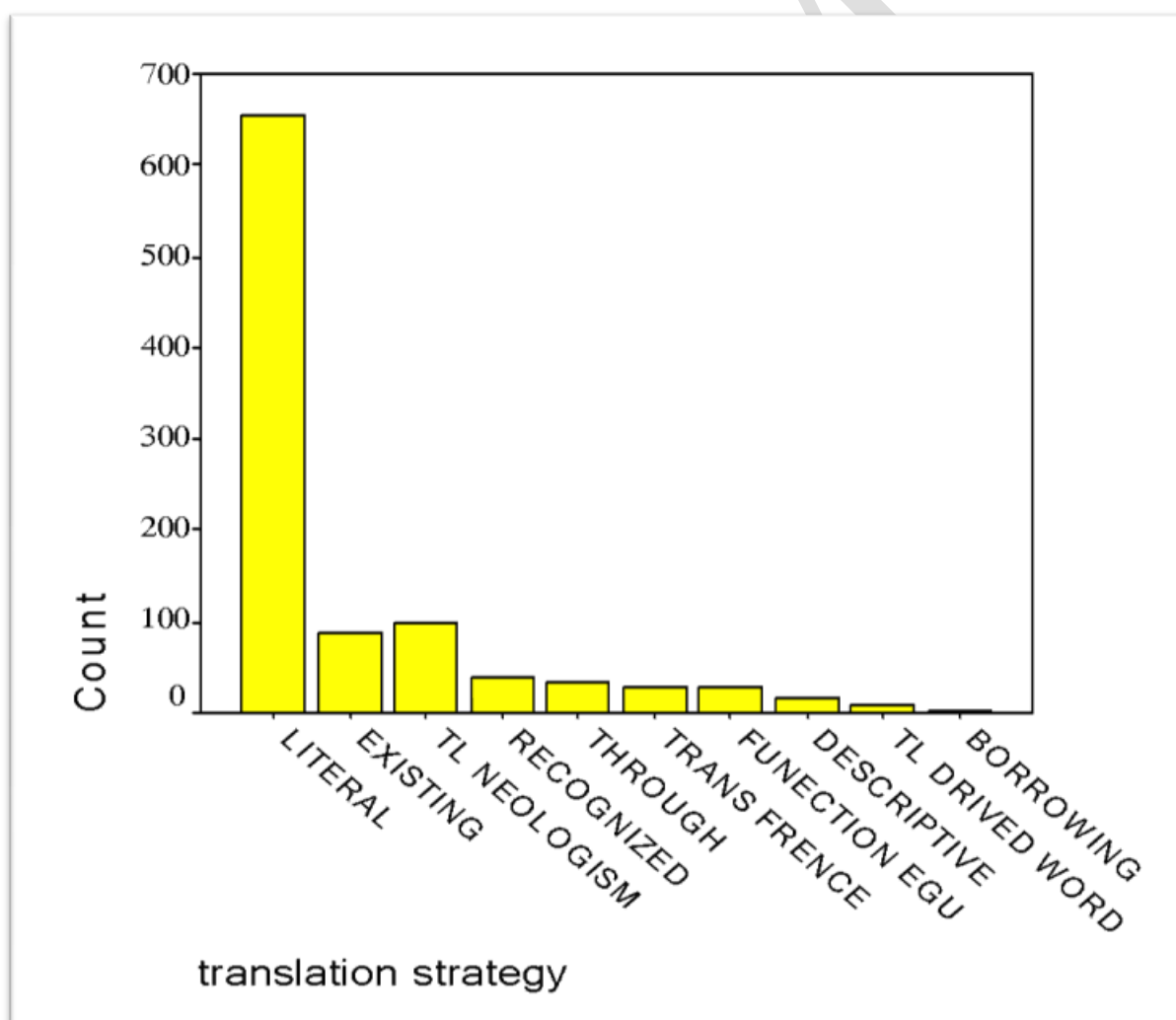


Figure 1. A comparison Between the Frequencies of the Strategies Used by the Selected Iranian Translators.

Finally, the total frequencies of the ten strategies employed by Iranian translators were used in the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test in order to detect the significant difference(s) between the observed frequencies of these strategies.

The normal expectations indicate that the identified strategies would have been used with the same frequency. Therefore; the expected frequency of the ten strategies equals 3905. In other words, if there were no differences between the identified strategies, each one would have been employed for the translation of 1000 neologisms. However, a comparison of the research findings presented in Table 2. indicated that there were significant differences between the observed frequencies of the identified strategies. In order to determine whether these differences are significant, a Chi-square test was applied. Table 3. displays the  $\chi^2$  values for the ten strategies employed by the selected Iranian translators.

*Table 3. The Chi-Square Results for the Fourteen Strategies Employed by the Selected Iranian Translators*

Translation Strategy	Total Frequency	$\chi^2$ Value
<b>Literal Translation</b>	655	555
<b>TL Neologism</b>	98	20
<b>Existing TL Word</b>	87	13
<b>Recognized TL Translation</b>	41	59
<b>Through-translation</b>	33	67
<b>Functional Equivalent</b>	29	73
<b>Transference</b>	27	71
<b>Descriptive Equivalent</b>	17	83
<b>TL Derived Word</b>	9	91
<b>Borrowing</b>	4	96

With regard to Table 3, it is evident that the chi-square values for most of the strategies used by Iranian translators are greater than the critical value of 22.362 which in this case, is required for significance at the 0.05 level. This finding reveals that the differences observed between the frequencies of the strategies, are statistically significant and could not simply have happened by chance. The Chi-square values for the strategies of Literal Translation and TL Neologism were 278 and 28.5 respectively.

Compared to others, such values are quite considerable and signify important points about these two strategies. The strategies of Descriptive Equivalent, TL Derived Word and Transference have been of limited application, with respect to their corresponding chi-square values. However, there are also other Chi-square values which are of statistical significance. The relevant conclusion and discussion are presented in the next chapter.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

As the findings of the study revealed, the most frequently used strategy by the selected Iranian translators was Literal Translation, with the total frequency of 65.5% .This strategy has often been employed for the translation of new coinages. Also, it has been the most commonly used strategy for the translation of new collocations. Over half of the new collocations found in these words have been transferred into Persian. Indeed, 488 of the 746 new collocations, 49 of the 76 derived words, 66 of the 101 acronyms, 17 of the 26 eponyms, 8 of the 13 existing words with new senses have been rendered by

the translators using the strategy of Literal Translation. It is worth mentioning that 21 of the 31 phrasal words found, also have been used literal translation.

Another strategy with the high frequency was TL Neologism recognized which held the second rank. Its total frequency equaled 9.8%; moreover, it was the most commonly used strategy for the translation of new collocations. In fact, 73 of the 746 new collocations identified have been rendered by the translators employing the strategy of TL Neologism. However, with the Chi-square value of 20 which is higher than the critical value of 22.362, TL Neologism should be classified as a strategy which is statistically significant.

Among the two strategies used by the translator, which were not proposed in Newmark's (1988) model, the most frequently used one was Existing TL Word. With the total frequency of 8.7%, this strategy held the third rank. It has often been employed for the translation of new collocations. In fact, 64 of the 746 new collocations identified have been rendered by the translators employing this strategy. Moreover, Existing TL Word has the second rank in translating in phrasal word. 3 of the 23 phrasal words detected have been translated through the strategy of Existing TL Word. However, with a Chi-square value of 13 which approximately equaled half the critical value, Existing TL Word was not regarded as a strategy significantly different from the others.

The strategies of Recognized TL Translation and Through-translation have often been used for the translation of new collocations. 31 of the 746 neologisms translated through the former and 25 of the 746 neologisms through the latter were new collocations. However, with a total frequency of 4.1 and a Chi-square value of 59 Recognized TL Translation and Through-translation should be regarded as the strategies which have been of limited application and which do not significantly from others.

The sum of the translation strategies holding the last five ranks in Table 3 was less than 8%. Thus, they were of very limited application and not of great help to the translators rendering the neologisms created in Persian Academy words. The five strategies were Transference, Functional Equivalent, Descriptive Equivalent, TL Derived Word, and Borrowing. Among these strategies, TL Derived Word was employed for the translation of nine neologisms, and Borrowing for that of only four. As such, Borrowing was the least frequently used strategy. The Chi-square values for TL Derived Word and Borrowing equaled 91 and 96 respectively. Hence, these two should be classified as the strategies which were significantly different from others. The strategies of Transference, Functional Equivalent and Descriptive Equivalent have been employed for the translation of 27, 29, and 17 neologisms respectively. With respect to their Chi-square values, they should be regarded as the strategies which were statistically significant.

These findings can support Newmark's (1988) belief that Literal Translation is the basic strategy in both semantic and communicative translation. Moreover, from the conclusion, it can be inferred that Literal Translation is the most effective strategy for the translation of new collocations from English to Persian, and TL Neologisms the most effective one for Persian translation of new collocations. With regard to their corresponding Chi-square values, Existing TL Word and Recognized TL Translation were classified as the strategies which were of statistical significance. However, their relatively low frequencies can indicate that these two strategies have not been of great help to the Iranian translators, because TL Neologism involves the re-creation of a TL neologism on the basis of the SL neologism demanding individual creativity on the part of the translator;

The strategies of Functional Equivalent and Descriptive Equivalent were not statistically significant, with respect to their corresponding Chi-square values. This finding revealed that these two strategies were of limited application in Persian translation of the neologism detected in the selected words. From the limited application of Functional Equivalent, it can be inferred that providing an SL neologism with a TL equivalent in a way that both refer to the same function in their own cultures, requires considerable acquaintance with both SL and TL cultures on the part of the translator. Lack of such acquaintance, however, Functional Equivalent can be the most effective strategy for pseudo-neologisms. It also seems to be one of the most useful strategies for translating new derived words from English to Persian. The limited application of Descriptive Equivalent strategy, reflected in its low chi-square value, can signify the point that it is of little use in Persian translation of English



neologisms. In fact, regarding the conclusions, this strategy can mostly be effective for Persian translation of new English acronyms and abbreviations.

The two least frequently used strategies, i.e., Borrowing and TL Derived Word, differ significantly from the other four ones which were applicable, regarding their corresponding Chi-square values. Such a difference signifies that these two strategies can be used in very rare cases, since borrowing involves the direct transference of a TL neologism into the SL, and TL Derived Word requires productive affixes in the TL, to form an equivalent for a neologism found in the SL. It can also indicate that Iranian translators try to avoid the direct transference of English neologisms into Persian, and that for the vast majority of the English neologisms there is no popular or generally accepted equivalents already existing in Persian. The other four strategies Through-translation, Descriptive equivalent, Functional equivalent, Transference, which have been of limited use by the selected Iranian translators seem to be applicable to Persian translation of small number of English neologisms, with respect to their corresponding chi-square values. Among them, however; Through-translation can be useful in rendering some new English collocations into Persian, according to the finding of the study.

The final objective of this study was to examine the applicability of Newmark's (1988) model to Persian translation of the neologisms created in English words. From the findings and conclusions of this study, it can be inferred that almost all the strategies presented in his model are applicable to Persian translation of such neologisms. From among eleven strategies proposed in his model, ten have been used more or less by the selected Iranian translators. The strategy of Internationalism, however, did not have any application in the selected Persian translations. Two translation strategies used by the selected translators were also identified, which have not mentioned in Newmark's (1988) model. The present study has come to some findings in common with the investigations conducted by Niska (1998), Khutyz (2005), and Alawneh (2007). In fact, the strategies of Transference, Descriptive Equivalent, Borrowing, and TL Neologism have been identified in their studies, too. However, they employed rather different titles to refer to these strategies.

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## THE EFFECT OF KEEPING PORTFOLIOS ON WRITING ABILITY OF ADVANCED EFL LEARNERS

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### Abstract

The present study attempted to discover the impact of keeping portfolios on the improvement of the advanced EFL learners writing. In order to have homogeneous groups, a TOEFL proficiency test was given to 60 participants of the study and 48 of them selected, and then they were randomly assigned to comparison and experimental groups. Since the study concentrated on writing ability a writing pretest was administered to both groups to make sure they were also homogeneous in terms of writing ability. The experimental group was exposed to portfolio assessment and instruction while the comparison group received the traditional writing instruction and assessment. After 10 sessions of treatment, a posttest similar to the pretest was administered. The result of the study indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the groups. The conclusion was that keeping portfolios can contribute to progress of the students in terms of writing ability and it can be used as a promising testing and teaching tool in English language classes.

**Key words:** writing ability, portfolio instruction, portfolio assessment.

### 1. Introduction

Based on Brown (2004), in the field of second or foreign language teaching and learning, writing is a unique skill with its own conventions and features. Writing effectively and clearly in a logical and well-developed organization is a main purpose of every writing treatment. Unlike the other skill, assessing writing is not a simple task. The traditional methods of assessing writing were not really successful in helping students in improving their writing ability. But, developing alternative assessments like portfolios have had high washback effect on writing classes. Chapelle and Brindley (2010), state that portfolio is purposeful collection of students' work over the time and contains their language performance at different stages of completion, as well as the students' own observations on his or her progress. Assessments may be focused on many purposes, but the most important role is always to improve instruction for each student. According to Gordon (2008), writing is an aid and support for other skills; it focuses on accuracy and communication of meaning. Morrison-Saunders, Bell and Retief (2012) point out that since most of university works are around writing, it is considered as a fundamental skill to the university students in academics experiences.

#### 1.1. Direct and indirect methods of gathering data for assessment

Allen (2008) states that generally there is two basic ways to assess students' writing: first one is direct assessment which is based on an analysis of student products, in which they demonstrate how well

they have mastered learning outcomes; next one is indirect assessment which is based on an analysis of reported views about students mastery of learning outcomes. Cooper (1984) also believes that direct assessment requires the examinees to write one or more essays, typically on preselected topics and indirect assessment requires them to answer multiple-choice items. He also states that direct assessment is sometimes referred to as a "production" measure and indirect assessment as a "recognition" measure. In Fraidan (2005) point of view, while direct approach of assessing writing has been criticized for its subjectivity, indirect approach is popular for being objective and producing the same result in the future.

### 1.2. Formal approach to scoring writing

To make plan for administering an approach to writing assessment there may be varieties of scoring methods and combination of methods like holistic, primary trait and analytic assessment for different purposes in different writing tasks. Bacha (2001) believes that holistic and analytic scoring instruments or rating scales have been used to identify students' writing proficiency levels for different purposes in EFL/ESL programs.

Table1. A comparison of holistic and analytic scales in terms of qualities of test usefulness (Weigle, 2002).

Quality	Holistic Scales	Analytic Scales
Reliability	lower than analytic, but still acceptable	higher than holistic
Construct Validity	assume that all relevant aspects of writing ability develop at the same rate and can thus be captured in a single score; correlate with superficial aspects such as length and handwriting	more appropriate for L2 writers as different aspects of writing ability develop at different rates
Practicality	relatively fast and easy	time-consuming; expensive

Breland (1983) quotes from Diederich (1974) that in analytic scoring, the writing samples scored by experts representing several different academic disciplines. Primary trait scoring is also known as focused holistic scoring, and it is resemble to holistic scoring. Brown (2004) states that this kind of scoring focus on task at hand and assigns a score based on the effectiveness of the text's achieving that goal, for example if the goal or content of writing is to write an persuasive essay, the score evaluation would rise or fall on the achievement of that function.

### 1.3. Writing ability test

While some scholars talk about intensive and extensive writing, some others have known them as controlled and free composition. Brown (2004) clarified intensive or controlled writing as a form-focused writing, grammar writing or simply guided writing and talks about extensive or free writing in which learners can exercise a number of options in choosing words, structure, and discourse that is

freed from strict control of intensive writing. According to Farhady, Ja'farpour, and Birjandi (2009), controlled writing is utilized to recognize or complete grammatical sentences to assess the learner's ability to convey certain thoughts in writing; it consists of some type of written model with directions for conversations or language uses in rewriting the model. They also believe that free writing or composition writing includes a topic for the examinees to write a composition of a definite length. To Hyland (2003), in controlled writing fixed patterns from substitution table will be employed and in free writing patterns have developed by learners to write essay, letter, and so on.

### **Portfolios**

khodadady and Khodabakhshzade (2012) note that Portfolio is a collection of texts that writer has produced in a definite period of time. According to Davis and Ponnampuruma (2005), a portfolio is gathering various forms of evidence of achievement of learning outcomes; the student portfolio for assessment aims is a set of reports, papers, and other material, together with the student's consideration on his or her learning and on strengths and weaknesses. Based on Aydin (2010), students usually have positive reactions toward portfolio; it helps learners to analyze literary texts, write in different styles, demonstrate an awareness of the target language culture, improves proficiency skills, content knowledge, and grammatical competence; it also reduces writing anxiety, and promotes students' motivation to learn a foreign language.

Syafei (2012) believes that there are several types of portfolio: First, showcase portfolios which are usually used to show a student's best work to parents and school administrators. Next, collections portfolios which are student's work to present how students deal with day to day class assignments or *working folders* which may contain rough drafts, sketches, works-in-progress, and final products and finally, assessment portfolios which are presented as reflections of specific learning goals that consist of systematic collections of students' work, student self-assessment, and teacher assessment. According to Davis and Ponnampuruma (2005), Portfolio assessment has five stages:

1. Collection of evidence of learning outcomes achievement during day-to-day learning activities.
2. Reflection on learning to promote learning, personal and professional development, and improvement of practice.
3. Evaluation of evidence or quality of the evidence.
4. Defense of evidence of how well the portfolio has reflected the achievement of the learning outcomes.
5. Assessment decision or Pre-validated rating scales to assess the evidence.

Moya and O'Malley (1994) use both formal and informal assessment methods, emphasizes on both the processes and products of learning, try to understand student language progress in the linguistic, cognitive, metacognitive, and affective domains, it contains teacher, student, and objective input, and also stresses both academic and informal language development. These are the characteristics that make portfolios as a popular alternative assessment in the frame work of communicative language teaching.

However, testing and rating writing is a long process; it seems to be more delicate than other skills and needs more time and attention. In this way there are different kinds of writing assessment like direct, indirect, formal, informal, and Portfolios assessments which are also direct method of writing assessment. This study attempted investigates the impact of Portfolio assessment on students' writing progress.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. Participants**

The participants of this study were 60 advanced students from 3 language institutes in Mashhad, Iran. After administering language proficiency test, 48 of them were randomly assigned in two experimental and the comparison groups. Although both male and female had participated in this study but gender was not considered as a moderator. They were advanced EFL learners who were tested on the effect of portfolio assessment.

## 2.2. Instrumentation

The instruments used in this study included a test of language proficiency, a pretest, and a posttest as well. At the beginning of the study since the researchers aimed to apply their treatment on advanced students, they were given a TOEFL proficiency test. After the participants had assigned in two groups, a writing pretest was also administered to both groups to make sure they were homogeneous in terms of writing ability. To explore the utility and efficiency of the treatment a writing posttest was conducted at the end of the research. In both pre/posttests the participants were asked to write a paper based on the same topics between two groups.

## 2.3. Design and Procedure

Since the purpose of this paper was to investigate the impact of portfolio assessment on improvement of writing skill, an experimental method was selected. Through administering a language proficiency test between 60 advanced students in 3 language institutes in Mashhad, Iran, 48 of them were selected and their close homogeneity was confirmed by utilizing the statistical technique of t-test. In order to fulfill the research the treatment applied in 10 sessions between two experimental and comparison groups. In comparison group students received traditional writing assessment; every session learners were given a topic to write about, the teacher read and marked the students' papers. But in experimental group, after choosing the topic, learners wrote up their first drafts, then, under each assignment teacher wrote his comments about the different aspects of students' written tasks. Therefore, the students gained information about their strengths and weaknesses of their essays. They also were asked to self-assess or reflect on their writing in the classroom and evaluate themselves. Then, at home, the students revised and redrafted their writings based on teacher's comments and their own reflection.

## 3. Result

At the beginning of the research, a writing pretest was administered in order to determine the ability of the subjects in the writing skill. This would enable the researchers to investigate the possible impact of the treatment on the improvement of the writing ability of the experimental group. The descriptive statistics of the writing pre test are reported in table 2.

*2. Descriptive Statistics of the Two Groups on the Writing Pre-test*

Group		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Post-test	Control	24	11.93	2.13
	Experimental	24	11.91	2.42

To guarantee the homogeneity of the subjects regarding their current writing ability, the researcher ran a t-test. As it has been shown in table 3, the t- observed of 0.129 was lower than the t- critical of 2.02 at 0.05 level of significance for 46 degrees of freedom. Thus it could be claimed that the two groups were not significantly different in terms of writing before undergoing the treatment.

*3. Comparison between Variances and Means of the Two Groups on the Writing Pre-test*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means
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	F observed	F critical	t observed	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	t critical
Pre-test Equal variances assumed	1.28	.001	-.129	46	0.86	0.02	2.02

After the instruction, the subjects in both groups sat for the post test. The descriptive statistics of the post test for both groups are presented in table 4.

#### 4. Descriptive Statistics of the two Groups on the Writing Post-test

Group		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Post-test	Control	24	12.56	2.31
	Experimental	24	15.31	2.28

The researchers ran an independent t-test (table 5) to analyze the means of two groups on the post test. Since the t observed value of 6.25 at 46 degrees of freedom was greater than the t critical of 2.02, the null hypothesis could be safely rejected at 0.05 level of significance leading to the conclusion that the treatment was effective enough to make a significant difference between the experimental and comparison groups. Consequently, it could be concluded that keeping portfolios would certainly improve students' writing ability.

#### 5. Comparison between variances and Means of the Two Groups on the Writing Post-test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F observed	F critical	t observed	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	t critical
Post-test Equal variances assumed	1.02	1.69	6.25	46	0.02	2.75	2.02

#### 4. Discussion and conclusion

As mentioned earlier, the main aim of the study was to find out the impact of portfolio assessment on students' writing. The results of quantitative data analysis indicated that portfolio assessment affected the students' achievement in their overall writing as well as their achievement in terms of focus, elaboration, organization, vocabulary, etc. To some extent, the results are also in accord with Fahed Al-Serhani 's (2007) findings that portfolio assessment significantly improves students' writing performance in general and the product skills of purpose, content, organization, vocabulary, sentence structure and mechanics in particular. Similarly, Khodashenas and Salehi (2012) find that portfolio-based writing instruction and assessment is an appropriate alternative in terms of writing. The result of the study also showed that, Portfolio assessment help students foster their English writing ability since they receive useful comments from teacher and actively involvement in process of assessment by themselves. Writing portfolios can be utilized in EFL classes as a technique whereby learning, teaching and assessment are linked in. portfolios can be used to increase the development of writing ability between EFL students and help them to progress their writing goals.

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# AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE TRANSLATION METHODS APPLIED BY IRANIAN TRANSLATORS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ENGLISH LYRICS TRANSLATING BASED ON NEWMARK'S (1988) FLATTENED V DIAGRAM

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## Abstract

The present study tended to investigate different translation methods pointed out by Newmark (1988). These translations were chosen with special reference to lyric translation. To do so, one-hundred lyrics were chosen to be compared to their corresponding Persian translations to see if there existed any statistically significant differences among the translation methods introduced by Newmark (1988), referred to as 'the V diagram of translation methods'. After collecting the data, Chi-Square procedure was carried out to see if the results held any statistically significant differences or not. The findings of the study revealed that there were statistically significant differences among the eight methods presented in the V diagram of Newmark (*ibid.*). The results also indicated that out of the eight methods introduced, 'communicative', 'semantic' and 'literal' translation methods were the most frequently used methods.

**Key words:** V Diagram, Translation Methods, English Lyrics, Newmark (1988).

## 1. Introduction

Within the academic context, it is for less than a century that Translation Studies (henceforth TS) has been regarded as an academic discipline. From that time, a considerable number of models, theories, frameworks, procedures, etc. have been introduced by several TS scholars and researchers in order to delve into different aspects of translation and translating (Bell, 1993). A few number of these classifications root back to the act of establishing main categories related to different aspects of translation and translating. As an example, Holmes (1988) put forward his "map" of TS in order to classify the main branches and sub-branches of TS in a systematic way. The TS map was later developed by the Israeli scholar Toury in 1995 mostly referred to as the Holmes/Toury map of TS these days. Other theories, frameworks and/or models relate to the fields of Translation Quality Assessment (henceforth TQA), translation procedures, methods of translation, translation equivalence, etc. Each of these fields under the category of TS tries to find a suitable answer to the questions posed by a researcher during the process of research. Translation equivalence, for instance, was a key topic of discussion in 1960s and 1970s (Munday, 2008). In doing so, several scholars and theorists provided different models and frameworks as to what the basic concepts on translation equivalence relate to (e.g., Nida 1984, Koller 1977, Newmark 1986, etc.).

One of the most well-known and systematic classifications made in the realm of TS up to the present day is the one made by Newmark (1988) referred to as "methods of translation". In fact, how to

translate has always been the main question in this field. During the history of translation, there have been a lot of argues about this issue. As an example, Benjamin and Nabokov were two of extreme literalists who strongly believed that the translation must be as literal as possible (as cited in Newmark, 1988).

According to Newmark (1988), a two-way emphasis is made during the process of translation that one refers to Source Language (henceforth SL) and the other to Target Language (henceforth TL). That is where Newmark (ibid.) introduces his flattened V diagram of translation emphasis containing the main translation methods available up to the present day.

With special reference to the translation of literary texts in general and lyrics translation in particular, the present study aimed to investigate the methods applied within the process of translating lyrics from English into Persian in during 2000s in Iran.

The present study aimed at answering the following research question posed in line with the aforementioned discussions:

- Is there any significant difference in the frequencies of translation methods while translating English lyrics into Persian based on the eight methods introduced in the flattened V diagram of Newmark (1988)?

## **2. Literature Review**

As it was mentioned before, TS has faced different models and classifications during the history. These models tend to delve into several aspects of translation, being relatively connected to different issues in TS. Concerning the term 'equivalent', for instance, many models have been pointed out by different scholars and theorists (e.g., Koller 1979, Nida 1986, etc.). Likewise, the methods and procedures of translation have been under discussion for many years (Munday, 2008). Thus, the present study tended to investigate one of the well-known classifications of translation methods introduced by Newmark (1988). First, a search into the related literature would provide us with some basic background of the topic in question.

### **2.1. Theoretical Perspectives**

#### **2.1.1. Newmark's (1988) Model Revisited**

The framework used in the present study included the one introduced by Newmark (1988) for the first time. First, he (ibid.) introduced his flattened V diagram of translation emphasis, believing that a two-way emphasis could be made while dealing with that act of any kind of translation or rendering. This will be discussed and elaborated as the ending part of the present section. Then, he (ibid.) continued with introducing some situational methods of translation briefly explained as followings. It is interesting to note that the last two methods are presented by Newmark for the first time (1988, pp.52-3):

1. **Service translation:** Is translation from one's language of habitual use into another language.
2. **Plain Prose translation:** The prose translation of poems and poetic drama initiated by E. V. Rieu for Penguin Books. Usually stanzas become paragraphs, prose punctuation is introduced, original metaphors and SL culture retained, while no sound-effects are reproduced. The reader can appreciate the sense of the work without experiencing equivalent effect. Plain prose translations are often published in parallel with their originals, to which, after a careful word-for-word comparison, they provide ready and full access.
3. **Information translation:** This conveys all the information in a non-literary text, sometimes rearranged in a moral, logical form, sometimes partially summarized, and not in the form of a paraphrase.
4. **Cognitive translation:** This reproduces the information in an SL text converting the SL grammar to its normal TL transpositions, normally reducing any figurative to literal language.
5. **Academic translation:** This type of translation, practiced in some British universities, reduces an original SL text to an "elegant" idiomatic educated TL version which follows a (non-existent) literally register.

Translation of literary texts is obviously different from other types of translation due to several reasons. In this regard, a comparison could be made between the renderings of a literary text, e.g., lyrics to a piece of scientific text. The former consists of a set of elements which make the process of translation more and more problematic. These may include culture-bound element, extra-linguistic references, idioms, allusions, proverbs, etc. While Newmark's word-for-word method of translation might suit better for a scientific text, it might not be useful for a literary text.

## **2.2. Empirical Background**

In a study conducted by Mungchomklang (2009), the researcher attempted to analyze the translation strategies used in translating twenty abstracts of theses and Master's projects which were found at the abstract translation service section, Department of Western Languages, Faculty of Humanities, Srinakharinwirot University from 2007-2008. Those abstracts were translated from Thai into English by two translation specialists at the Department of Western Languages, Faculty of Humanities. The analysis was based on Baker's (1993) eight translation strategies of non-equivalence at the word level, as compared to Newmark's (1988) classification of translation methods presenting his (ibid.) flattened V diagram. The frequency of occurrence of all the eight strategies was calculated in terms of percentage. The results in the study revealed that seven of Baker's (1993) translation strategies were used. The most frequent translation strategy employed was translation by omission (46.60%), followed by translation by using loan words/loan words plus explanation (22.73%), translation by using more general words (10.80%), translation by using cultural substitution (7.95%), translation by paraphrase using related words (6.25%), translation by paraphrase using unrelated words (4.55%), and translation by more neutral/less expressive words (1.14%) respectively. However, the translation by illustration was not found in this study.

In another research conducted by Sharififar (2009), the researcher aimed to investigate the differences between English and Persian religious elements which might be problematic in translating from English into Persian. The study also aimed to investigate the way cultural elements in general and religious ones in particular were dealt with in the selected corpora and to check whether the procedures proposed by Newmark (1986) were sufficient and adequate for translation of these elements from English into Persian. The findings indicated that there was no evidence to show a consistent effort on the part of translator to use any particular translation approach in the process of achieving adequate translation. The findings also showed that procedures suggested by Newmark (ibid.) have accounted well for the transfer of cultural as well as religious elements; it was observed that Newmark's (ibid.) range of procedures was comprehensive and worked well nearly for cultural elements included in the selected corpora.

In a book review presented by Ateşoğlu (2010) on the classification made by Newmark (1988), the reviewer claimed that the concepts of communicative and semantic translation represented Newmark's main contribution to general translation theory. In his book *Approaches to Translation* (1981), two chapters contributed to the elaboration on these two methods. In this book report, the reviewer illustrated these two methods with examples, comparing them to other translation methods and also made some comment on the similarities and differences between them.

The orientations of the present research lie behind a popular topic within the realm of translation, namely Translation Quality Assessment (henceforth TQA). In her "Translation Quality Assessment of Popular Science Articles, Corpus Study of the Scientific American and Its Arabic Version", Sharkas (2009) tested the problems of translation that the genre of popular science feature articles posed for translators and investigated the methods followed in dealing with the problems and their ability to produce adequate translations. The method of her analysis was adopted from Hervey and Higgins' (1992) model of translation analysis in which the principle of translation loss was used to assess the adequacy of a target text in relation to five textual levels including genre, cultural, semantic, formal and varietal. The model also took the translation brief and genre characteristics into account when assessing the translations. A working hypothesis and four sub-hypotheses were developed to perform this investigation. Textual analysis identified several translation problems, some of which were general and some specific to the genre. The results also revealed that the methods followed by

translators varied, and analysis showed that translation loss was mainly on the semantic and formal levels.

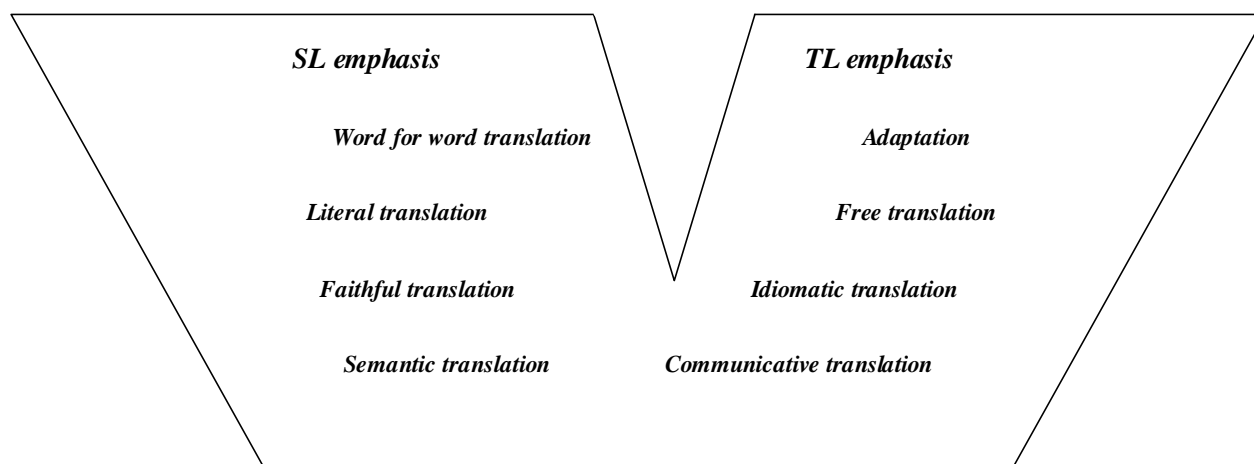
Mohaghegh (2011) made an attempt to apply a text-based approach of translation criticism proposed by Reiss (1977/1989, as cited in Munday, 2008) to examine Clarke's (1891) English translation of Ghazal 167 of Hafez through focus on evaluation of linguistic elements consisting of four parts. Comparing the Original Persian poem with its translation, the researcher came up with the conclusion that at linguistic level, there were a number of cases in which the translator's miss-reading of the original poem had led to the miss-translation and due to a literal rendering, some idioms had been translated un-intelligibly

### 2.3. Newmark's (1988) Classification of Translation Methods

According to Newmark (1988), a two-way emphasis is made during the process of translation that one refers to Source Language (henceforth SL) and the other to Target Language (henceforth TL). That is where Newmark (ibid.) introduces his flattened V diagram of translation emphasis containing the main translation methods available up to the present day. In Newmark's (ibid. pp.45-7) explanation of his V diagram of translation methods, the definitions of the methods are as followings:

1. **Word for word translation:** This is often demonstrated as interlinear translation, with the TL immediately below the SL words. The SL word-order is preserved and the words translated singly by their most common meanings, out of context. Cultural words are translated literally. The main use of word-for-word translation is to understand the mechanics of the source language or to construe a difficult text as a pre-translation process.
2. **Literal translation:** The SL grammatical constructions are converted to their nearest TL equivalents but the lexical words are again translated singly, out of context. As a pre-translation process, this indicates the problem to be solved.
3. **Faithful translation:** A faithful translation attempts to reproduce the precise contextual meaning of the original within the constraints of the TL grammatical structures. It "transfers" cultural words and preserves the degree of grammatical and lexical "abnormality" (deviation from SL norms) in the translation. It attempts to be completely faithful to the intentions and the text-realization of the SL writer.
4. **Semantic translation:** It differs from faithful translation only as far as it must take more account of the aesthetic value (that is, the beautiful and natural sound) of the SL text, compromising on "meaning" where appropriate so that no assonance, word-play or repetition jars in the finished version. The distinction between "faithful" and "semantic" translation is that the first is uncompromising and dogmatic, while the second is more flexible.
5. **Adaptation:** This is the "freest" form of translation. It is used mainly for plays (comedies) and poetry; the themes, characters, plots are usually preserved, the SL culture converted to the TL culture and the text rewritten.
6. **Free translation:** Free translation reproduces the matter without the manner, or the content without the form of the original. Usually it is a paraphrase much longer than the original.
7. **Idiomatic translation:** It reproduces the "message" of the original, but tends to distort nuances of meaning by preferring colloquialisms and idioms where these do not exist in the original.
8. **Communicative translation:** It attempts to render the exact contextual meaning of the original in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to the readership.

As Newmark(1988,p.47)believes, only two methods can fulfill the two main aims of translation, including the "accuracy" and the "economy". These two methods include *semantic* and *communicative* translations.



*Figure 1. Newmark's (1988) Flattened V Diagram of Translation Emphasis*

### 3. Method

There are a considerable number of models and frameworks for a researcher to deal with while conducting a research on translation procedures or methods. These studies are placed mostly within the comparative models of translation (Chesterman, 2007). In other words, these are among the studies which tend to investigate the relationship of the source text with other texts. As Chesterman (2001) points out, these texts may include the target text, other texts, etc. However, the method used here is the one introduced by Newmark (1988), covering nearly all possible translation methods available.

#### 3.1. Materials

Five publications containing the translations of English lyrics into Persian, all published between 2000 to 2010 were used as the materials of the present study. These books were chosen through simple random sampling, as the music style they adhered to did not matter. These music styles were pop, rock and rap music. Table 1. provides the readers with a demographic overview of the materials used in the present study:

*Table 1. Demographic Overview of the Materials Used in the Present Study, Including the Music Styles and the Frequency of Each*

<i>Titles of the publications studied</i>	<i>Number of the selected lyrics from each publication</i>
1. "The Sad Eyes", Mahmoudinejad (2003)	20
2. "On the Wings of Night", Kian (2003)	20
3. "Victory", Houshmandi (2003)	20
4. "Eminem", Qorbanzade (2003)	20
5. "One Broken Heart for Sale", Gohari Raad (2004)	20
<b>Total</b>	100

### 3.2. Data Collection Procedures

First, twenty lyrics from each book (and music style) were chosen through simple random sampling. The total number of the lyrics then formed a set of one-hundred lyrics to be studied. Then, each and every lyric was carefully studied and placed into the flattened V diagram of the translation methods introduced by Newmark (1988) to reveal any probable differences between the eight methods of translation introduced.

It is important to point out that the translation method chosen for some lyrics could possibly be placed within two or even three categories mentioned in Newmark's (1988) classification of translation methods. However, the translation method which held the more significant perspectives was chosen as the main method, representing other methods, too. In other words, the similarities between a word-for-word translation on the one hand, and a literal one on the other could not be neglected. In Newmark's (ibid.) idea, a word-for-word translation is different from a literal one, only as the former does not put the stylistic and grammatical issues into consideration, while the latter to some extent does.

### 3.3. Data Analysis

After gathering the data, using SPSS, Chi-square procedure was applied in search for the meaningfulness of the differences between the eight translation methods introduced by Newmark (1988).

### 4. Results and Findings

First, some demographic information on the total number of one-hundred lyrics and their translation methods is presented in Table 2.

*Table 2. Some Demographic Information on the Translated Lyrics*

Method of Translation	Frequency
Word-for-word translation	0
Literal translation	23
Faithful translation	14
Semantic translation	24
Communicative translation	33
Idiomatic translation	6
Free translation	0
Adaptation	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

As it is visible in Table 2., the word-for-word translation is not applicable anymore. Even translation machines tend to avoid such phenomena (Hutchins, 1997). On the contrary, it would be interesting to note that free translation and adaptation are among two favorable translation methods all over the world (Marzban and Nouray, 2011). The other five translation methods introduced by Newmark (1988) held different frequencies while being investigated. That might be due to the reason that these

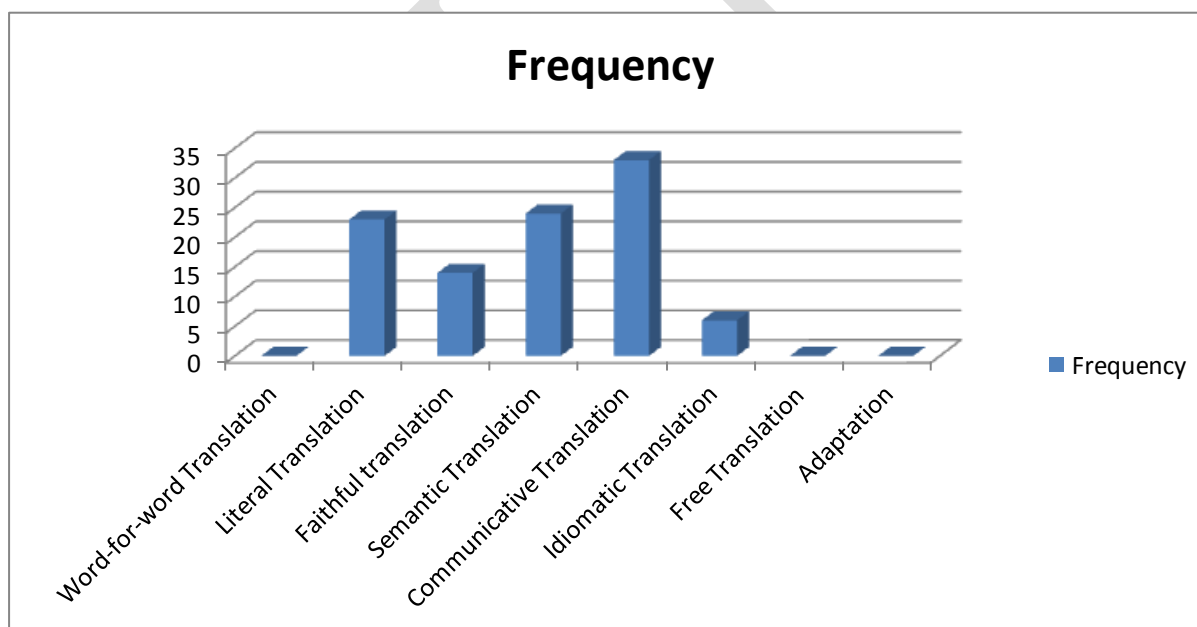
methods take closer considerations towards the orientations of the source language text (Marzban and Nouraey, 2011).

After gathering the sufficient data, they were inserted to the SPSS software as the input in order to be analyzed. Table 3. provides some statistical information on the Chi-Square test carried out by the researcher.

*Table 3. Some Statistical Information on the Frequencies of the Translated Lyrics*

Translation Method	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Literal translation	23	20.0	3.0
Faithful translation	14	20.0	-6.0
Semantic translation	24	20.0	4.0
Communicative translation	33	20.0	13.0
Idiomatic translation	6	20.0	-14.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>		

Accordingly, Figure 2. illustrates the frequencies of the lyrics translated from English into Persian:



*Figure 2. The Frequencies of the Lyrics With an Insight From Their Translation Methods Introduced by Newmark (1988)*

It is important to point out that the translation methods with the frequency of 0 were automatically deleted by the software during the process of data analysis. In Table 3., the observed number relates to the factual frequencies of the translation methods introduced by Newmark (1988). The expected

frequency, however, is related to the number of occurrence of each translation method in the absence of any statistical significant differences between the methods of translation.

Applying the Chi-Square procedure among the different music styles (except for those with the frequency of 0), the researcher tended to see if the differences among the frequencies of the translation methods introduced by Newmark (1988) were of any significance or not. Table 4. provides the readers with the results obtained from the Chi-Square test carried out by the researcher.

**Table 4. The Chi-Square Test Results Related to Different Translation Methods Used by Iranian Lyric Translators**

Test Statistics	Translation Methods
Chi-Square	21.300 <sup>a</sup>
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000

## 5. Discussion

As the results of the Chi-Square test showed (see table 4.), there were statistically significant differences between the translation methods applied by Iranian translators (Asymp. Sig. < .0005). In other words, the research hypothesis was supported and it could be concluded that there are statistically significant differences in terms of translation methods' choice by Iranian translators. There might be a series of reasons for such phenomenon, discussed under this section.

During the history of translation, the way of translating a text has always been the center of attention among the translators (baker, 1992); whether to translate freely or literally, whether to keep the sense, the spirit and the message, or the words and the form. As an example, "Benjamin and Nabokov were two of the extreme literalists who strongly believed that a translation should be as literal as possible" (As cited in Newmark, 1988, p.45). These classifications, however, are not nascent within the field of translation. Several other scholars (e.g., Holmes 1988, Toury 1995, Jakobson 1959/2000, Nida 1964, Vinay and Darbelnet 1958, Larson 1998, Catford 1965, etc.) have come up with different models and "meta-models" within the field of translation (Katan, 2004).

Another reason for picking up a specific method of translation among all other available methods relates to the "extra-linguistic" content of a text (Pym, 1998). These relate to several aspects that lead to the formation of a text, also known as meta-linguistic levels of a language or meta-systems. As an example, morphology, syntax, etc., are among different meta-linguistic aspects of a text. Generally speaking, one could claim that these meta-systems mostly lead to the process of discovering the primary meanings of a word, which is widely available in several bilingual dictionaries. However, there are other issues involved in the process of translation. Cultural issues, for instance, tend to play an important role in the translation of a text. Thus, the translator might be in favor of a method with a higher level of freedom in order to make any changes necessary.

The results of the study were, however, similar to the one carried out by other researchers around the world (e.g., Mungchomklang 2009, Ateşoğlu 2010, etc.). Some alternative methods were used within the aforementioned studies. However, they mostly enjoyed a similar basic foundation in terms of their research methods and procedures applied by the researchers.

## 6. Conclusion

All in all, the results of the present work indicated that communicative translation (f=33), semantic translation (f=24) and literal translation (f=23) held the highest frequencies among the eight translation methods pointed out by Newmark (1988). As Newmark (ibid., p.47) believes, "of all these methods, only two can fulfill the two main aims of translation, which are first, 'accuracy' and second, 'economy'. These two methods include 'semantic' and 'communicative' translations." This supports the results of the present work. Hence, it could be concluded that Persian translators of English lyrics are in line with the global trends concerning the accuracy of a translated text on one hand, and the economy of the process of translation on the other.



Considering the results of the present study, it could be concluded that some of the translation methods are not used these days. As discussed before, even translation machines tend to give a more acceptable piece of translated text. As Chesterman (2012) believes, in the near future, the orientations of the researchers, the types of translations and thus, the methods of translation applied by the translators will face a change (as cited in Nouraey and Karimnia, 2012). Chesterman (ibid., p.99) also believes that in near future

More and more will be done by better and better computers, so humans' role will increasingly be post-editing, revision, and specialized texts such as literary ones. Customers will also be faced with more and more poor-quality translation, and it will be interesting to see how people will react. With the rising pace of technology, this seems to be true that in near future, the audience will be faced with these types of translations. Thus, it would be important to delve into several aspects of the translations done.

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## PROMOTING THE READING COMPREHENSION OF HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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### Abstract

This paper attempts to introduce a range of discourse analysis strategies as a pedagogical tool to demonstrate its practical relevance in teaching reading comprehension. The study that is going to be reported here, will address a new area in Iranian English Language Teaching (ELT). Specifically speaking, it aims at determining what areas of discourse analysis are relevant to teaching EFL reading at Iranian high-school as well as identifying what language teachers and learners can borrow from the linguistic study of text and discourse and make use of in the language classroom as well as outside it. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is amongst the most popular methodologies for the analysis of language and texts. All of us, as language users and makers, are continuously engaged in reading comprehension in our everyday lives. Relatively few studies in Iran have investigated the role of critical discourse analysis in teaching reading comprehension. The article argues that knowing critical discourse analysis techniques lead learners to have a deeper understanding of reading comprehension. Finally, in this paper, some recommendations are suggested: techniques of Critical Discourse Analysis can be used by teachers, students and others; and due to Critical Discourse Analysis skills, they become conscious of the concealed meaning within various kinds of text.

**Key words:** discourse, critical discourse analysis, language teaching, reading comprehension

### 1. Introduction

What is language for? Many people think language exists so that we can "say things" in the sense of communicating information. However, language serves a great many functions in our lives. Giving and getting information is by no means the only one. Language does, of course, allow us to inform each other. But it also allows us to do things and to be things, as well. In fact, saying things in language never goes without also doing things and being things. In language, there are important connections among saying (informing), doing (action), and being (identity). If I say anything to you, you cannot really understand it fully if you do not know what I am trying to do and who I am trying to be by saying it. To understand anything fully you need to know *who* is saying it and *what* the person saying it is trying to do (Gee, 2011).

Discourse analysis is the study of language-in-use. Better put, it is the study of the language at use in the world, not just to say things, but to do things, people use language to communicate, co-operate, help others, and build things like marriage, reputations, and institutions. They also use it to lie, advantage themselves, harm people, and destroy things like marriage, reputations, and institutions (Gee, 2011). Discourse analysis examines how stretches of language, considered in their full textual, social, and psychological context, become meaningful and unified for their users. It is a rapidly expanding field, providing insight into the problems and processes of language use and language learning, and is therefore of great importance to language teachers. Traditionally, language teaching has concentrated on pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, and while these remain the basis of foreign language knowledge, discourse analysis can draw attention to the skills needed to put this knowledge into action and to achieve successful results in teaching reading comprehension too (Cook, 1990).

How do people acquire skill at comprehending what they read? Chastain (2005) acknowledges that the purpose of reading is not just making a student literate but adds rationale thinking,

knowledgeability and self sufficiency. The reading goal is to read for meaning or to recreate the writer's meaning. To help learners achieve this objective, numerous strategies such as: inferring meaning, previewing, skimming, scanning and understanding the meaning of words from context, to name but a few, have been introduced (Wegmann & Knezevic, 2008).

In addition to the above-mentioned strategies, this paper aims to introduce discourse analysis as a pedagogical tool to demonstrate its practical relevance to reading comprehension. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a relatively new approach to text analysis and although it has become popular and favoured by discourse analysis researchers, it is rather rarely used by language teachers in Iranian high-school teachers. If, however, teachers understand the nature of this highly context sensitive approach, they will find it extremely useful in teaching critical reading to their language learners. This article is trying to present some strategies of CDA and its analytic tools that can be applied in EFL teaching reading comprehension. A short analysis of a pre-university reading text will attempt to illustrate how to implement CDA strategies in EFL reading classes.

## **2. Discourse analysis**

### **2.1. A brief historical overview**

Discourse analysis grew out of work in different disciplines in the 1960s and early 1970s, including linguistics, semiotics, psychology, anthropology and sociology. Discourse analysts study language in use: written texts of all kinds, and spoken data, from conversation to highly institutionalised forms of talk (McCarthy, 2000).

At a time when linguistics was largely concerned with the analysis of single sentences, Zellig Harris published a paper with the title 'Discourse analysis'. Harris was interested in the distribution of linguistic elements in extended texts, and the links between the text and its social situation, though his paper is a far cry from the discourse analysis we are used to nowadays. In the 1960s, Dell Hymes provided a sociological perspective with the study of speech in its social setting (e.g. Hymes 1964). The linguistic philosophers such as Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and Grice (1975) were also influential in the study of language as social action, reflected in speech-act theory and the formulation of conversational maxims, alongside the emergence of pragmatics, which is the study of meaning in context (McCarthy, 2000).

The start of the CDA network was marked by the launch of Van Dijk's journal *Discourse and Society* (1990), as well as by several books which were coincidentally published simultaneously and led by similar research goals. The Amsterdam meeting determined an institutional start, an attempt both to constitute an exchange programme (ERASMUS for three years), as well as joint projects and collaborations between scholars of different countries, and a special issue of *Discourse and Society* (1993). Since then, new journals have been created, multiple overviews have been written, and nowadays CDA is an established paradigm in Linguistics. Additionally we can't ignore the role of linguists, Norman Fairclough who made a remarkable contribution in this field. Fairclough introduced the three-dimensional framework for examining discourse, which comprised of analysis of (spoken or written) language texts, discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution and consumption) and discursive events as instances of sociocultural practice (Wodak & Meyer, 2001).

### **2.2. What is discourse analysis?**

Discourse analysis focuses on knowledge about language beyond the word, clause, phrase and sentence that is needed for successful communication. It looks at patterns of language across texts and considers the relationship between language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used (Paltridge, 2001).

For example, discourse analysis deals with:

- a. How the choice of articles, pronouns, and tenses affect the structure of the discourse
- b. The relationship between utterances in a discourse
- c. The move made by speakers to introduce a new topic, change the topic, or assert a higher role relationship to the other participants

Such analysis can be useful in finding out about the effectiveness of teaching methods and the types of teacher-student interactions (Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

**2.3. Critical Discourse Analysis as a form of discourse analysis**

A form of discourse analysis that takes a critical stance towards how language is used and analyzes text and other discourse types in order to identify the ideology and values underlying them. It seeks to reveal the interests and power relations in any institutional and socio-historical context through analyzing the ways that people use language (Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

Where discourse analysis focused on the linguistic aspects of discourse, it has also been known as Critical Linguistics or Critical Discourse Analysis, because of the wide range of influences from different areas of study (Bloor & Bloor, 2007).

The significant difference between DS and CDS (or CDA) lies in the *constitutive problem-oriented, interdisciplinary approach* of the latter, apart from endorsing all of the above points. *CDA is therefore interested in investigating a linguistic unit per se but in studying social phenomena which are necessarily complex and thus require a multidisciplinary and multi-methodical approach* (Fairclough, 2010).

**a. The aim of Critical Discourse Analysis**

The aim of Critical Discourse Analysis is to shed light on the linguistic discursive dimension of social and cultural phenomena and processes of change in late modernity. Research in critical discourse analysis has covered areas such as organisational analysis, pedagogy, mass communication and racism, nationalism and identity, mass communication and economy, the spread of market practices, and mass communication, democracy and politics (Fairclough, 2010).

**b. Main assumptions of CDA**

The main assumption of CDA that makes the approach different from other approaches to text analysis is that it stresses not only the decoding propositional meaning of a text but also its ideological assumptions. Advocates of CDA are interested in how a text may influence and manipulate its readers by the use of presuppositions that stem from the author's own, particular view of the world and circumstances of a text production. Thus, the text interpretation should include a close analysis of context which is not represented only by: "the immediate environment in which a text is produced and interpreted but also the larger societal context including its relevant cultural, political, social and other facets." (McCarthy, 2000).

Reading texts critically seems to be a crucial skill since as Fowler states: "events and ideas are not communicated neutrally because they are transmitted through the medium that contains certain structural features which, in turn, are impregnated with social values that form some perspective on events." The medium is also used by people who work under certain social circumstances and follow certain conventions of production, and as a result will choose such linguistic structures that are going to conform to those circumstances and conventions. Thus, it seems to be inevitable that writers, by choosing specific linguistic structures, will tend to manipulate readers in order to make them accept ideological message contained in a text. Critical Discourse Analysis aims at readers detecting this manipulation (McCarthy, 2000).

**3. Reading comprehension**

Clearly, reading is a most important activity in any language class, not only as a source of information and a pleasurable activity, but also as a means of consolidating and extending one's knowledge of the language (Rivers, 1981). Reading is the most important skill of all for most students of English throughout the world, especially in the countries that foreign language learners have not the opportunity to interact with native speakers but have access to the written form of that language (Birjandi et al, 2006).

**3.1. what is "Reading"?**

Reading is a process in which the readers focus attention on the reading materials and activate previously acquired knowledge and skills in order to comprehend what someone else has written. Because the reader does not produce message like a speaker or a writer, sometimes it is erroneously referred to as a passive skill, but if we examine the abilities that have a basic role in comprehension of

meaning, we find that it requires active mental processing. It is also a receptive and decoding skill in which the reader tries to understand the meaning of the word or phrase or sentence (code) and perceive the content of the written text (Birjandi et al, 2006).

### 3.2. *Importance of reading*

In many second or foreign language teaching situations, reading receives a special focus. There are a number of reasons for this. First, many foreign language students often have reading as one of their most important goals. They want to be able to read for information and pleasure, for their career, and for study purposes. In fact, in most EFL situations, the ability to read in a foreign language is all that students ever want to acquire. Second, written texts serve various pedagogical purposes. Extensive exposure to linguistically comprehensible written text can enhance the process of language acquisition. Good reading texts also provide good models for writing, and provide opportunities to introduce new topics, to stimulate discussion, and to study language (e.g., vocabulary, grammar, and idioms). Reading, then, is a skill which is highly valued by students and teachers alike (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

Reading is an important component of learning a second language for various reasons. One major benefit of reading is that students can control the speed at which they read, a very important psychological, emotional, and cognitive variable in learning a complicated new skill. They are not forced, as they are in listening, to receive and process language at a rate controlled by someone else. Another advantage is that they can read in privacy which is another important psychological factor for students who are apprehensive about reciting in front of their classmates (Chastain, 2005).

### 3.3. *Strategies to reading comprehensions*

One of the biggest challenges facing reading teachers is how to teach reading comprehension skills. Comprehension questions can be very useful if they lead to discussion about what the text means and if information in the text is explored for greater understanding. Strategy training is another way to provide comprehension instruction. Asking students to engage in predicting, clarifying, summarizing, questioning, goal setting, reviewing, and noting text organization – all done while discussing the meaning of the text information – will provide real comprehension instruction for students.

In recent years, there has been an emphasis on teaching reading strategies to students in order to develop their reading skill, rather than merely expecting them to improve the skill by their own. So the language teachers try to find the process involved in reading a written text, help their students develop habits of reading, and provide guidance for them (Birjandi et al, 2006).

Here a few strategies have been introduced:

#### a. *Getting meaning from word structure and context*

Try to guess the meaning of new or unfamiliar words as you read. To do this, break them into smaller words, into prefixes and suffixes, or use clues from the context – the words that come before and after the word.

#### b. *Scanning for specific information*

To scan, move your eyes quickly over the reading until you come to the specific information that you want.

#### c. *Previewing a reading*

To preview a reading, look at the title and any photos, charts, or illustrations, the first and last paragraphs, and the first line of each of the other paragraphs. Think about what association or connections there are between your life and the topic. Ask yourself: what is the topic and what do I already know about it.

#### d. *Making inferences*

Inferences are ideas or opinions that are not stated but that can be *inferred* (concluded) from the information given. Learning how to make inferences makes you a better reader and a clearer thinker.

#### e. *Skimming for the general idea*

You can find the general idea of a reading selection by *skimming*. For example, move your eyes rapidly over the whole piece, taking note of the title, headings, photos, and captions. Read the first

and last line of the long paragraphs. In the shorter ones, look at just a few key words in each line, the ones that seem to carry the message, then go on. Try to summarize the general idea in two or three sentences ( Wegmann & Knezevic, 2008).

A third way to promote effective comprehension is applying critical discourse analysis strategies that it will be discussed in the next parts.

### **3.4. Teaching reading comprehension at Iranian high-school**

In the Iranian school system, students begin to learn English as a Foreign Language at guidance-school and continue throughout high school. All the textbooks for the schools are produced by the Ministry of Education and no alternatives are available. Guidance-school textbooks teach elementary grammar rules, dialogue and basic vocabulary, but at high-school the main focus of teaching is directed toward reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is an essential skill for learners of English and for most of the learners. It is the most important skill to master in order to ensure success in learning (Anderson, 2000). It is not surprising, therefore, that in many countries, where English is taught as a foreign language, as it is the case in Iranian high-school, the primary emphasis is placed on the development of reading comprehension ability. Because of the high exposure to reading comprehension that students experience at high-school, therefore developing reading strategies sounds vital.

Strategies such as skimming, scanning, previewing, generating questions and inferencing are employed in teaching reading. But, relatively few studies in Iran have investigated the role of critical discourse analysis in teaching reading comprehension.

## **4. Developing Critical Discourse Analysis in teaching reading comprehension**

### **4.1. Critical Discourse Analysis in educational setting**

In educational setting, language is the primary tool through which learning occurs. CDA contributes to an understanding of learning in two primary ways. First, analyzing discourse from a critical perspective allows one to understand the processes of learning in more complex ways. Second, in the process of conducting CDA, researchers' and participants' learning is shaped (Rogers, 2004).

### **4.2. Critical Discourse Analysis in EFL reading comprehension classroom**

EFL students are often marginalized as readers; their goals in interacting with written texts are perceived to be primarily those of language learners. Certainly, teachers most often choose for practising reading skills texts that present functional survival or general interest material of a safe nature and the main reading tasks are analyzing linguistic structure or new vocabulary items. During interaction with such texts readers take up a rather submissive position. Critical reading approach is trying to change this situation by offering students clues how to become more assertive and more confident readers (Wallace, 1998).

Wallace (1998) also admits that critical reading is one of many strategies available to the readers, however it may become very efficient when learners encounter texts that contain ideological assumptions and whose interpretation depends largely on a sociocultural context. Lots of texts people read in everyday life are of this nature, the examples of which are: news reports, magazine articles, advertisements, political speeches, even some novels and short stories.

Another factor that teachers of reading in a foreign language should have in mind is that a very careful critical analysis of such texts may be too complicated for students who still learn the language. Therefore, they should rather choose for their initial critical reading classes shorter texts, such as advertisements or news reports or implement only certain factors from those proposed by CDA analysts, some of which are presented below (Wallace, 1998).

#### **a. CDA as a pedagogical tool in reading comprehension**

Critical Discourse Analysis includes not only a description and interpretation of discourse in a context, but also offers an explanation of why and how discourse work. A Critical Discourse Analysis, then, might commence by deciding what discourse type, or genre, the text represents. the analysis may consider the framing of the text; that is, how the content of the text is presented, and the sort of angle or perspective of writer, or speaker, is taking. Closely related to the framing is the notion of foregrounding, that is, what concepts and issues are emphasized, as well as what concepts and issues



are played down or backgrounded in the text. Equally important to the analysis are the background knowledge, assumptions, attitudes and point of view that the text presents (Paltridge, 2001). At the sentence level, the analyst might consider what has been topicalized in each of the sentences in the text; that is, what has been put at the front of each sentence to indicate what it is about. The analysis may also consider who is doing what to whom; that is, agent-patient relations in the discourse, and who has the most authority and power in the discourse. It may also consider what agents have been left out of sentences, such as when the passive voice is used, and why this has been done (Paltridge, 2001).

At word and phrase level, connotations of particular words and phrases might be considered as well as the text's degree of formality or informality, degree of technicality, and what this means for other participants in the text. The choice of words which express degrees of certainty and attitude may also be considered and whether the intended audience of the text might be expected to share the views expressed in the text, or not. The procedure an analyst follows in this kind of analysis depends on the research situation, the research question and the text that are being studied. What is essential, however, is that there is some attention to the critical discourse analysis in whatever focus is taken up in the analysis (Paltridge, 2001).

We cannot leave this discussion, without considering the influence of discourse analysis on the teaching of reading. Listening and reading have in common a positive and active role for the receiver, and, if any insight is to be taken seriously on board from discourse analysis, it is that good listeners and readers are constantly attending to the segmentation of the discourse, whether by intonational features in speech, or by orthographical features in writing, or by lexico-grammatical signals in both. What is also clear is that good listeners and readers are always predicting what is to come, both in terms of the next few words and in terms of larger patterns such as problem-solution, narrative, and so on. This act of prediction may be in the form of precise prediction of content or a more diffuse prediction of a set of questions that the author is likely to answer. For this reason, interpreting the author's signals at the level of grammar and vocabulary as to what questions he/she is going to address is as useful as predicting, for example, the content of the rest of a given sentence or paragraph. This will mean paying attention to structures such as cleft sentences, rhetorical questions, front-placing of adverbials and other markers, and any other discourse-level features. The reading text will be seen simultaneously as an artifact arising from a context and a particular set of assumptions of world knowledge, and as an unfolding message in which the writer has encoded a lot more than just content, with signposts at various stages to guide the reader around (McCarthy, 2000). Critical Discourse Analysis, then, takes us beyond the level of description to a deeper understanding of texts and provides, as far as might be possible, some kind of explanation of why a text is as it is and what it is aiming to do (Rogers, 2004).

b. *An example of Critical Discourse Analysis*

Bearing in mind the CDA strategies, read the following text that is excerpted from English for Pre-University book, then, perform a Critical Discourse Analysis on the text.

*Mother Teresa*

Mother Teresa was born in Skopje, Macedonia on August 27, 1910. Her Albanian father had a small farm. At the age of twelve, when she was a student at a Roman Catholic elementary school, she knew she had a duty to help the poor. She decided to get training for missionary work and, a few years later, made India her choice. At the age of eighteen, she left home and joined an Irish community of nuns with a mission in Calcutta. After a few months' training in Dublin, she was sent to India and in 1928 she became a nun.

From 1929 to 1948 Mother Teresa taught at St. Mary's High School in Calcutta. The suffering and poverty she observed outside the convent walls made a deep impression on her. In 1946, she received permission from her superiors to leave the convent school and devote herself to working among the poor in the slums of Calcutta. Although she had no money, she started an open-air school for homeless children. Soon voluntary helpers joined her, and financial support came from various church organizations, as well as from the city officials. In 1950, she was permitted to start her own



religious community "The Missionaries of Charity". Its task was to care for those persons nobody was prepared to look after.

Mother Teresa had fifty charity projects in India, including work among people living in slums, children's homes, and clinics. The community is still active and does charity work for the poorest of the poor in a number of countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe, and the United States. Mother Teresa's work received a lot of attention all over the world, and she was given a number of awards including a Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, for her promotion of peace and brotherhood among the nations. Mother Teresa died on September 5, 1997 (Birjandi et al, 2011).

Read and discuss the following questions in the class in the light of CDA strategies discussed in this article.

- Why is the text written about?
  - In the text, who is devotee? Does the text give us an answer?
  - Does the structure of the text foregrounded the great women appropriately?
  - Is there any unnecessary information in the text?
  - What is the writer's attitude toward Teresa? What about you?
  - Does the words 'nun' and 'devote' have negative connotation?
  - Is the text written formally or not?
  - How do you evaluate Teresa's work?
  - Can you find any words or phrases that you would call biased? What are they?
- Clearly, it is true, that knowing Critical Discourse Analysis techniques and answering questions will lead learners:
- To have a deeper understanding of reading comprehension.
  - To explore the effect of CDA on students' attitudes about learning English language
  - To adapt some of the techniques of CDA for developing the art of reading skills.

## 5. Conclusion and suggestions

The basic purpose of this article is to introduce some pedagogical and useful strategies for teaching reading to high-school EFL Learners. Reading is an essential part of most teachers' daily didactic routine. This article proposes some explanations as to why this tool (CDA) is so useful in the high-school classes and how to use these strategies to facilitate learning in areas such as reading. In using CDA as a tool, it has been the intention of this article to help raise awareness of the various parties involved to be more critical of the ideologically invested discourses to which they are subjected and the nature of all texts as complex representations and constructions of social practices, their attendant ideological positions and power relations. Additionally, Critical Discourse Analysis is an analytic tool that has much to offer for literacy research and education. It is amongst the most popular methodologies for the analysis of language and texts. All of us, as language users and makers, are continuously engaged in reading comprehension in our everyday lives. Relatively few studies in Iran have investigated the role of critical discourse analysis in teaching reading comprehension. The article argues that knowing critical discourse analysis techniques lead learners to have a deeper understanding of reading comprehension. Finally, We hope that, the techniques of critical discourse analysis can be used by teachers, training teachers, students and others; and learners can analyze different types of text and discourse, taking into account the different strategies outlined in the article. Furthermore, CDA techniques should be introduced as an independent course, especially for the teachers. As English language has become the main medium of communication used by everyone so its power and concealed capabilities should be revealed to everyone. For developing critical language awareness students should be given more time to practice it for a longer period. It is also recommended that for further studies, there should be a greater degree of focus on political, cultural, and historical aspects of learning.

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## THE EFFECT OF TEACHING CULTURALLY-ORIENTED MATERIALS ON THE LISTENING COMPREHENSION OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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### Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to examine the effect of cultural knowledge on the listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. 70 intermediate EFL learners (of Lahijan private English institute (Guilan province, Iran) out of 95, who were selected randomly, participated in this study. The placement test was conducted to choose the intermediate samples. The study utilized an experimental pre-test post-test design with 35 participants in the experimental group and 35 participants in the control group. The experimental group received some treatment in the form of *role-playing*, *audio-motor unit model*, and watching video clips that gave them good cultural knowledge of listening materials, while the control group received no such treatment. Before inserting treatment, both groups participated in a pre-test. The results of the pre-test indicated that the participants of the two groups were homogenous with respect to their listening comprehension ability. After one month treatment of experimental group, both groups participated in a post-test. The results of the post-test indicated that the subjects in the treatment group whose background knowledge was activated by cultural knowledge performed significantly better than they did in the pre-test. Simultaneously, there was not a significant difference between the performance of the control group in pre-and post-tests. The control group performed poorer than they did in the pre-test. It was concluded that topic familiarity with culturally-oriented language materials generally raised the Iranian EFL learners' listening proficiency.

**Keywords:** listening comprehension; background knowledge; cultural knowledge; culture; EFL learners

### 1. Introduction

Listening is the most frequently used language skill in everyday life (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000) and it is the basic skill in language learning. Without listening skill, learners will never learn to communicate effectively. In fact more than 50% of the time that students spend functioning in a foreign language will be devoted to listening (Nunan, 1998). Buck (2001) argues that listening involves both linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge. Linguistic knowledge relates to knowledge of phonology, lexis, syntax, semantics, discourse structure, pragmatics and sociolinguistics, whereas non-linguistic knowledge refers to knowledge of the topic, the context and general knowledge about the world and how it works.

According to Nunan (2002), two models of listening can be identified: the bottom-up and the top-down processing models. Bottom-up processes are developed through practice in word segmentation. Comprehension occurs to the extent that the listener is successful in decoding the spoken text.

Listeners favor bottom-up processes when they construct meaning by accretion, gradually combining increasingly larger units of meaning from the phoneme-level up to discourse-level features (Vandergrift, 2007). The top-down model of listening, by contrast, involves the listener in actively contrasting meaning based on expectations, inferences, intentions, and other relevant prior knowledge (Renandya and Richards, 2002). Listeners favour top down processes when they use context and prior knowledge (topic, genre, culture and other schema knowledge stored in long-term memory) to build a conceptual framework for comprehension (Vandergrift, 2007).

Actually, the role of prior knowledge in facilitating successful L2 listening comprehension has long been established (Chiang and Dunkel, 1992; Long, 1990). Goh (2002) and Nunan (2007) argue that comprehension relies on listeners' successful activation of their prior knowledge. Listeners can use advance organizers to activate prior knowledge. These organizers can take a variety of forms: pictures, video clips, key vocabulary presentation, class discussion, question preview, or cultural information (Vandergrift, 2007). Gebhard (2000) stated that in the process of listening, comprehension can only occur when the listener can place what he hears in a context. Also, familiarity with the text makes listening easier for the listener as he is able to relate his own background knowledge. Due to this interactive nature of listening comprehension process, it is important to help learners use what they already know to understand what they hear. So, if teachers suspect that there are gaps in their learners' knowledge, the listening itself can be preceded by schema-building activities (Nunan, 2002). Brown and Yule (1983) describe schemata as organized background knowledge which leads us to expect or predict aspects in our interpretation of discourse. What is more, Carrel and Eisterhold (1983) found culture as a component involved in organized background knowledge. In order to make clear the concept of culture, Robertson (1981) defines culture as a system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors and artifacts that the members of a society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning (cited in Wang, 2011).

As a matter of fact, culture and language are intricately intertwined. Any time that a person successfully learns a language, he will also learn something of the culture of the speakers of that language and whenever a person teaches a language, he also teaches a complex system of cultural customs, values, and ways of thinking, feeling and acting (Brown, 2001). Brown (2007) emphasized that culture, as an ingrained set of behaviors and modes of perception, becomes highly important in the learning of a second language. Furthermore, Brown (2007) suggests that language- the means for communication among members of a culture- is the most visible and available expression of that culture. More specifically, language carries knowledge and cultural information and it reflects the substantial and particular ways of thinking of particular people. In addition, culture is embedded in even the simplest act of language (Hao, 2000; Kramersch, 1993). Tang (1999) believes that culture is language and language is culture. Kramersch (1993) stated that culture in language teaching is not an expendable fifth skill. In fact, culture is tacked on the teaching of speaking, reading, writing and listening.

In order to highlight the necessity of cultural knowledge in aural comprehension, Wang (2011) finds many students complain that much time has been spent on listening, but little achievement has been acquired. According to him, this may be due to the fact that some students' English is very poor and the material is rather difficult; on the other hand, another reason is that they are unfamiliar with cultural background of the USA and England. Lynch (1996) emphasizes that in many cases it is the lack of appropriate background knowledge that prevents us understanding something, rather than inadequate knowledge of the language. Likewise, Anderson and Lynch (2000) claim that lack of socio-cultural, factual and contextual knowledge of the target language can present an obstacle to comprehension because language is used to express culture.

The effect of cultural knowledge and background knowledge on the listening comprehension has been examined by a handful of studies. For instance: Bada and Genc (2005) investigated the role of culture in language learning and teaching. They conducted the study using the students of the ELT department of Cukurova University in Turkey. As a result, a significant similarity between the students' views and the theoretical benefits of a culture class was observed. According to them,

regarding the benefits of learning about culture, attending the culture class has raised cultural awareness in ELT students concerning both native and target societies.

In another study, the effect of cultural instruction on foreign language learning was investigated by Tsou (2005). For the purpose of the study, the combination of an anthropology process and task-oriented approach was applied. Cultural instruction was implemented within two elementary EFL classrooms for one semester to see the effect of culture instruction on foreign language learning. When culture lessons were integrated into EFL instruction, students' language proficiency was significantly improved.

The effect of prior knowledge was examined by Hasen and Jensen (1995). They stated that students' prior knowledge could bias the tests. After having studied the results of 128 university level L2 learners, they concluded that prior knowledge does not dramatically contribute to L2 listening comprehension.

Additionally, Schmidt-Rinehart (1994) investigated the effect of topic familiarity on L2 listening comprehension. Students listened to two familiar passages. The passages represented authentic language in that the recordings were from spontaneous speech of a native speaker. Listening comprehension was assessed through a native language recall protocol procedure. Subjects scored considerably higher on the familiar topic than on the new one. She concluded that background knowledge in the form of topic familiarity emerges as a powerful factor in facilitating listening comprehension.

In the light of Iranian studies of the effect of cultural knowledge on students' listening comprehension, Dastjerdi and Hayati Samian (2012) carried out a study with the main purpose of investigating the relationship between prior knowledge (cultural knowledge in focus) and EFL learners' listening comprehension. The participants were selected based on their scores on FCE test. Then, they were randomly divided into four groups. In order to account for the influence of culture on listening comprehension, four types of materials reflecting different cultures were focused. Each group practiced with listening comprehension materials that reflected a particular culture. Finally, the four groups took a listening comprehension test which included sample listening comprehension materials. As a result, some evidence obtained by statistical analyses indicated that cultural familiarization of the text had a significant effect on listening comprehension and participants performed significantly better on test questions that had culturally familiar content.

Adinevand and Bakhtiarvand (2011) explored the effect of cultural knowledge on listening comprehension. For the purpose of the study, one hundred and twenty students who had scored between 5.5 and 47.5 out of 100 on a sample listening comprehension proficiency test were selected as pre-intermediate language learners. They were randomly divided into four groups. They studied listening comprehension materials selected from internet reliable sites and other authentic sources such as New Interchange series (Richards, 2005). Finally, the four groups took a listening comprehension test. The results of the study support the claim that background knowledge and topic familiarity would improve students' performance in listening comprehension.

In another study, Hayati (2009) conducted an experiment that focused on the influence of cultural knowledge on listening comprehension. A hundred and twenty participants with the age range of 13-25 were selected based on language proficiency test; later based on systematic random sampling, they were divided into four groups: group A (target culture), group B (international target culture), group C (source culture) and group D (culture-free). The participants in each group practiced listening materials that reflected a particular culture. Finally, the scores obtained by post-test in four groups were compared with one another. The results of the study revealed that the four groups performed differently on the post-test which was indicative of the fact that greater cultural familiarity with listening materials promoted the Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension.

Sadighi and Zare (2002) investigated the effect of background knowledge on listening comprehension. Two TOEFL preparation classes took part in their study. The experimental group received some treatment in the form of topic familiarity, and their background knowledge was activated. Then a 50-item TOEFL test of listening comprehension was administered to both

experimental and control groups. Finally, statistical analysis of the results provided some evidence in support of the effect of background knowledge on listening comprehension.

Clearly, few empirical studies have explored the effect of cultural knowledge and background knowledge on the listening comprehension. Mao (2006) stated that cultural studies concerning English have been of most significance in the age of economic globalization. In addition, the rapid increasing of intercultural communication and cooperation with other countries through seminars, foreign trades, international contests and development of the global economy raises the need to nurture the students' cultural understanding. In fact, by teaching cultural knowledge, students will be able to predict the behavior of people and understand appropriately other cultures. Language learners want to understand target language (L2) speakers and they want to be able to access the rich variety of aural and visual L2 texts available today via network based multimedia, such as on-line audio and video, YouTube, podcasts and blogs (Rost, 2002). So, it is likely to say that along with globalization and the use of technology for listening instruction, it is the aim of Iranian EFL learners to make them ready for real-life listening and greater gains in comprehension. Moreover, it seems that the EFL field in Iran is in need of further studies investigating the issue of cultural knowledge through visual inputs (e.g. video clips, gestures, illustrations, etc.). Therefore, this study is conducted to find out if listening comprehension could be improved by providing the cultural knowledge through *role-playing*, *audio-motor unit* (Jarvis (1977), Lafayette (1978) and Morain (1978)) and watching video clips. To this end, the researchers tried to address the following question:

Is listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners affected by culturally-oriented materials?

## **2. Methodology**

### *2.1. Research Design*

In order to achieve the purpose of this research, a quasi-experimental study with pre-and post-test design was used. Independent variables include teaching techniques which has two levels: lecture-based and the new ones using *role-playing*, *audio-motor unit*, and watching video. The dependent variables include scores of students in pre-and post-tests. . In this study, the gender, age and English proficiency level were control variables.

### **2.2. Participants**

The sample of study included 70, out of 95; intermediate students of Shokouh institute in Lahijan (Guilan province). The subjects were randomly selected. All the participants were female with the age range of 15 to 17. They got a lot of exposure to different English books such as Connect Series and New Interchange Series

### **2.3. Instruments**

#### *2.3.1. Solutions Placement Test:*

In order to select homogeneous participants, Solutions Placement Test (Edwards, 2007) extracted from [www.solutionsplacementtest.com](http://www.solutionsplacementtest.com) was used. The test was piloted with the similar group of female students. In the piloting phase, 20 students were given the test. The reliability of the test was .9 based on KR-21 method. The content validity of Solutions Placement Test was proved through examining the test by two specialists. Solutions Placement Test consisted of:

- 50 multiple-choice questions which assessed students' knowledge of key grammar and vocabulary
- A reading text with 10 graded comprehension questions
- A writing text

#### *2.3.2. Tactics for Listening:*

A sample listening comprehension proficiency test extracted from Tactics for Listening (Richards, 2010) was administered as a pre-and post-test. The test contained 20 multiple-choice items. In the piloting phase, 15 female students were given the test. The English proficiency level of these students was intermediate. The reliability of test was .7 based on KR-21 method. The content validity of Tactics

for Listening was proved through examining the test by two specialists in the field of EFL learning and teaching.

#### **2.4. Materials**

In order to elicit cultural knowledge, variety of materials such as culturally-oriented texts extracted from reliable site [www.Headsupenglish.com](http://www.Headsupenglish.com) accompanying with clips chosen from [www.halloweenishes-com/videos](http://www.halloweenishes-com/videos) and [www.savevid.com/video/scary-halloween-video-video-html](http://www.savevid.com/video/scary-halloween-video-video-html) were used. These materials contained cultural information related to British customs and more specifically Halloween. The clips were from spontaneous speech of native speakers.

#### **2.5. Procedure**

At the first stage, a pilot study was conducted in Shokouh institute, Iran, Lahijan. The Solutions Placement Test (Edwards, 2007) was given to a group of twenty participants. The subjects were selected randomly. The reliability of the test was .9 based on Kuder-Richardson 21 (KR-21). After checking the test for ceiling and floor effects, the test was given to the target group of learners (95 females). The scores of the participants were calculated. Then, 70 of students, whose scores were above 47, were classified as intermediate level (according to borderline defined in Solutions Placement Test-“Oxford University Press”). Next, in order to ensure the homogeneity of the subjects in terms of listening comprehension ability, they were given Tactics for Listening (Richards, 2010) as a pre-test. After that, they were randomly divided into two equal groups of A and B. Out of 70, 35 students represented group A, and the other 35 students represented group B. Group A was the control group, one who didn't receive any treatment. Group B was the experimental group whose content schema was activated by *role-playing*, *audio-motor unit*, and watching video clips. The participants in this group practiced listening comprehension materials in two phases.

##### *Phase1 (week one-week two)*

The treatment was conducted in a two hour classes twice a week. The treatment class took the learners for a month. At the first phase, they practiced actively based on *role-playing* and *audio-motor unit* (Jarvis (1977), Lafayette (1978) and Morain (1978)). Audio-Motor Unit is primarily a listening comprehension exercise. Students are supposed to react physically to the instructor's verbal commands. For example, an instructor might have students step through proper dining etiquette. Doing this kind of activity helps students learn cultural actions by actually doing them. Explanations for why certain things are done may help students understand what just really happened.

##### *Phase2 (week three-week four)*

At the second phase, the students in treatment group were asked to work on the video clips focused on Halloween. After watching two videos, they were asked to share their findings through the discussion and write a summary. Some questions were also designed by teacher to guide the watching and lead students to capture meaning. Because of the limited time in class, only half of the video clips could be taught by teacher. So, the students were requested to watch the whole video after class. Thus, the treatment group had opportunity to interact with a visual component whereas the students in control group were asked to work with texts and Listen to the lectures. Finally, the listening comprehension test, Tactics for listening, was distributed as a post-test and the two groups took the test. The scores of the two groups were compared with each other to see the probable effect of the treatment on the participants' listening comprehension proficiency.

#### **3. Results**

Statistical analyses of the experimental and control groups' scores in pre-and post-tests are shown in the following Tables.

##### *The results of the Solutions Placement Test*

The homogeneity of the participants regarding their level of language proficiency was checked by means of Solutions Placement test (Edwards, 2007) using independent samples t-test with the level of



significance set at .05. Means, standard deviations, and standard error means of each of the two groups are presented in Table1.

**Table1. Descriptive Statistics for Solutions Placement Test**

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental group	35	49.34	2.75	.465
Control group	35	49.02	2.97	.502

As the results show, the means, standard deviations, and standard error means of each of the two experimental and control groups are to some extent similar. Since the means of the two groups cannot show the significant difference between experimental and control groups in terms of their level of language proficiency, an Independent Samples t-Test is conducted to show the degree of significance between each group.

**Table2. Independent Samples t-Test**

Levene' s Test for Equality of Variances		t-Test for Equality of Means		
F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
.385	.537	.459	68	.648

The 35 participants in the experimental group ( $M = 49.34$ ,  $SD = 2.75$ ) and the 35 participants in the control group ( $M = 49.02$ ,  $SD = 2.97$ ), did not demonstrate a significance difference in performance ( $t(68) = .459$ ,  $p = .05$ ). The results indicate that the students are of intermediate level.

### The Results of the Tactics for Listening

In order to make sure that the two groups were homogeneous in listening comprehension, a pre-test was administered to both experimental and control groups. In the pre-test, there were 20 multiple-choice questions which carried 20 marks. Multiple-choice questions were used because the scores were reported objectively. The descriptive statistics of this test for experimental group (Group B) is shown in Table3. The mean score for the pre-test is 13.02 with a standard deviation of .821. The minimum score is 12, while the maximum score is 14. Regarding the performance of control group (Group A) in the pre-test, the minimum score is 9, while the maximum score is 14. The mean score for the pre-test is 11.60 with a standard deviation of 1.51. As Table3 indicates the mean of the experimental group ( $M = 13.02$ ) in the listening pre-test is higher than the mean of the control group ( $M = 11.60$ ). In order to see if the two groups performed significantly different or not in the pre-test, an Independent Samples t-Test is run. The results are shown in Table4. ( $t(68) = 4.89$ ,  $p = 0.000 < .05$ ). Four weeks later, the post-test was administered. The same listening passage was used for the post-test. The mean of the experimental group in the post-test score was 18.14 with a standard deviation of 1.00. The minimum score was 17, while the maximum score was 20. Based on Table3, the mean of the control group in the post-test was 11.42 with a standard deviation of 1.42. The minimum score was 9, while the maximum score was 14. Table3 indicates that the mean of the experimental group ( $M = 18.14$ ) in the listening post-test is higher than the mean of the control group ( $M = 11.42$ ). As shown in Table4, the difference between the control and experimental group's performance on the listening post-test is significant ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ).

In order to make a comparison between the performance of each of the groups in terms of pre-and post-test, the statistical t-Test for Dependent Samples is also run. As Table5 indicates, there is a statistically significant difference between the experimental group's performance in the pre-and post-test ( $t(34) = 21.80$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Also, Table 5 reveals that there is no statistically significant difference between the control group's performance in the pre- and post-test ( $t(34) = .745$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ).



Therefore, students practicing actively based on *role-playing*, *audio-motor unit*, and watching video clips had higher scores ( $M = 18.14$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ) than did those listening to lectures ( $M = 11.42$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ). The results confirmed that having greater exposure to culturally-oriented materials such as culturally-oriented video clips and listening comprehension exercises enhanced the ability of listening comprehension in the treatment group. That is, the participants in the Group B performed more homogeneously than the participants in the Group A. Regarding the performance of the control group, the results confirmed that the difference between the subjects' mean scores in the pre-and post-test was not statistically significant. In other words, the participants in the control group failed to improve their level of listening comprehension ability.

Table3. Descriptive Statistics for Tactics

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental group (pre-test)	35	13.02	.821	.138
Experimental group (post-test)	35	18.14	1.00	.169
Control group (pre-test)	35	11.60	1.51	.256
Control group (post-test)	35	11.42	1.42	.240

Table4. Independent Samples t-Test

Tests	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test	11.46	.000	4.89	68	.000
Post-test	5.03	.028	22.83	68	.000

Table5. Paired Samples Test

Condition	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Group B	-5.08	1.37	.233	-21.80	34	.000
Group A	.171	1.36	.230	.745	34	.461

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The main findings of this study were as follows:

1. Building cultural knowledge and familiarity with the culturally-oriented materials would be resulted in successful comprehension. These results were consistent with the findings of Bada & Genc (2005), Dastjerdi & Hayati Samian (2012), etc. They claimed that cultural familiarity was essential for enhancing listening comprehension. Thus, helping students to build cultural knowledge, done in *role-playing* and *audio-motor model*, facilitated listening comprehension ability. Additionally, the results of this study supported that of Schmidt-Rinehart (1994). He claimed that topic familiarity would improve students' performance in listening comprehension.
2. Activating prior knowledge relevant to listening materials increased listening comprehension. The present study gives evidence that lack of background knowledge may hamper listening comprehension. According to Anderson and Lynch (2000), successful comprehension in listening takes place when the listener has schematic knowledge, knowledge of the context and systemic knowledge. The results of this study were in line with those of studies conducted by Sadighi and Zare (2002). However, the results contradicted that of Hasen and Jensen (1995). They claimed that prior knowledge did not dramatically contribute to L2 listening comprehension.
3. Teaching cultural knowledge need to be seen as an integral part of Iranian language courses. According to Gakuin, Sasaki, and Yoshinori (1991), two general views exist in relation to culture. Teaching English without culture or inclusion of culture in the curriculum. The first view is consistent with that of Chambers' (1997). According to him, comprehension as a crucial component of aural proficiency cannot be improved through

practice or exposure to language listening materials such as those of culturally-oriented listening texts. On the other hand, supporters of the second view believe that language and culture are not separable and all language is interpreted in relation to the culture and, therefore, teaching language irrespective of culture is impossible. So, the results of this study were in line with the second view.

4. In order to compensate whatever which is absent in students' culture, the use of additional materials can be supportive. Our findings support the idea that using authentic sources from the native speech community helps to engage students in authentic cultural experiences. Sources can include films, news broadcasts, television shows, Web sites, photographs, magazines, newspapers, restaurant menus, travel brochures, and other materials (Wang, 2011).
5. In this research, technology played a prominent role in enhancing comprehension. It is likely to say that treatment group outperformed the control group because they had opportunity to watch video clips. Belmonte and Verdugo (2007) reported similar findings. According to them, weekly interaction with 'an internet-based technology' using songs, games and stories resulted in greater comprehension gains than regular textbook-based listening activities.

This study made it clear that due to the importance of pedagogical implication of listening in EFL contexts, more attention should be paid to increase the cultivation of cultural consciousness in Iranian curriculum. This can be a great help to students to achieve much better cultural understanding. To achieve this purpose, the use of authentic materials, activating prior knowledge, and familiarity with cultural-oriented materials should be in the centre of focus. Further, it seems that some questions still remain unanswered. Therefore, the effect of cultural knowledge on the listening comprehension process needs much more research attention. Future studies using questionnaire and interview may be able to achieve a greater understanding of the value of visual support vs. text in lecture. Moreover, it is necessary to see the potential effect of cultural knowledge on listening skill with a larger group of participants incorporating both male and female in different levels of language proficiency than it is used in this study.

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## PROBLEM SOLVING STRATEGIES AFFECT ON TEACHING POEMS AMONG EFL LEARNERS

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### Abstract

More than other genres, poetry seems to elicit the most groans from students. Often language arts teachers report feeling uncomfortable teaching poetry, because they aren't sure how to teach it effectively. Most of teachers follow traditional approaches for teaching poetry in which the teacher, like the protagonist in a 'dramatic monologue', is the only speaker and the students, being silent listeners, have practically got nothing to do other than listen to what the teacher says, no matter whether they enjoy it or not. Such approaches, predominantly teacher-centered, neither can arouse students' genuine interest in the content being taught nor do they directly involve the students in the teaching- learning process. It is, therefore, imperative to investigate about new techniques, strategies, approaches to teaching pretty which would help students. In a traditional classroom, the teacher like the protagonist in a 'dramatic monologue', speaks before the students who, being silent listeners, have practically got nothing to do other than listening to what the teacher says, no matter whether they understand it or not. In such approaches, "the teaching of literature", as Moody (1983) observes, "has faltered and students have been led busily but aimlessly through 'forests of inspired literary gossips', or cajoled into rigid and doctrinaire interpretation"(p. 23). An ideal classroom situation is one in which students' maximum participation is ensured. The present study looked for new strategies and techniques to make poetry classes more desirable and teacher , teach more effectively by directly involving the students in the classroom activities. To involve learners in learning process researcher decided to observe problem solving strategies in poetry class and investigated about the effect of using problem solving strategies on teaching English poems among Iranian EFL learners.

**Key Words:** problem solving, strategies, teaching poems

### 1.1. Theoretical framework

A Problem-based learning (PBL) was originated from the reforms in medical education at McMaster University in the mid-1960s. It derived from the theory that learning was a process in which the learners actively constructed knowledge (Gejselaers, 1996: 13). In PBL instruction, learning is primarily constructed by students who have been presented with a problem. The problem, by itself, engages students in learning because as soon as they are presented with a problem, they have to brainstorm among their peers to identify the problem statement and generate learning issues for their own self-directed learning. Then they will come back to their groups to share the knowledge that they have learned and discuss it over for possible solutions to the problem According to Duch (2001) and Igo et al. (2008), PBL instruction is driven by challenging and open-ended or ill-structured problems which mean that there is no right or wrong answer to those problems, but there are reasonable solutions based on the application of learners 'knowledge and information.

The important characteristics of a good PBL problem can be summarized to be as follows: (a) it must first motivate students to probe for deeper understanding and relate the subject matter to the real world as much as possible; (b) it required students to take responsibilities of their learning in order to find the solutions; (c) it requires the cooperative learning and group discussion to synthesize what they have learned or known to come up with a solution; (d) it should be incorporated with the

content objectives of the course, connecting new knowledge to concepts in other courses and/or disciplines. Problem-based learning (PBL) approach has recently played a significant role as a teaching approach that enhances the cognitive and metacognitive knowledge of the students. It is an approach that engages students in learning how to learn while they also learn language and content (Mathews-Aydinli, 2007: 1).

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is aligned with the constructivist framework that views learning and teaching as the active and meaningful inquiry and building of knowledge by learners. PBL fosters both inquiry- and knowledge-based approaches to problem solving. As an inquiry-based approach, its focus is on helping professionals such as teachers work through authentic, complex problems or cases (Bereiter and Scardamalia 2006; Hmelo-Silver 2004). The cases simulate real-life classroom decision making (Brown, Collins, and Duguid 1989), including considering multiple perspectives, warranting solutions, assessing consequences, and reflecting on decisions.

### **1.1.1. PBL model**

Mathews-Aydinli (2007) has suggested four main steps in implementing problem-based learning: (1) introducing learners to the problem, (2) exploring what learners do and do not know about the problem (3) generating possible solutions to the problem, and (4) considering the consequences of each solution and selecting the most viable solution. Both Woods (1995) and Wadhwa (2005) agree that learners cannot improve language or academic skill simply by sitting in a PBL class. Learning involves tasks such as the understanding of a teacher's role, the preparing of opened or ill-structured problems where there is no right or wrong answer, the collaborating, and the encouraging self-directed learning. In the case of language learning, the process skills such as discussion, self-directed learning, and problem-solving should be emphasized in parallel with the English performances of the learners.

The PBL model would be implemented in this study according to the above mentioned criteria. The process consists of six stages: (a) Lead-in Activities, (b) Meeting the Problem, (c) Problem Analysis & Learning Issues, (d) Discovery & Reporting, (e) Solution Presentation & Reflection, and (f) Overview, Integration & Evaluation. In the Lead-in Activities Stage, teachers introduce some lead-in activities, related to the theme of the problem, which can be activities, and review of difficult vocabulary. After giving the students an open-ended/ ill-structured problem in the next stage, teachers should make sure that students understand the problem and then divide learners into small groups.

In Problem Analysis & Learning Issues Stage, there are small group discussions to identify the problem statement and learning issues. In the Discovery & Reporting Stage, students in each small group will share some of their discovered information, and their peers will help gather the solution and prepare a presentation to the class. In the next stage, each group will present their solution to the class. After that, there will be a whole class discussion and reflection. In the final Stage, students will reflect on what they have learned and criticize themselves. While the students are moving from each stage, the teachers will act as facilitators to support their language and provide feedback on their language use. Additionally, there are scaffolding strategies for the learners to make progress and encourage them to be the self-directed learners.

### **1.2. Significance and purpose of the study**

This research provides evidence and some causes that using problem solving strategies would help teaching English poetry among Iranian EFL learner. In traditional poetry classes, teacher is the only speaker and a student feel the role of passive learners and has no participation in class room.

It is hoped this investigation will be useful and appropriate for following reason:

- 1) It gives language teachers and learners an opportunity to begin thinking about the new ways of teaching and learning English poetry among Iranian EFL learners and persuade them to examine modern methods and techniques.
- 2) It can be used to increase the students' participation in poetry 'class and to bring up their awareness during the process of learning.

- 3) it requires the cooperative learning and group discussion to synthesize what they have learned or known to come up with a solution
- 4) it required students to take responsibilities of their learning in order to understand problematic pattern
- 4) it create more desirable atmosphere in poetry class because of team working which motivate them.

### **1.3. Statement of the problem**

Literature and poetry is one of the most important elements of foreign language learning. It is commonly assumed that English poetry is too difficult for foreign students to cope with therefore it will be out of their reach and Because of the difficulties they encounter in learning poem ,it is the great concern of .Iranian EFL learners . Thus, if the methodology currently used in the poetry classes is not effective and successful, it is worthwhile experimenting with other methods strategies and finding out whether they will yield significantly different result or not .

Much has been written about the problems associated with teaching poetry. More than other genres, poetry seems to elicit the most groans from students. Often language arts teachers report feeling uncomfortable teaching poetry, either because they aren't sure how to teach it effectively (owing to lack of pedagogical role models), or because they find it elusive themselves. The dominant model of poetry teaching has been to teach poetry through print text and to focus on finding one meaning to be dissected. In contrast, poets emphasize the importance of hearing the poem read aloud (lifting the poem from the page), engaging with it, and probing for deeper meaning through discussion with others. If we want our students to understand how literature, and poetry in particular, brings them to a deeper understanding in life, we need to find meaningful ways to engage them with poetry.

Hughes. J(2007)

Although revolutionary changes have taken place in Foreign Language Teaching methodology, most of our teachers, ignorant of these recent developments, still follow traditional approaches in which the teacher, like the protagonist in a 'dramatic monologue', is the only speaker and the students, being silent listeners, have practically got nothing to do other than listen to what the teacher says, no matter whether they enjoy it or not. Such approaches, predominantly teacher-centered, neither can arouse students' genuine interest in the content being taught nor do they directly involve the students in the teaching-learning process DR. Sujit K. Datta. (2001)

Poetry like other literary genres exists to be enjoyed and appreciated. The difficult task facing any instructor is to develop this sense of appreciation and enjoyment in students who are not interested in poetry. The teaching of poetry to EFL students has always been a very demanding task. It is commonly assumed that English poetry is too difficult for foreign students to cope with and therefore it will be out of their reach.

There is no doubt that poetry is perceived by many people, including, sadly, teachers, as something highbrow, difficult and obscure. It is a common prejudice among many teachers at the secondary school that poetry is difficult, and they are, therefore, reluctant to teach it. This is a pity for teachers and the students, as well as for the poems, for poetry represents essential human qualities, without which we are just nothing but what could be called "sub-lingual". Since, it is often argued, poetry represents a peculiar kind of knowledge about language, and therefore offers a utility, which, while being greatly extended by literacy, has its origin elsewhere. Reeves (1963) argue that "in the teaching of poetry basically there are four factors to be considered. The pupils; the poems to be taught; the methods adopted and the personality of the teacher. But, personality of teacher is not only elements of taste, judgments and training which determine a teachers choice of poems and attitude towards poetry, but also the impact, he makes on the class when handling the subject". Khansir.A. (2012) English poetry has been taught in many non-native countries as well as in Iran for many years, but what has dominated the teaching of poetry is the traditional approaches. Teachers lecture about the things that will prepare the students for a particular exam and will not encourage them to share their own views with their peers and teachers. Khatib.M (2011).

This study intends to show how using problem solving strategies enables a teacher in the classroom to teach more effectively by directly involving the students in the classroom activities.

#### **1.4. Research question of the study**

Do using problem solving strategies affect teaching poems among Iranian EFL learners?

#### **1.5. Hypothesis of the study**

Using problem solving strategies does not affect teaching poems among Iranian EFL learners.

Students learning English as a new language face many challenges regarding poetry. Not only must they be proficient in new language, they must also use the new language to study and enjoy poetry which comes from another culture and system of communication, thus students should be acquainted with strategies and techniques which make poetry classes more enjoyable to them. Most of the student express that poetry classes is so boring because it seems that their job is as a passive listener only listen to the teacher ,but if we change the conditions and the learner be responsible for their learning ,find the difficulties and solve the problems ,the class will be more desirable. The researcher decided to investigate about employing techniques and strategies of problem solving to make the poetry classes learner centered and dynamic.

#### **1.6. Design of the study**

Within the field of language learning and teaching, PBL engages language students in learning how to learn while they also learn language and content. Generally, as mathews-Aydinli (2007) has suggested, teacher is as a coach for or facilitator of activities that students carry out themselves. Teacher role does not simply present information or directly control the progression of work. Instead, she provide students with appropriate problems to work on, assist them in identifying and accessing the materials and equipment necessary to solve the problems, give necessary feedback and support during the problem solving process, and evaluate their participation and products, with the goal of helping them develop their problem-solving as well as their language and literacy skills. The important characteristics of a good PBL problem can be summarized to be as follows: (a) it must first motivate students to probe for deeper understanding and relate the subject matter to the real world as much as possible; (b) it required students to take responsibilities of their learning in order to find the solutions; (c) it requires the cooperative learning and group discussion to synthesize what they have learned or known to come up with a solution; (d) it should be incorporated with the content objectives of the course, connecting new knowledge to concepts in other courses and/or disciplines. Mathews-Aydinli (2007) has also concluded the four main steps of PBL process for students which are:

1. Being introduced to the problem;
2. Exploring what they do and do not know about the problem;
3. Generating possible solutions to the problem and;
4. Considering the consequences of each solution and selection the most viable solution.

#### **1.7. Utilizing PBL in the poetry class**

After intensive literature reviews on the topic, researcher decided to incorporate PBL into English poetry class in Chalous Azad University. In PBL, students are encouraged to be active rather than passive and to co-operate rather than compete. Group activities and making each student responsible for facts and ideas discussed in class, stimulates total participation. All students are involved in class and the participation is achieved. All of these group activities both develop the speaking abilities of students and decrease the negative effect of affective filters.

The teaching plan covered six sessions of instruction; the first session of the course was designed to be delivered traditionally to introduce PBL to the student. PBL can be frustrating and disturbing for new students. Students were invited to form groups of maximum of five students as this size was judged to be suitable for the complexity of the work involved and also, as a general rule, four to five students



work well together. In each group one of the student acts as a leader of group. Then, each group was assigned to problem based on the use of teaching material designs.

In the remaining five session the class time was allocated to students with the lecturer/ tutor acting as a facilitator for the learning process, students work in group and were supposed to hold their time for searching information relevant to the problem to be solved, the role of the teacher was to guide students through the process of answering question and not to provide any answers.

After being *sure* that students understand the goals and benefits of a problem-based approach for language learning, researcher start using problem-solving strategies in the class. Texts also were provided to introduce the problem to students. Students also need to be prepared for vocabulary related to the problem. Students were asked about previous personal experiences with the problem and provide pre-reading exercises about it. Student were *sure* that that there is no single answer or solution, and they need to choose what appears to be the most viable answer to them and be prepared to explain why they chose that solution.

Researcher observes students and provides support as needed, but do not attempt to direct their efforts or control their activity in solving the problem. While observing, she took notes and provided feedback on student. Classroom environment was somewhat different from the traditional one.

Student were sitting around in group, Facing the poetry , each group got different ideas. Two members of the group were assigned special roles, one as a leader and the other as a secretary. Each group received the poem. The groups studied the poem and clarified the terms for precise understanding. Each group raised some questions about the poem. The secretary wrote the questions on the paper. Each group brainstormed to find out the possibly answers/solutions for each problem had risen. The secretary wrote the responses on the paper. Each group set hypothesis, the secretary wrote the responses on the paper. Students in each group search for the answers/solutions in response to each hypothesis had posted.

### **1.8. Participants**

The participants selected for this study were 40 intermediate English proficiency level from Chlous Azad University. Most of them were female with the average age range of 24 . they were randomly divided in two classes .One of the classes was the experimental group (n =20) the other was the control group (n=20) . The same material and resource were used for both classes .

### **1.9. Materials**

The selection of the poem was based on the fact that the selected poems should be the most frequent and familiar English poems among Iranian language learners of the same proficiency level .Thus five well known poetry from famous poet were introduced as course material which are listed below:

The Road Not Taken	by Robert Frost
Night train	by Fahazel johannesse
Ozimandess	by Shelly
Love from my country	by Dikeni
Ancestore at wonderwork	by M.cope

### **1.10. Procedures**

Student were divided into two group , control group and experimental groups .In the control group ,researcher used the traditional approach to teaching poetry .The Instructor read the poem aloud and a short biography of the poet and the historical, political, and/or social background of the poem was given to the students. The figures of speech and other literary devices were explained. . The instructor paraphrased the difficult lines and talked about the central idea expressed in the poem. One or two students were invited to read the poem aloud to the class.

In the experimental group the seating arrangement was changed from traditional style of rows to a complete circle. This seating arrangement prepared the scene for small-group learning. Researcher tried to awaken initial interest in the poem, to familiarize students with the possible contents of the poem they were to read. And help the students to be involved with the text as much as possible

The PBL model has been implemented in this study according to the above mentioned criteria. The process consists of six stages: (a) Lead-in Activities, (b) Meeting the Problem, (c) Problem Analysis & Learning Issues, (d) Discovery & Reporting, (e) Solution Presentation & Reflection, and (f) Evaluation. In the Lead-in Activities Stage, teachers introduced some lead-in activities, related to the theme of the problem, which were pointing to the theme of the poem and giving some necessary information about the poem and difficult vocabulary. After giving the students the new poetry which was selected for the class according to class interest and proficiency level. In the next stage, a teacher was sure that students understand the problem and then divided learners into small groups. In Problem Analysis & Learning Issues Stage, there were small group discussions to identify the problematic statement and learning issues. In the Discovery & Reporting Stage, students in each small group shared some of their discovered information, and their peers helped to gather the solution and prepare a presentation to the class. In the next stage, each group presented their solution to the class. After that, there was a whole class discussion and reflection. In the final Stage, students reflected on what they had learned and criticized themselves. While the students were moving from each stage, the teachers acted as facilitators to support their language and provided feedback on their language use. The process of the PBL approach used in this study is illustrated below:

Stage 1 . Lead in activities.

Awakening initial interest in the poem,

Stage 2 . Meeting the problem

Familiarizing students with the possible contents of the poem introducing vocabulary relating to the theme of the poem

stage :3 problem analysis & learning issue

Small group discussion to identify problematic statement & learning issues

Stage 4: Discovery and reporting

Small group discussion to share discovered information gather solution, & prepare presentation to the whole class

Stage 5: solution presentation.

Whole class discussion and reflection on the poem

Stage 6 : Overview and evaluation

Students reflected on what they have learned & criticized themselves and teacher provided feedback on Students' and made comment on their work.

In order to make sure that all the participants were homogeneous and truly at the same level of language proficiency, Oxford Placement Test was employed as the homogenizing instrument .this is an online free placement test published by c oxford university press 2007 including 70 items of grammar and vocabulary, reading and writing. As a posttest students were tested with the five quiz on each poetry which their reliability were estimated 0/67 according to 3 interpreters

#### **1.11. method of analyzing data**

After scoring the tests and tabulating the scores for each subject the data of the study were analyzed through the SPSS software via T-Test. SPSS software computed the obtained score by comparing the mean of students post test score.

#### **1.12. Summary**

this research is done to investigate for new strategies and techniques to be utilized in poetry classes to decrease EFL learners' problems in studying English poetry .Thus researcher tried to use problem solving strategies in EFL learner 'poetry classes .The research is done in Chalous Azad University .60

students whom were homogenized by OPT were the participants of this study ,they were divided into two control and experimental group and they were exposed to same materials but by two different teaching strategies . The control class carried out the traditional approach and the experimental group followed the strategies of problem solving theory .As a final stage students were exposed to five teacher made quiz with the 0/67 reliability The obtained data of the posttest were computed by SPSS soft via T-Test .

### **1.13. General discussion**

The findings of the current study indicated that using problem solving strategies could not result in a better performance of language learners in poetry classes and EFL learners stile have problem with English poetry learning. These findings seem to be compatible with the findings of the research study made DR. Sujit K. Dtta. (2001) that although revolutionary changes have taken place in Foreign Language Teaching methodology, most of our teachers, ignorant of these recent developments, still follow traditional approaches in which the teacher, like the protagonist in a 'dramatic monologue', is the only speaker and the students, being silent listeners, have practically got nothing to do other than listen to what the teacher says, no matter whether they enjoy it or not. Such approaches, predominantly teacher-centered, neither can arouse students' genuine interest in the content being taught nor do they directly involve the students in the teaching-learning process Further, the results of this study are in line. Hughes. J(2007)that Much has been written about the problems associated with teaching poetry. More than other genres, poetry seems to elicit the most groans from students. Often language arts teachers report feeling uncomfortable teaching poetry, either because they aren't sure how to teach it effectively (owing to lack of pedagogical role models), or because they find it elusive themselves. The dominant model of poetry teaching has been to teach poetry through print text and to focus on finding one meaning to be dissected. In contrast, poets emphasize the importance of hearing the poem read aloud (lifting the poem from the page), engaging with it, and probing for deeper meaning through discussion with others. If we want our students to understand how literature, and poetry in particular, brings them to a deeper understanding in life, we need to find meaningful ways to engage them with poetry

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MJLTM

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WRITING PERFORMANCE OF IELTS LEARNERS

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## Abstract

The present study elaborated on the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Writing Performance. In fact, this study made attempts to indicate whether EI has any relationship with writing performance and whether components of EI can be a predictor of learners' writing. 30 advanced IELTS students from two English language teaching institutes in Boushehr were selected to participate in the current study. Two instruments were used including IELTS writing Test (argumentative essay) and Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence (SSREI). Learners' scores obtained from the SSREI and IELTS writing test were then analyzed via Pearson's correlation coefficient, standard regression and ANOVA. The findings of this study revealed the fact that there is no relationship between EI & Writing and between EI components and Writing.

Key words: Emotional Intelligence (EI), Writing, IELTS Writing

## 1. Introduction

In the past decade or so, growing interest has been attached to affective factors and emotional intelligence in foreign language learning. Affective factors are emotional traits which influence learning and can have a negative or positive effect on it. Many philosophers and scientists viewed human intelligence as being a single capacity that people were born with and that could not be altered throughout the life. Traditionally, standardized Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and Aptitude tests based on verbal fluency, breadth of vocabulary, and computational skills were used as instruments to measure intelligence. Intelligence was traditionally defined and measured in terms of Linguistic and Logical Mathematical abilities. Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences utilizes aspects of cognitive and developmental psychology, anthropology, and sociology paving the way for uncovering other intelligences such as *Emotional intelligence*, which is interchangeably known as EI or EQ to explain the human intellect. Gardner (1983: 81) defines intelligence as "the ability to solve problems or to create products that are valued with one or more cultural settings".

The concept of Emotional Intelligence formally developed out of growing emphasis on research on the interaction of emotion and thought in the field of psychology in 1990s (Grewal & Salovey, 2006). EQ/EI is about the intelligent use of emotions and utilizing the power or information contained in emotion to make effective decisions. In relating intelligence to second language learning, Brown (1994: 93) states that in the past it was conceived that "the greatest barrier to second language learning seemed to boil down to a matter of memory", in the sense that if a student could remember something he or she would be a successful language learner.

## 2. Review of literature

A theoretical presentation of EI by Salovey and Mayer (1990) appeared almost concurrently with an article reporting the first empirical study on EI (Mayer et al., 1990). These authors assert that the concept of EI draws from research on emotion as well as that of intelligence. With respect to emotion they point out that it has been considered by many philosophers and scientists since antiquity, and those opinions have varied widely. Some characterized emotion as disruptive of mental activities, and therefore an affliction that must be controlled. Others viewed it as an adaptive tool which afforded effective action on the environment arising from focused mental activity. Salovey and Mayer adopt a

view that emotions are an organized, multi-system, psychological response to some internal or external events that the individual perceives as positive or negative.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) go on to point out an important difference between intelligence and *models of intelligence*. Whereas the construct intelligence describes a comprehensive set of abilities exhibited by individuals, the models of intelligence paradigm involve a grouping of mental abilities into categories that may share little or no variance with respect to how much of a particular intelligence an individual possesses.

Wolfradt, Felfe, Koster (2001-2002) in two studies showed that Emotional Intelligence is mainly associated with personality traits (extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, self-perceived creativity), life satisfaction and thinking styles with only a low relation to verbal intelligence. Furthermore, people higher in Emotional intelligence dimension, produced more creative performances than those lower in this dimension.

The relationship between attachment style and Emotional Intelligence was explored by Rouhani (2008) in a sample of the university of Tehran students. Two hundred students (107 girls, 93 boys) participated in this study; all participants were asked to complete the Adult Attachment Inventory (AAI) and the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS). Analysis of the data involved both descriptive and inferential statistics including means, standard deviations, *t*-test, correlation coefficient, and regression analysis. The results showed that attachment styles are associated with Emotional Intelligence. Secure attachment style was positively associated with EI and insecure attachment style (avoidant, ambivalence) were negatively associated with EI.

Bolton et al. (2002), also, conducted a corpus-based study of logical connectors in student writing. Their research focused on usage of logical connector in the English essay writing of university students in Hong Kong and in Great Britain, and presented results based on the comparison of data from the Hong Kong component and the British component of the International Corpus of English (ICE).

As Bolton et al. (2002) pointed out, the study confined itself to the analysis of underuse and overuse of logical connectors and was especially concerned with methodological issues relating to the accurate measurement of these concepts. The results claimed to show that "both groups of students – native speakers and non-native speakers alike – overuse a wide range of connectors and no evidence of significant underuse was observed (Bolton, Nelson, & Hung, 2002, p. 165). The results also indicated that the overuse of connectors is not limited to non-native speakers, but is a significant feature of students' writing, in general (Bolton, Nelson, & Hung, 2002).

### **3. Research Questions and Hypotheses**

To fulfill the purpose of this study, the following questions are raised:

1. Is there any significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and writing performance of IELTS students?

2. Which components of Emotional Intelligence can best predict learners' writing performance?

In order to investigate the above-mentioned research questions, the following null hypotheses are formulated:

**HO1:** There is no relationship between Emotional Intelligence and writing performance of IELTS students.

**HO2:** None of the components of EI is an adequate predictor of writing performance.

### **4. Methodology**

#### **4.1 Participants**

To conduct this study, the participants were chosen from two institutes in Boushehr, Iran. The participants were native speakers of Persian and consisted of 30 males & females within the age range of 18-28. They were adult learners of intermediate levels. The candidates were administered on EI

questionnaire in order to measure their EI profiles, as well as a test of writing ability based on an IELTS topic. These students were studying to get prepared for IELTS exam.

#### 4.2 Instrument

Two tests were employed in this study. The first was the Schutte self-report Emotional Intelligence test (SSEIT) (Schutte et al., 1998). The second test was IELTS writing test Task 2. The Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS; Schutte, 1998) is a reliable questionnaire for assessing EI that has been validated as a predictor of wellbeing. Schutte (1998) identified a need for an abbreviated measure of EI, which succinctly encompassed the full range of characteristics attributed to EI. It consists of 33 items representing three dimensions of EI: Appraisal and Expression, Regulation, and Utilization of Emotion. Based on construct validity, the validity of EI test has been extensively confirmed. IELTS writing task 2 was administered to determine each participant's level of writing. Students' writing was corrected based on four scales: Task response, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical resource and Grammatical range and Accuracy. (www.ielts.org)

#### 4.3 Data collection

The purpose of the current study was to reveal the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and writing performance of IELTS students. The Schutte Emotional Intelligence scale was translated into Persian in order to prevent any reading comprehension problems and misunderstanding. This translated test was given to the participants and the necessary instruction was given to them. The Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS; Schutte et al., 1998) consists of 33 items on which individuals rate themselves on a five-point Likert scale. The items in the scale can be divided into three subscales: appraisal and expression of emotion in oneself and others (13 items), regulation of emotion in oneself and others (10 items), and using emotions to solve problems (10 items). Then, the writing task (an IELTS argumentative essay) was given to each participant to determine his or her writing threshold. The participants were supported to back up their intended ideas through writing an argumentative essay. Writing products were rated by 2 raters. There was a minimum requirement for word count (at least 250 words).

#### 4.4 Data analysis

The data for this study were analyzed through statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). First, using Pearson-product moment correlation Formula, the correlation between the overall EI scores and writing scores was calculated to specify the extent to which they correlated with each other (relationship between EI and writing). To understand any positive, negative, or zero relationship between variables, correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was calculated. In addition to descriptive analysis measures such as means, maximum and minimum scores, standard deviation of all the scores was also run. In order to see which component of EI is a better predictor for writing performance regression analysis was done.

### 5. Results and Discussion

In this section, a descriptive analysis of quantitative data is presented. The descriptive statistics for Emotional Intelligence and Writing performance are reported in Table 1.

*Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of EI and writing performance*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.deviation
EI	30	3.39	4.51	3.9410	.27489
writing	30	4.38	6.25	5.3500	.54377
Valid N	30				



According to the results, the mean of the scores obtained from EI test is 3.94 and standard deviation is .274 and for writing test the mean is 5.35 and the standard deviation is .543. So, there was no relationship between the two variables.

Table 2: Correlations between EI and WR

		WR	EI
WR	Pearson Correlation	1	.072
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.705
	N	30	30
EI	Pearson Correlation	.072 1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.705	
	N	30	30

As for the relationship between EI and Writing, the findings of data analyses showed that there was no significant relationship between the two variables, ( $r = .072$ ). This shows that there is no significant relationship between Emotional intelligence and writing performance of the participants of this study.

In order to answer the question which components of EI could be the best predictor for writing performance, R square (.110) was calculated.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.332	.110	.008	.54170

Predictors: (Constant), expression emotion, regulation emotion, utilizing emotion

Table 4: ANOVA (b) between EI components & WR

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	.945	3	.315	1.074	.377
Residual	7.630	26	.293		
Total	8.575	29			

a. Predictors: (Constant), expression emotion, regulation emotion, utilization emotion

b. Dependent Variable: writing performance

Table 4 shows if independent variables (EI components) have been able to predict the variance in the dependent variables (writing performance). According to Table 4, ANOVA output showed no significant relationship between EI components & writing performance.

Table 5: Coefficients between EI & writing performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.231	1.482		2.856	.008
	Self emotion	.285	.433	.161	.658	.516

	TURN emotion	.537	.567	.274	.948	.352
	USE emotion	-.485	.334	-.351	-1.453	.158

Table 5 confirms that there was no significant relationship between EI components and writing performance because all components of EI were higher than .05.

In this section, the relationship between EI variables and writing performance among IELTS students was analyzed. As mentioned before, the statistical analysis of collected data showed that there was no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and writing performance of IELTS students. EI could not affect writing performance and EI components (Expression, Regulation & Utilization of emotion) could not predict writing performance. Aghasafari (2006), in a correlational design investigated the relationship between EQ and second language learning strategies among 100 sophomore participants at Islamic Azad University in Iran. The results indicated that there was a positive relationship between overall EQ and language learning strategies. Razmjoo (2008) worked on the relationship between multiple intelligences & language proficiency. The results indicated that there was not a significant relationship between language proficiency and the combination of intelligences in general and the types of intelligences in particular. The results of this study indicated that there was no correlation between EI and writing performance of IELTS students. However, there are some factors that may affect low IELTS scores. These factors include learner factors, context factors, teacher training and difficulty level of test.

This study was conducted to probe the possible effect of EI on IELTS learners' performance on writing. Emotional Intelligence as the combination of factors allows a person to feel, to be motivated, to regulate mood, to control impulse, to persist in the face of frustration, and thereby to succeed in day to day living. Also, EI is a different way of being smart (Goleman, 1995). Writing is one of the most difficult skills for students to acquire. Written language is different from spoken language as it requires the readers or the audience to understand and interpret what has been written. Langan (1987) and Gunning (1998) argued that writing is difficult and that writing is both more complex and more abstract than speaking.

In the light of the insights gained from the findings of this research, the following findings were stated:

1. There is no significant relationship between Emotional intelligence and writing performance of IELTS students.
2. There is no relationship between components of Emotional intelligence and writing performance of IELTS students.

## 6. Conclusion

As mentioned earlier Emotional Intelligence is an important aspect of human life. Generally, the main focus of Iranian school is on cognitive skills; such as reading, writing, mathematics, etc. Working on emotions seems to be an important aspect of education, because the learners can manage their emotions better, can motivate themselves, and they can have a better relationship with others. As Gardner (1993) states, to fully understand the complexity of language learning process, we should pay attention to internal mechanisms and social interpersonal interaction involved in this process. To this end, Emotional intelligence can be a great help since, as Goleman (2001) states, it only serves as an internal mechanism, but also interlocks with the external environment. A great deal of research indicates there is a correlation between EI and positive social interaction in a wide variety of environmental settings. That is why, this study seeks to shed some light on Emotional Intelligence, together with Writing Performance, which may be effective factors involved in the process of second/foreign language learning.

In order to answer research question 1, Pearson Correlation was used. The result of the test showed that there was no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and writing performance of IELTS students. Through descriptive analysis, the mean, maximum, and minimum scores, standard deviation of all the scores were obtained.

To answer the second research question, ANOVA was used and it can be said that components of EI could not predict writing performance of IELTS students of the study. Also, regression analysis was done to make predictions.

In general, it can be concluded that Emotional intelligence has no effect on writing performance and the EI components could not predict writing performance of students.

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## THE EFFECT OF LEXICAL FREQUENCY KNOWLEDGE ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' SPEAKING ABILITY

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### Abstract

This study examines how knowledge of high frequency words affects speaking ability of Iranian EFL learners. The participants of this study are junior B.A. students of English translation, studying at the Islamic Azad University of Tonekabon. In order to examine the focus of the study different instruments were used. 60 students were selected out of 100 ones, based on their scores in OPT test. This test was conducted to measure students' proficiency level and to homogenize them. The second test was lexical frequency test, which was two-choice test. It was conducted to measure participants' lexical frequency knowledge. Based on the obtained scores of this test, participants were divided into two groups. One of these groups referred to as +LF, that is; a group with higher knowledge of high frequency words. And the other group referred to as -LF, which is the group with lower knowledge of high frequency words. After that, both groups were interviewed orally to test their speaking abilities. Independent sample t-test was used to measure t-observed. Comparing t-observed with t-critical, it is clear that knowledge of lexical frequency has a positive effect on speaking ability of Iranian EFL learners.

**Key Words:** Frequency, High frequency words, Low frequency words, Speaking, Speaking ability, Knowledge

### 1.0. Introduction

According to M. Muzikant (2007), language is one of the means of communication among people. It helps them understand each other, share their knowledge, express their opinions and attitudes. What is more, it enables them to communicate things and phenomena they would never be capable of without a language. Geaney (1996, p. 26) states that 99 per cent of English use is speech. The paradox is that there was only a little research of everyday speech. Lexicographers still have a tendency to consider the occurrence of a word in print a chief or sole criterion for its inclusion in the dictionary. Grammarians rarely venture beyond the safe confines of the sentence, a unit that is of doubtful value in the description of casual speech. The fact is that people use spoken language every day – in all kinds of conversations, discussions.

Huebner (1960) said "language is essentially speech, and speech is basically communication by sounds". And accordingly, speaking is a skill used by someone in daily life communication whether at school or outside. The skill is required by much repetition; it primarily a neuromuscular and not intellectual process. It consists of competence in speaking and receiving messages. So speaking is a mean of expressing ideas, opinions, or feelings to others.

### 1.1. Theoretical Framework

Language is primarily speech, and knowing a language is often defined as the ability to understand and speak the language. It has also been noted that the development of other skills, namely reading and writing would be comparatively easy if they are based on oral foundation.

Speaking is a crucial part of second language and teaching. Despite its importance, for many years, teachers teach speaking just a repetition of drills or memorization of dialogues.

According to Geaney (1996,p. 24) 99 per cent of English use is speech. This might be for this reason that people like conveying information among themselves especially with friends and relatives they feel comfortable with. Another reason might be that conversation can be about nothing in particular, whereas written language usually conveys some information.

According to Bygate (1987,p.3), there are two aspects to be considered in order to achieve a communicative goal through speaking – knowledge of the language, and skill in using this knowledge. It is not enough to possess a certain amount of knowledge, but a speaker of the language should be able to use this knowledge in different situations. Being able to decide what to say on the spot, saying it clearly and being flexible during a conversation as different situations come out is the ability to use the knowledge ‘in action’, which creates the second aspect of speaking - the skill, Bygate notes (p.4).

### **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Despite of many attempts which were made to improve students’ (EFL learners’) speaking ability, most of them still have problems in speaking. They are not able to convey their meaning.

According to Asaei (2011), a large number of the world’s language learners study English to develop proficiency in speaking, because speech is the most basic means of human communication, perhaps the most difficult aspect of spoken English is that. It is almost always accompanied via interaction with at least other speaker.

According to Chastain (1988), speaking is an important element in developing each language skill and conveying culture knowledge. Students view speaking as an essential skill for functioning in another country, and enroll in language classes with speaking as one of their principal goals. Chastain (1988) stated that like any language skill, foreign language learners need explicit instructions in speaking. Language students need to learn to speak the language in order to communicate with each other. Bailey and Savage (1994, pp.6-7) believed that “speaking a second foreign language has often viewed as the most demanding of the four skills” (pp.6-7).

### **1.3. Significance of the Study**

- 1) Theoretical importance:
  - a) It is important to get an insight into the effect of lexical frequency knowledge on EFL learners’ speaking ability.
  - b) The finding of this study would add something new to the previous theories.
- 2) Practical importance:

This study would lead to the improvement of EFL learners’ speaking ability

### **1.4. Research Question**

Does knowledge of high frequency words have any effect on the speaking ability of the Iranian EFL learners?

### **1.5. Hypothesis**

Knowledge of high frequency words does not affect Iranian EFL learners’ speaking ability.

### **1.6. Definition of Key Terms**

#### **1.6.1. Frequency**

Frequency is the number of occurrences of a repeating event per unit time. It is also referred to as temporal frequency.

#### **1.6.2. High Frequency Words**

High-frequency words are the words that appear most often in printed materials.

#### **1.6.3. Low Frequency Words**

Low frequency words are words that appear less often in printed texts and are not often used.

#### **1.6.4. Speaking**

Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997). Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking.

#### **1.6.5. Speaking Ability**

The ability to speak in a language is called speaking ability. Speaking and the art of communications is a productive skill. Good speaking skills are the act of generating words that can be understood by listeners. A good speaker is clear and informative.

#### **1.6.6. Knowledge**

According to Webster's Dictionary, knowledge is "the fact or condition of knowing something with familiarity gained through experience or association".

### **2. Review of the Related Literature**

#### **2.1. Lexical frequency**

According to Laufer et al (1995), vocabulary is not usually learned for its own sake. An important aim of a vocabulary program is to bring learners' vocabulary knowledge into communicative use. Where learners are in a situation where there are demands upon them to make use of what they know, we would expect to see a relationship between direct measures of learners vocabulary in their language production.

Vocabulary is of primary importance in language teaching and in linguistic communication, but it has not always been adequately emphasized or adequately highlighted. In particular, the nature of words and its contribution and role in the building of meaning has not been correctly evaluated by most teaching methods. In the last two decades, though, the importance of vocabulary knowledge has been brought to the forefront, especially in the field of vocabulary acquisition research and assessment (Laufer & Hulstijn 2001; Nagy & Scott, 2000; Nation, 2001; Read, 2000, etc.). This movement in favour of vocabulary is rooted in the assumption that the knowledge of words improves the communicative potential, linguistic fluency and accuracy.

Lexical frequency is often equated with lexical richness. Most frequency indices depend on frequency lists and are based on the hypothesis that a higher lexical proficiency results in the use of less frequent words (Meara and Bell, 2001). Word proficiency has traditionally been assigned to the breadth of knowledge category, but this categorization is debatable. Ellis (2002), for instance, argues that the production and comprehension of words is a function of their frequency of occurrence in language. Under this approach, word frequency helps determine lexical acquisition because each repetition of a word strengthens the connections between the word and its meaning categorization. As learners are exposed to frequent words, there is a reduction in processing time because the practice time with the word increases. Such a model of lexical acquisition is supported by studies that demonstrate that high frequency words are named more quickly than low frequency words (Balota and Chumbly, 1984), are processed more quickly in reading tasks (Kirsner, 1994), are judged more quickly to be words in lexical decision tasks (Forster, 1976), and have faster response latencies (Glanzer and Ehrenreich, 1979).

#### **2.2. Experiments on Lexical Frequency**

Laufer and Nation (1995) argue that it might be possible to use lexical frequency profile to gauge the extent of the productive vocabulary available to non-native speakers of English, an idea which Nation (2001, p.362) pursues further. The fundamental assumption underlying Laufer and Nation's approach is that people with larger vocabularies generate texts which reflect this larger vocabulary, and this suggests that it ought to be possible to simulate the underlying experimental data by generating 'texts' from different sized vocabularies according to some rule. (Meara, 2005, p.3)

The word frequency effect in speech production was discovered by Oldfield and Wingfield (1965). In a picture-naming task, they found that pictures with low-frequency (LF) names (such as syringe) took longer to name than pictures with high-frequency (HF) names (such as basket). Wingfield (1968)

established this effect as a genuinely lexical one. The effect was not due to differential speeds of object recognition but to naming itself.

According to Zhao et al (2008), lexical factors such as usage frequency affect production at the supra-segmental level as well as the segmental level. Words of the same tone but of different usage frequency differ significantly in pitch height. LF words are hyper articulated and produced with relatively higher pitch. The tone space of LF words is more expanded than that of their HF counterparts; in other words, tones are more dispersed in this acoustic space.

Frequency of collocation determines the growth of lexical phrases. These play out as frequency effects within the realm of idioms, too. High-frequency idioms are easier to comprehend than less familiar ones because their figurative meanings are known and these, by dint of practice, have become more salient than their literal ones (Giora, 1997; Nippold & Rudzinski, 1993).

### **2.3. Speaking**

Speaking is so much part of daily life that we tend to take it for granted. However, learning speaking, whether in a first or other language, involves developing subtle and detailed knowledge about why, how and when to communicate, and complex skills for producing and managing interaction, such as asking a question or obtaining a turn. One of the most important aspects of everyday talk is that it always takes place in cultural and social activities and, although we may not always be consciously aware of doing so, we attune our language and meanings we wish to exchange to our specific purposes for speaking in that context (Schmitt, 2002, p. 211).

Spoken interaction involves producing and negotiating language rather differently from the way it is used in writing. Speakers and listeners are involved simultaneously in both producing and processing spoken interactions (Schmitt, 2002, p.212).

Baily and Savage (1994), stated that speaking is a task that requires the incorporation of many systems. All those factors must be integrated; making speaking a second language is a terrifying task for language learners. However, for many people, speaking is viewed as the central skill.

Chaney (1998), however, considered speaking a process: "speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal or non-verbal symbols in a variety of contexts" (p.13). Sharing the same viewpoint, Florez (1999) added that speaking is an "interactive" process, which consists of three main stages "producing, receiving and processing information." (p.1)

### **2.4. Experiments on the speaking Skill**

According to Levelt (1999), the generation of words in speech involves a number of processing stages. There is, first, a stage of conceptual preparation; this is followed by stages of lexical selection, phonological encoding, phonetic encoding and articulation. In addition, the speaker monitors the output and, if necessary, self-corrects. Major parts of the theory have been computer modelled. The paper concentrates on experimental reaction time evidence in support of the theory.

Central to the skill of speaking is our ability to select words that appropriately express our intentions, to retrieve their syntactic and phonological properties and to compute the ultimate articulatory shape of these words in the context of the utterance as a whole (Levelt, 1989).

To effectively improve learners speaking it is important to look at the structure and grammar of spoken interactions (Burns and Joyce, 1999, p.92). Grammar teaching for speaking purposes has largely focused around structured sentence grammar. This however, is of limited use to learners as spontaneous speech is produced in clause length, rather than sentence length, segments (Thornbury, 2008, p. 33).

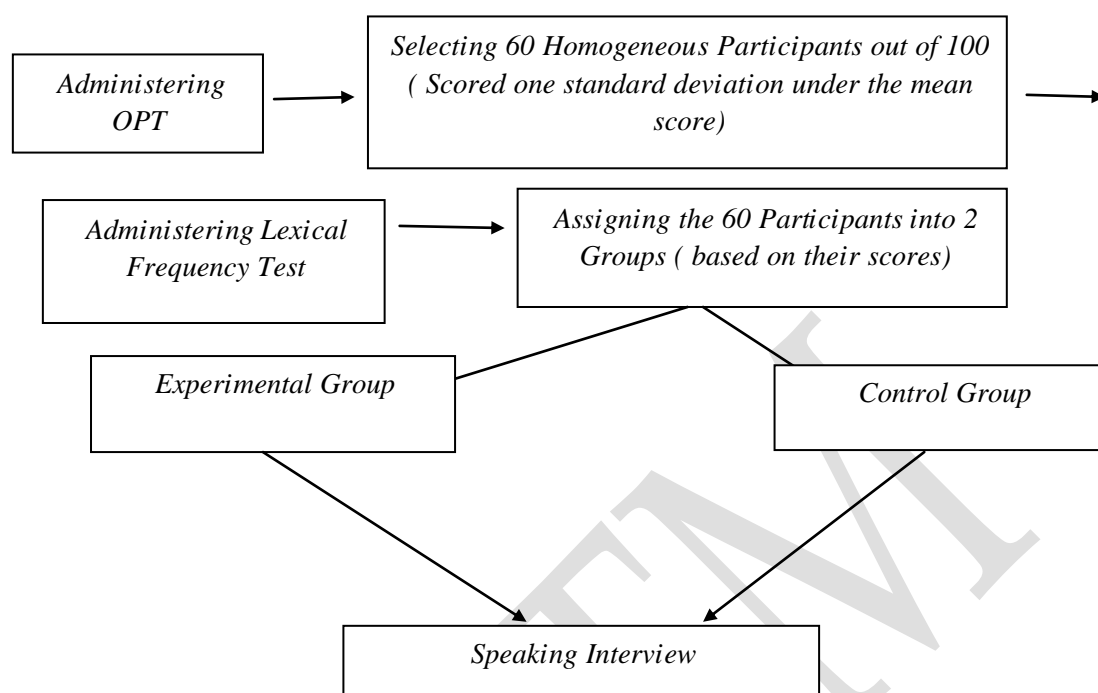
According to Adams (1980) and Higgs and Clifford (1982), there seems to be a close relationship between vocabulary as part of overall speaking performance and overall speaking performance at low levels than at intermediate and advance levels.

## **3. Methods of Research**

### **3.1. Design of the Study**

The design of the present study was quasi-experimental design. It is shown in the following figure:





*Figure3.1. Design of the Study*

### 3.2. Participants

The participants of this study were junior (third-year) B.A students of English translation, studying at the Islamic Azad University of Tonekabon, Iran. The total of 60 students out of 100 students were selected to participate in this study based on their scores in OPT (oxford placement test). That is, the students whose scores were one standard deviation under the mean score were selected. The gender was not considered. They were both males and females. The ages of the participants ranged from 19 to 27.

### 3.3. Materials

Three sets of tests were administered in this study. The first test was OPT (Oxford Placement Test) version 1.1, which was printed by Oxford University Press in 2001. This test was applied to 100 students to homogenize the population. The test is composed of 61 questions which fall into different categories. Five questions were sign and notion questions, fifteen questions were colze-test questions, twenty questions were grammar questions, twenty were vocabulary questions, the last one question was writing. The participants were required to answer the questions within 70 minutes. 60 students whose scores were one standard deviation under the mean score were selected. This test was divided into three parts. These parts are as the following:

- Part One: Questions 1-40
- Part Two: Questions 41-60
- Part Three: Question 61

In the first and second parts, questions were multiple-choice item, but the third part included one question in which participants were asked to write a well-organized paragraph of 150-200 words on a given topic. This test included 60 multiple-choice questions and 1 production question. Students were given about one hour to answer the questions.

The second test was lexical frequency test which was two-choice test, and consisted of forty questions. This test was applied to measure participants' knowledge of high frequency words. Participants were



asked to decide whether the given word is of high frequency word or low frequency word. Twenty of these words were of high frequency words, and twenty of them were of low frequency words. The inter-rater reliability of the test was estimated 0.7. It was written. Participants were given ten minutes to answer the test.

Finally, participants were interviewed orally to measure their speaking ability. The speaking test included ten questions, 9wh-questions and one yes-no question (the speaking test of Asaei, 2011). The questions were personal questions. All of these ten questions were about the participants' themselves.

### 3.4. Procedures

OPT was administered to measure the degree of the participants' proficiency and to homogenize the population. It was a paper-and-pencil test. Participants were expected to answer in specific answer sheets. Allowed time was 70 minutes. The second test was lexical frequency test which included two-choice item. The test was applied to measure participants' knowledge of high frequency words. Based on their scores in lexical frequency test, participants were divided into two groups of control group and experimental group. 30 participants with higher scores in lexical frequency test were in experimental group, and the other 30 participants formed the control group. This test was also a paper-and pencil test, and participants had to answer the questions in specific answer sheets. Ten minutes were allowed for the test. The speaking test was administered; it was an oral interview, which consisted of 10 questions. The time allocated for the speaking interview was about 15 minutes for each participant. The questions were asked and the answers were heard and scored. In lexical frequency test, 0.5 point was considered for each item. So the total point of the test was 20. For interview, 2 points was allocated to each question. 1 point for understanding the question and the content of the answer and 1 point for correct pronunciation which included correct intonation and stress. The participants were scored by inter-rater scoring method.

### 3.5. Methods of Analyzing Data

The data were analyzed to produce the findings of this study. The analysis was based on participants' scores in lexical frequency test and speaking test. The data was analyzed through SPSS software, version 16, using independent sample t-test in order to compare performances of the participants in control and experimental group in control and experimental group in speaking interview.

### 4.0. Results and discussion

The results showed that knowledge of high frequency words have some effects on the speaking ability of the Iranian EFL learners. And there was a considerable difference between mean scores of speaking interview in experimental group ( students who got higher marks on lexical frequency test) and control group ( students who got lower marks on lexical frequency test ).Experimental group is shown by +LF and control group is shown by -LF (See table 4.1).

Group statistics is reported below:

*Table.4.1. Group Statistics*

LF	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
Speaking	+LF	30	17.366	1.479	.270
	-LF	30	15.300	1.578	.288

In the above table, +LF stands for a group of students with higher knowledge of high frequency words, and -LF stands for a group with lower knowledge of high frequency words.

T-test was observed through independent sample t-test. The obtained value of T-test is shown in the following table (table4.2):

Table 4.2. Independent sample t-test

LF	Sig.	T	df	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal Variances not assumed	0.627	5.232	57.756	2.066	0.395

The table of 4.2 shows that t-observed is 5.232, and by comparison of this t with t-critical it is concluded that the null hypothesis of the study is rejected. That is, knowledge of high frequency words enhances speaking ability of EFL Learners (t-critical is already computed and it is found in Research Design and Statistics book by Hatch & Farhady).

#### 4.2. Results of Hypothesis Testing

Research question of this study which was mentioned in chapter one, is as follow:

Does knowledge of high frequency words have any effects on the speaking ability of Iranian EFL learners?

To answer this question, the following assumption was formulated:

H0: Lexical frequency knowledge does not affect Iranian learners' speaking ability

Based on the findings of the present study, the hypothesis is rejected.

#### 5.1. General Discussion

The findings of present study showed that knowledge of high frequency words has a positive effect on Iranian EFL learners' speaking ability. The result of this study lends support to findings of several studies that indicate that lexical frequency has some effect in different aspects of language.

The word frequency effect in speech production was investigated by Oldfield and Wingfield (1965), who found that pictures with low-frequency (LF) names (such as syringe) took longer to name than pictures with high-frequency (HF) names (such as basket). Wingfield (1968) established this effect as a genuinely lexical one. The effect was not due to differential speeds of object recognition but to naming itself.

According to Dell (1990), LF words with an HF homophone (such as *wee* with homophone *we*) are as little prone to induced phonological errors as are their high-frequency twins. That is, an LF homophone profits from sharing its word form with an HF word. Although this seems to indicate that frequency is coded at the lexeme level, not at the lemma level (homophones share their lexeme but not their lemmas), Dell argued for a lemma-level explanation within his interactive model. He assumes that lemmas with high-frequency values have resting levels of activation higher than lemmas with low-frequency values, and as a consequence the former lemmas reach the selection threshold faster than the later. As a consequence the speed with which lexical selection takes place depends, to some extent, on the word's frequency value.

Fidelhotz (1975), for example, showed that low-frequency words like *for fend* were less likely to have as schwa vowel in the first syllable than high-frequency words like *forget*. Rhodes (1992) showed that /t/ sin low-frequency words were less likely to flap than /t/ sin high-frequency words.

#### 5.2. Implication of the Study

This study aimed at examining the effect of lexical frequency knowledge on students' speaking ability. The results of this study showed that knowledge of high frequency words can facilitate students' speaking skill. These results were of great importance and could interest researchers, language teachers, and language learners.

One of the aspects of improving speaking ability is to enrich vocabulary. Scholars such as Allen (1983) and Bowen (1985) have shown that lexical problems frequently interfere with communication; in other words, communication breaks down when people do not use the right words. Therefore, there is an increased interest in vocabulary as a component of every language. Therefore, teachers could benefit from the results of the present study; that is, they could focus more on high frequency words

to help students improve their speaking ability. Researchers can also benefit from the results of this study. They could use results of this study to do other research on related topics.

### **5.3. Suggestion for Further Research**

Although there are a lot of studies about speaking and related topics, there are some issues that have not been considered. Thus, this study gives suggestions for further studies.

It is recommended that a replication of this study be done on:

- 1) Specific age groups of learners such as teenage language learners.
- 2) Specific gender, either on male or female learners
- 3) Different variables influencing speaking ability of language learners

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# COGNITIVE NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES, LANGUAGE LEARNING DISORDERS AND TASK- INTEGRATED PAIR READING: EVIDENCE FROM DYSLEXIC EFL LEARNERS' WORD DECODING IMPAIRMENT

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## Abstract

The present classroom-based quasi-experimental study has a shot at exploring and outlining developmental cognitive disorders in dyslexic EFL learners. The study follows a two-group pretest, treatment, post-test design and focuses on the different ways in which task-integrated partner reading activities are presented to dyslexic learners. The study documented 30 low-intermediate dyslexic Iranian EFL learners with the same proficiency level measured by an OPT test. The participants were randomly assigned to an experimental and a control group that were exposed to task-integrated partner reading activities and traditional instruction respectively. Analysis of the data obtained from independent-samples t-test indicated that the participants of the experimental group improved in the four tested areas, and that there were significant quantitative and statistical differences in the output of participants from the two different groups, with learners who participated in the experimental group outperforming and incorporating significantly better reading skills in the posttest than learners from the control group.

**Keywords:** Task-integrated pair reading, Cognitive neuropsychology, Dyslexia, Word decoding.

## 1. Introduction

It is axiomatic that the prowess to communicate with foreign languages is a must in the multilingual modern society we live in today. Hence, a foreign language requirement is to be satisfied in our schools, universities and language centers, giving rise to manifold of problems for a number of language learners, who have always sustained defeat suffering from divergent magnitudes of vicissitudes in foreign language learning but, nonetheless, performing moderately well on other courses in hand. Numerous researchers have endeavored to expound on pivotal facets of the so called phenomenon. Paucity of aptitude in foreign language learning, dearth of motivation, anxiety, individual differences and neuropsychological correlates of intelligence have all been good cases in point. Meanwhile, no single rationale has been put forward to be the mere justification of successful or unsuccessful foreign language learning. Foreign language researchers, psychologists, neurologists and other scholars have not managed to specifically instigate any other principle reasons, but dyslexia for the aforementioned issue.

After the manifestation of *Contrastive Analysis* in the 1960's, *Error Analysis* in the 1970's and Larry Selinker's fossilization studies in 1972, many scholars in EFL and SLA studies have made an attempt

to investigate English learning difficulties from different aspects. Recently, a growing body of researchers has shown an interest in studying the effects of dyslexia in learning a foreign language. Unfortunately, not many studies to this date have been carried out to investigate the effects of dyslexia on language learning. Hence, it is probably safe to say, without the fear of contradiction, that the study of dyslexia in EFL context is intermittent (see for example, Ho & Fong, 2005).

We shall say that the present article constitutes no disrespect to research studies regarding fossilization, contrastive analysis and error analysis. The author of this study has already investigated the notion of fossilization (Eliasi & Vahidi Borji, 2013a) along with the notion of error analysis (Eliasi & Vahidi Borji, 2013b) in EFL context in Iran and has got somewhat fervent reasoning for investigating research paths in language learning disorders that should be carefully juxtaposed alongside fossilization and error analysis studies. We suggest that the study of dyslexia is not without peril, but nevertheless the approach we espouse in this study inverts the viewpoint from linguistic failures associated fossilization, intralingual and interlingual errors to language learning disorders, which may be quite perilous itself.

It is widely known that learning disabilities are not likely to be singled out for treatment. However, students with learning disabilities can be taught ways to overcome their learning difficulties. With appropriate teaching techniques and tasks, proper help and hard work, children with LD will be able to learn successfully.

In light of the need for further research into the nature of dyslexia, the present research that is a foray into the linchpin of cognitive neuropsychological processes and language learning disorders aims to highlight how the requirements of dyslexic children can be satisfied within the curriculum at micro and macro levels. The premise is that the intervention for such learners should be coping with impediments of learning, and the most salient of these might be characteristics of a supportive curriculum. Accordingly, in the line of the research direction that investigated the scope of cognitive neuropsychology, the present study seeks to investigate the following research question:

Q1: Is there any relationship between using task-integrated partner reading activities and word decoding impairment of dyslexic EFL learners?

A null hypothesis was assumed for the above-mentioned research question.

## **2. Background**

The term *learning disabilities* was first coined by a professor called Sam Kirk on April 6, 1963, and the term dyslexia was first used by an ophthalmologist called Rudolf Berlin to refer to a boy's severe impairment in learning to read and write. Later, in a report entitled "congenital word blindness", a British physician called Morgan, described learning disorders of a boy who showed to have normal intelligence. After all, these were the psychologists who introduced two types of dyslexia, developmental dyslexia and acquired dyslexia, to the field (Ellis, 1984; Tabirzy, 2007). Dyslexia as defined by (Lyon et al. 2003) is,

...a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Latest studies on the notion of dyslexia are anchored in the intersection of several fields of studies: behavioral genetics, cognitive neuroscience, developmental neurobiology and molecular genetics. It is probably safe to say that the studies of dyslexia has benefited from the reconciliation of behavioral and molecular and cognitive neuroscience. These studies gradually gave birth to a field called cognitive neuropsychology. Cognitive neuropsychology was first emerged in the 1970's. It aimed to study the psychological functions of parts of brain cortex by investigating and defining different problems shown in individuals with deficits in these areas. Cognitive neuropsychology aims to explain how individuals with brain lesions behave. It is in accordance with the premise that, due to a brain lesion, the language system of an individual can be impaired to produce identifiable patterns. Nevertheless, not everyone can claim it is a premise now; within the last 27 years, a huge volume of research has been carried out to demonstrate the utility of the approach.

In fact, two papers on people with reading disorders by Marshall & Newcombe (1966, 1973) laid the foundations of cognitive neuropsychological approaches to language learning. These studies were followed by several other invaluable publications in the field. Cognitive analysis of dyslexia can lay the foundations of its precise diagnostic phenotype.

The foreign language requirement is absolutely necessary in the educational systems of many countries. Accordingly, a plethora of EFL teachers might encounter the challenge of teaching learners suffering from dyslexia. They sometimes call for a comprehensible guidance on how to cope with dyslexia in dyslexic learners. In the light of the demands to provide all students with the same instruction, teachers are required to adapt their instruction and examination conditions to individual learner's needs, intelligence and abilities.

To date, several scholars have carried out invaluable studies to investigate Foreign Language (FL) learners' difficulties in language learning. Chodkiewicz (1986) underlines the case that individuals having problem with reading in their native language are bound to face up to a debacle in their foreign language learning. Since the 1980s, Sparks et al. have carried out pioneering investigations in FL learning difficulties of learners for whom spelling and reading in their mother tongue contributed to an ostensible challenge in FL learning. These are language learners arranged into the taxonomy of learning disabled (LD)/dyslexia and low-achieving (at-risk) language learners who have been unfortunate not to be diagnosed towards their LD. Sparks & Ganschow (1991) put forward the *linguistic coding deficits hypothesis* (LCDH) to elaborate the problems challenging FL learners.

Over the last few years, many research studies have been carried out to investigate the potential causes of dyslexia. A major breakthrough in genetics, brain imaging and most importantly neurosciences has substantiated some plausible causal variables of dyslexia. These interlocking causal variable may work independently or together to exacerbate dyslexic learners' problems. All in all, it is held that the causes of dyslexia anchors in its neurobiological origins along with genetic construction and attributes of the central nervous system (Knight & Hynd, 2008). On the whole, these causes breed malfunctions at the cognitive level, which can itself be a predominant cause of reading failure or word decoding impairment.

Several scholars believe that dyslexia cannot be considered an ephemeral chronic condition. Children who are diagnosed with dyslexia are very likely to remain dyslexic until their adulthood (Gregg et al., 2005). An obvious symptom of dyslexia can be an unabated difficulty in skillful reading (word decoding) spelling (encoding). Therefore, the child is always lagged behind his classmates, which may linger on for several years. Reading problems can be easily seen during single word reading tasks. Children who come from families with a record of dyslexia in its members are more likely to suffer from the problem (Snowling et al., 2007). Those who suffer speech delay, ambidextrousness or are left-handed may also be at the risk of dyslexia. Language impairments are also regarded as the symptoms of the problem. Word-naming problems, jumbling words, trouble in recalling names, using circumlocutions are all good cases in point. Other symptoms may involve poor automatization of motor skills. Cognitive analysis is usually started with the elements of reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is fragmented into cognitive components and later into developmental precursors of these cognitive components.

Although there have been some studies in Iran investigating the notion of dyslexia (Ghonsooly 2009; Narimani et al. 2009; Sedaghati et al. 2010), most of these studies have just concentrated on dyslexia in the learners' mother tongue. For instance, Ghonsooly (2009) investigated the notion of dyslexia among students in third grade of primary school in Mashhad. The results of the study revealed that dyslexia was more widespread in boys than girls.

Unfortunately, no single study to this date has been carried out to investigate the impact of using tasks on dyslexic EFL learners' word decoding impairment. Hence, the literature in this area is not very rich. Nevertheless, to provide the readership with a brief explanation of tasks, I decided to offer a definition by Ellis (2003, p. 16) who claimed that:

A task is a work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make

use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance, direct or indirect, to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills and also various cognitive processes. As mentioned before, there appears to be a growing body of research regarding different aspects of dyslexia; however, these are just the psychologists and native teachers who reap the benefits of such research studies carried out in the fields of pedagogy, psychology, neurology, linguistics and biology. Regarding the aforementioned issue, foreign language teachers have always sustained defeat. This problem is at least universally acknowledged. With the benefit of hindsight, the present article aims to fill the gap and investigate the issue from a foreign language teacher perspective. However, my intention does not contradict the previous findings of dyslexia; I only see that the balance of research studies is shifted one way whilst little or no attention has been paid to EFL learners. We hope that this article will help EFL teachers tackle one of the abundant problems they have in teaching students with dyslexia.

However, the hope to tackle the above-mentioned issue requires at least two perspectives, namely, that of a language teacher and researcher to act upon the issue. Teachers can play a very significant role to this end. It would appear that teachers' choices of the tasks to be used inside the classroom can be supported by the research findings of dyslexia. Nevertheless, some teachers have shown a dearth of enthusiasm with regard to implementing the research findings in the field (Philips et al., 2008). As a result there is always a chasm between research studies and practice.

It seems that to fill the gap between research and practice, researchers are required to work more to convince teachers apply the results of their studies in language classes with dyslexic learners. For instance, an overwhelming majority of researchers investigated the effectiveness of phonological training to help children with dyslexia and now it's the teachers' turn to play their role. A large number of remedial programmes for teaching have been put forward for teaching reading and writing. For example, *Alpha to Omega, the A\_Z of Teaching Reading Writing and Spelling* (Hornsby et al., 1999).

### **3. Methods**

#### **3.1. Setting**

The data were collected from lower intermediate English classes at a language school in Iran. The participants attended the class three sessions a week. Each session lasted 1 hour and 45 minutes. The EFL programme attracts children, teenagers and adult learners who are interested in ameliorating their language skills in a foreign language. Some students were in either junior high school or senior high school and some were university students. Prior to the study, the researcher visited the language school several times to discuss the research protocol with the supervisor and teachers of the language school who showed willingness to take part in the study.

#### **3.2. Participants**

The participants of the present study were chosen from among 100 EFL learners at a private, for profit English language school in Iran. The language school classified these learners as lower intermediate, according to their in-house oral and written language school placement test. Nevertheless, to escape any skepticism that the subjects of the study might not be in the aforementioned proficiency level, an Oxford Placement Test was administered. Eighty eight participants who scored 3-4 from a band score of 0-9 were called to be lower intermediate participating students of the study.

To find out whether or not the participants of the study are dyslexic, a checklist used by *British Dyslexia Association* was used. According to the association, if students answer yes to at least eight of the points listed in the checklist, they might be dyslexic. Hence, 30 participants who answered yes to eight or more items were assessed as dyslexic EFL learners.

Information obtained from the questionnaire given to the participants at the outset revealed that a great majority of the participants (87%) had been formally engaged in English language learning from 1 to 3 years. The mean age of the participants was 13 years.



The teaching approach favored by the language school at micro level laid emphasis upon *communicative language teaching method*. Learners attended the classes two sessions a week. Each session lasted 1 hour and 45 minutes. The dyslexic participants of the study were arbitrarily assigned an experimental group and a control group.

### 3.3. Design

The present classroom-based, person-by-treatment quasi-experimental study was of a two group pretest-treatment- posttest design and was carried out during the first 7 weeks of a 14-week language school semester. All participants were informed that they were taking part in a research study. The participants were taking intensive English spoken courses as a part of their language school's course requirement. There was an experimental group and a control group. The treatment or the quasi-independent variable of the study, included *task- integrated partner reading activities* (Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2008).

The pretests of the study included four tests in which the participants were tested for their potential word decoding impairment. The tests were partially taken from Ghonsooly & Javadian (2010), but their content validity, face validity and construct validity as well and internal reliability consistency were estimated again. The treatment of the experimental group involved task-integrated partner reading activities in which a participant with LD was paired with a stronger counterpart. The two participants took turns reading orally and listening to each other. The participants of the control group received traditional intervention. The post tests of the study were parallel to the pretests of the study. Table (1) shows the design of the current study.

*Table 1. Design of the study.*

Week	Action
1	OPT test/ General Questionnaire
2	Visiting an ophthalmologist
3	IQ test
4	Pretests
5	Intervention and instructional treatment
6	Rest
7	Posttests

#### 3.3.1. Week One / The OPT Test and Questionnaire

Prior to pretests and posttests of the study there was an Oxford Placement Test in session one/week one. The time allocated to the test was 30 minutes as indicated by the test itself. Those participants who scored 3-4 from a band score of 0-9 were indicated to be lower-intermediate EFL participants of the study. Then in session two /week two all participants of the study completed a questionnaire which aimed at eliciting background information regarding the subjects' L1, gender, age, number of years of instruction in English, potential physical injuries or mental impairments and family background.

#### 3.3.2. Weeks Two – Four / IQ Test and the Pretests

Over a three week period, the participants of the study were all visited by an ophthalmologist for any potential sight difficulties. The purpose was to exclude those who might have had sight impairments. A Raven Intelligence Test along with a psychometric (IQ-type) test was also administered to decompose the covariance between IQ and brain functioning and to escape the suspicion of any syndrome or mental retardation. The IQ tests utilized in the study reported that the dyslexic participating learners were within normal range of IQ that is 85 or above.

##### *Word Recognition Test*

In week five of the study, the pretest of the study was administered. Since measuring the participants' reading ability was somewhat unfeasible, it was decided to assess the participants' reading skill by

means of four separate tests whose scores were added to make a final score out of 20 for final statistical analysis. First, there was a *word recognition test* in which the participants were shown five pictures, each of which was followed by three written words. One point was given to each individual participant for each correct answer.

#### *Single Word Reading Test*

Second, there was a *Single word reading test* in which the participants were required to read single words out of a context individually. The words were randomly chosen from the participants' English textbook, American English File 2, taught at the language schools where the study was carried out. Ten words were typewritten on a paper with an appropriate face validity acknowledged by two testing experts at Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon branch, Iran. The participants were asked to read the words aloud, so the raters could give them 0.5 point for each correct word.

#### *Reading Comprehension Test*

Third, a *Reading comprehension test* in which the participants had to answer reading comprehension questions. The aim of the test was to check the participants' reading comprehension skill using a text which consisted of ten sentences followed by five multiple choice questions. The participants were told to read the texts individually and answer the questions. One point was allocated to each correct answer of the five questions. The internal consistency of the test questions were estimated by the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) 19 software programme. Cronbach's alpha was used as an internal consistency estimate of reliability of test scores. Cronbach's alpha for the above-mentioned test was 0.81.

#### *Context Oral Reading Test*

And finally, a *context oral reading test* in which the participating learners were asked to read a text in a normal speed was administered. The test in this strand consisted of a text based on vocabulary and grammatical structures, which was chosen from the students textbook. Prior to administering the reading test, the passage was analyzed by concordance 3.0 software programme (Watt, 2002). It was hoped that the text is not too difficult or easy for the lower-intermediate EFL participants of the study. The text involved ten words. The researcher, an EFL teachers and a research colleague at the language school recorded the decoding errors the participants committed.

It should be noted that to satisfy the requirements of inter-rater reliability, scoring of the tests was by the researcher, an experienced EFL teacher and a trained research colleague. Inter-rater reliability calculations measured via inter-class correlation coefficient revealed 96% agreement, homogeneity and consensus on the assignment of errors and points to the targeted items. All disagreements were resolved by group discussions.

The degree to which the test scores were consistent from one test administration to another was also assessed. Test-retest reliability (Pearson's  $r$ ) was calculated by administering the tests to a group of participants who exactly resembled the authentic participants of the study and then by re-administering the same test to the same group some time later. The reliability of the test was estimated by Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient using the SPSS 19 software programme. The results of the reliability analysis showed that test-retest reliability of the first test, word recognition test, was 0.88. The reliability of test two, single word reading test, was 0.78. For test three, reading comprehension test, the reliability estimate was 0.96, and finally the reliability of test four, context oral reading test, was 0.86.

### **3.3.3. Week Five – Intervention and Instructional Treatment**

In week five of the study, the participants of the control group underwent traditional teacher-centered pedagogy. The teacher taught reading passages through traditional methods asking the participants to read a text aloud individually while checking their mispronunciations.

The participants of the experimental group were divided into several pairs. Each pair consisted of a participant with LD working with another participant who was a strong reader. The partners took

turns reading orally and listening to each other. They were then asked to retell the story of the text that they read to each other.

### 3.3.4. Week Seven – Posttests

After a one week break, without any warnings that the tests would be repeated, the participants of both groups were asked to take part in a posttest. The tests were parallel to the pretests of the study.

## 4. Results

The present study began with the research question addressing whether utilizing task-integrated partner reading activities outperform traditional instruction in helping dyslexic EFL learners overcome their word decoding impairment. An independent-sample t-test was used for analyzing the scores of the pretests and posttests of the study to try to find out significant differences in word decoding impairment between two different methods and learning conditions used in the experimental group and control group. In this part, descriptive statistics were used to display and describe the data which embraced analytic calculations of statistical attributes. Further, inferential statistics were used to interpret the data. Finally, the net results were used to support or reject the null hypothesis of the study.

The data of the present research were mainly quantitative in nature and were subject to a range of statistical analyses presented in the following tables.

*Table 2. Group Statistics for the pretest*

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
				Mean
Experimental	15	6.40	3.13	.809
Control	15	5.26	3.28	.847

Table (2) shows the number of participants of each group in the pretest of the study ( $N_{EXP}$  15;  $N_{CON}$  = 15). There is no missing value and all participants took part in this part of the study. The mean score of the experimental group is 6.40 and the mean score of the control group is 5.26. As for the standard deviations obtained from the groups, there appears to be more variability among the pretest scores of the control group than that of experimental group.

*Table 3. Group Statistics for the posttest*

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
				Mean
Experimental	15	16.00	1.25	.323
Control	15	5.26	3.30	.853

Table (3) shows the number of participants taking part in the pretest of the study that is 15 for each group. There is no missing value which indicates that all participants took part in this strand of the study. The mean of the experimental group is 16.00 whilst the mean of the control group is 5.26. As for the standard deviations obtained from the groups (Experimental = 1.25 and Control = 3.30), there appears to be more variability among the pretest scores of the control group than that of experimental group. This statistical analysis is considered as a token of the experimental group's improvement after being exposed to task-integrated partner reading activities.

*Table 4. Independent-samples t-test for the Posttests*

Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means			
For Equality of Variances		Sig.2	Mean	Std.	95%Confidence

	f	sig	t	df	tailed	Dif.	Error Dif.	lower	upper
Equal variances Assumed	21.89	.000	11.76	28	.000	10.733	.912	8.863	12.60
Equal variances Not Assumed			11.76	17.94	.000	10.733	.912	8.815	12.65

As it was mentioned earlier in this study, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether the experimental and control group differ significantly in the posttest of the study. As it can be seen in table (4), the Levene's Test for Equal variances yields a p-value of .000. This means that the homogeneity of variance assumption has been satisfied and the difference between the variances is statistically insignificant. Accordingly, the statistics in the first row of the table, which refers to *equal variances assumed*, should be used for statistical analysis. To find out whether there is a significant difference between our two groups, we refer to the column labeled Sig. (2-tailed), which appears under the section labeled t-test for Equality of Means. The Sig. (2-tailed) value is .000. As this value is less than the required cut-off score of .05, we conclude that there is a significant difference in the means of the two groups. It is axiomatic that task-integrated partner reading activities have had a positive impact on improving the participants' abilities in the four tested areas. That is on the posttest, the participants of the experimental group who were treated via task-integrated partner reading activities and storytelling significantly outperformed the participants of the control group who were taught via traditional methods as the mean of the former was almost 4 times higher than that of the latter group ( $M = 16.00$ ,  $SE = .323$  and  $M = 5.26$ ,  $SE = .853$ , respectively, the observed  $t$ , with 28 df, is 11.76, and the  $p$  value is .000. Since  $p < .05$ , this test is statistically significant.

To calculate the effect size of the independent-samples t-test, eta squared was used in this part of our analyses. The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = 10.73, 95% CI: +8.863 to +12.60) was very high (eta squared = 1). Moreover, since upper and lower bounds of the confidence intervals have the same sign (+8.863 and +12.60) the difference is statistically significant. This means that the null finding of zero difference lies *outside* of the confidence interval.

The null hypothesis of the study which targeted the impact of utilizing task-integrated partner reading activities on low-intermediate dyslexic Iranian EFL learners' word decoding impairment was rejected here. The testimony for rejecting the null hypothesis of the study came from the fact that the two tailed level of significance calculated by the SPSS 19 software programme was .000. This is lower than .05 and indicates that using task-integrated partner reading activities along with storytelling would outweigh traditional methods.

The rejection of the null hypothesis of the study was also supported by the experimental group's progression from the pretest to the posttest.

## 5. Discussion

The findings of this research lent support to the idea that utilizing task-integrated partner reading activities along with storytelling would yield better results among low-intermediate dyslexic Iranian EFL learners. The findings of this study seem to be in the line with the treatment suggested by Pierangelo & Giuliani (2008, p. 85) regarding positive impact of using pair work tasks. The results of this study can also reconcile language pedagogy and cognitive neuropsychology which have been partially put aside in designing tasks for classroom use.

The implications of the present study are twofold and can be discussed in terms of both theoretical implications and pedagogical implications. The results of the study lend support to the positive impact of using pair work tasks in language classes. The results of this study have also got some implications for foreign language learners, teachers and scholars in the field of cognitive neuropsychology.

There were some relatively drastic limitations to this research study that might have declined its external validity. First, the net results of this study are not generalizable to all language learning contexts and students, although a labored attempt was made to intensify the external validity of the current study by a relatively large number of participants. Nonetheless, a similar study could be carried out with more participants chosen from a wider population.

Participants' individual differences and different learning style preferences, more features and circumstances should be taken into account when designing the framework of the studies in the future. The limited framework of the present study hasn't allowed broad generalizations of the results.

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