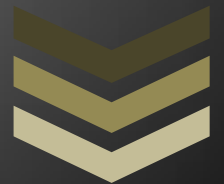




TARBIAT MODARES UNIVERSITY
TARBIAT MODARES UNIVERSITY

Modares Educational Journal in TEFL



Tarbiat Modares University

**Student-run Journal on Issues of
English Language Teaching and Learning**

License NO. 191/102796

Winter 2013

Vol. 1 NO. 1

Modares Educational Journal in TEFL (MeTEFL)

Student-run Journal on Issues of English Language Teaching and Learning

Director:

Fatemeh Tabassi Mofrad
Tarbiat Modares University

Editor-in-Chief:

Fatemeh Tabassi Mofrad
Tarbiat Modares University

Assistant to the Editor:

Mohammad Tahernia
Tarbiat Modares University

Editorial Board:

Behzadpour, Foad / Tarbiat Modares University
Momenian, Mohammad / Tarbiat Modares University
Rajabi, Omid Reza / Tarbiat Moallem University
Tabassi Mofrad, Fatemeh / Tarbiat Modares University
Tahernia, Mohammad / Tarbiat Modares University

Advisory Board:

Alibakhshi, Goodarz /
Hamavandi, Mehraban / Tarbiat Modares University
Jalali, Sara / Orumieh University
Karimi, Nabi /
Momenian, Mohammad / Tarbiat Modares University

MeTEFL, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran.
Email: modarestefl@yahoo.com

A Note from Editor-in-Chief

In His Name

*“Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more”*

William Cowper

MeTEFL, a student-run, peer-reviewed journal, was established with the aim of providing MA and PhD students of TEFL with an opportunity to share their research findings with others in the broader community; so it seeks to offer an academic forum regarding issues in English language teaching and learning.

This journal invites manuscripts on TEFL related topics from all scholars and students to be submitted via *modarestefl@yahoo.com* for any consideration and revision by our reviewers. Also, the Editorial Board will reserve the right to accept or reject manuscripts and to make all editorial changes if deemed necessary.

Readers are besides welcomed to have their comments and suggestions to pave the way for the improvements of this journal.

With the support and cooperation of all professors and experts in the field, we hope to enhance MeTEFL's status to scientific-research in the near future.

In here, I would like to have the opportunity to express my gratitude to the respected faculty members of the English Department of Tarbiat Modares University.

The establishment of this journal owes much to **Dr. Ghafar Samar** for his interest, inspiration and dedication.

Special thanks go to **Dr. Akbari**, the head of English Department and also **Dr. Kiany** whose encouragements and supports have accompanied this undertaking from the beginning.

In addition, I would like to thank the Editorial and Advisory Board for their considerable amount of time and effort put into this academic endeavor.

Editor-in-Chief

Table of Contents

Articles

Metadiscourse Resources: Native vs. Non-Native Comparisons in Applied Linguistics Journal Articles <i>(Reza Ghafar Samar, Fouad Behzadpour)</i>	5
On the Learnability of three categories of Idioms by Iranian EFL learners <i>(Abbas Ali Zarei)</i>	27
An analysis of the English class discourse in the Iranian high schools <i>(Behzad Barekat, Saeedeh Mohammadi)</i>	44
An Investigation of the Construction of English Learners' Identities in Iranian EFL Contexts: Schools and Institutes <i>(Marzieh Asadi)</i>	67
The Impact of Phrasal Verb Avoidance on the Writing Ability of the University EFL Learners <i>(Behzad Barekat, Berjis Baniasady)</i>	96

Dissertations or Theses Abstracts

Developing an ELT Context-Specific Teacher Efficacy Instrument <i>(Kobra Tavassoli)</i>	126
An Ethnographic Study of English Teachers' Institutional Identity in High Schools, Language Institutes, and Universities <i>(Hadi Azimi)</i>	128
The power of critical literacy in mentoring: Iranian readers of English literature <i>(Maryam Hesabi)</i>	130
The Effect of Wikis' Collaborative Environment on the Improvement of Iranian EFL Learners' Writing Skill <i>(Zahra Arabsarhangi)</i>	131
The Effect of Training in Reading Self-assessment on EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension, Reading Motivation and Reading Strategies Awareness <i>(Mahnoosh Hamavandi)</i>	133
The Iranian English Language Learners' Perceived Social Self-Efficacy and their Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety <i>(Mohammad Amerian)</i>	135

This page is intentionally left blank

Metadiscourse Resources: Native vs. Non-Native Comparisons in Applied Linguistics Journal Articles

Reza Ghafar Samar¹
Fouad Behzadpour²
Tarbiat Modares University³

Abstract

Journal articles are veritable indicators of academic writing and constitute resourceful communication tools. They play a key role in today's contacts of the members of different discourse communities all around the globe, and the discourse of applied linguistics is no exception in this respect. Meanwhile, metadiscourse has gained in popularity in the discourse of discourse analysis studies in general, and in academic writing discourse in particular. Metadiscourse is self-reflective linguistic expressions referring to the evolving text, to the writer, and to the imagined readers of that text, and is based on a view of writing as a social engagement and, in academic contexts, it reveals the ways writers project themselves into their discourse to signal their attitudes and commitments (Hyland, 2004). The present study, using Hyland's (2005) model of metadiscourse, made an attempt to investigate the metadiscourse present in the journal articles written in English by English and Iranian writers in the field of Applied Linguistics to probe into the existing similarities and differences among the authors in both groups. To this end, a corpus consisting of 40 articles covering different topics were selected from different journals of the field. The articles were not the same length, were from different journals, and from different issues and years of publication. The metadiscourse present in the 40 articles were analyzed based on Hyland's interpersonal taxonomy of metadiscourse which is based on two major categories of 'interactional' and 'interactive' metadiscourse components. The results of the study indicate that, all in all, native speakers/writers of English use more metadiscoursal forms and devices in their writings than do Iranian writers writing in English. However, the difference between the two groups is not significant. Evidentials and transitions are the most frequent metadiscoursal items employed by both groups. Furthermore, the results obtained from the two corpora clearly show that the total number of interactive devices outperforms that of interactional resources. Iranian writers, it is discussed and concluded, are well aware of the conventions set and used by the international discourse community of Applied Linguistics and are efficient users of the same metadiscoursal resources employed by native speakers of English though with some degree of difference and varied preferences. Limitations of studies of this kind along with implications and suggestions for further research are also discussed.

¹ rgsamr@modares.ac.ir

² fouad.behzadpour@gmail.com

³ Tehran, Iran.

Key Words: Metadiscourse; Applied Linguistics; Journal Articles; Native Writers, Non-Native Writers

Introduction

Journal articles (JAs), as genuine signifiers of academic writing as well as resourceful communication tools, are playing a pivotal role in today's contacts of the members of different discourse communities all around the globe (Farrokhi & Ashrafi, 2009). Meanwhile, academic discourse explorations have demonstrated that a great deal of variation can be witnessed when it comes to interpersonal functions of language, i.e., academic discourse depicting various fields of study, language codes, and text types/genres indicates discrepancies in terms of the different ways via which authors establish interaction in discourse (Burneikaite, 2008).

In today's communications of different discourse communities in different fields of study across the globe, the way members try to identify themselves with a particular discourse community is undoubtedly influenced by elaborate acquaintance and grasp of the courses going on in a given community on the part of each and every member (Abdi, Rizi, & Tavakoli, 2010). Therefore, discourse communities might establish, either explicitly or implicitly, certain sets of communication strategies or conventions which, in their own right, lead to a bundle of genres across these discourse communities (Swales, 1990). What adds to this requirement is that it might be very difficult to get into such discourse communities if one does not possess the required knowledge and consciousness with regard to these conventions (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002).

The role of metadiscourse in this respect is, therefore, undeniable which makes the issue a key one in discourse analysis discussions and writing instruction, and other branches of applied linguistics. According to (Abdi, Rizi, & Tavakoli, 2010):

Generally, it is assumed that the putatively different identities from diverse speech communities would tend to (or have to) converge in communications within discourse communities through the lingua franca. However, such convergence requires conscious attempt on the part of the participants and is not easily achieved. Thus, there is a need to provide explicit guidelines regarding the rhetorical features of various genres extracted from authentic performance of competent writers, on the part of researchers,

and a need to consciously attend to them, on the part of newcomers to the discourse community (p. 1670).

Metadiscourse has been extensively exploited in recent discourse analysis and language education discussions (Hyland, 2004; Hyland, 2005), and deals with “an interesting, and relatively new, approach to conceptualizing interactions between text producers and their texts and between text producers and users” (Hyland, 2005, p. 1). In the realm of academic writing, metadiscourse, in the words of Toumi (2009) is of paramount significance and provides the writer with useful tools to communicate with the reader in a very efficient way in which the realization of different phenomena related to this communication can be fostered greatly. He mentions that metadiscourse:

carries an essential social meaning by revealing the author’s personality and identity and by indicating how s/he hopes his/her readers to respond to the ideational material ... It is also argued that the addition of metadiscoursal features can help writers transform a dry text into a reader-friendly prose, and exhibit the ability of the author to supply sufficient cues to secure an understanding and acceptance of the propositional content ... The use of metadiscourse has positive effects on readability, including: improved comprehension of texts and recall, stimulating learning and interest among students, and decision-making in a business setting (p. 64).

Another beneficial function of metadiscourse is increasing readers’ critical thinking abilities where readers can analyze the text, make their own assumptions and ideas, and then compare them with those of the authors (Camiciottoli, 2003). To summarize, the both importance and benefit of the notion of metadiscourse can be well realized in the following quote:

Metadiscourse thus offers a framework for understanding communication as social engagement. It illuminates some aspects of how we project ourselves into our discourses by signalling our attitude towards both the content and the audience of the text. With the judicious addition of metadiscourse, a writer is able not only to transform what might otherwise be a dry or difficult text into coherent, reader-friendly prose, but also to relate it to a given context and convey his or her personality, credibility, audience-sensitivity and relationship to the message (Hyland, 2005, p. 4).

Nowadays, the Iranian discourse community of Applied Linguistics is contributing significantly to the whole profession particularly when it comes to publishing JAs in both domestic and international journals of Applied Linguistics. There has been also always the fear, on the part of Iranian writers writing in English, that they might be, due to their being non-native,

misunderstood by the international readership of Applied Linguistics. Thus, the present study, as its major goal, set out to investigate the possible similarities and differences that exist among Iranian writers writing in English in the field of Applied Linguistics and native writers of English academics in the same field of study. The findings of the study can shed light on the fact whether Iranian writers can communicate efficiently, meaningfully, and impressively with the reader based on the conventions and regulations set, explicitly and implicitly, by the international discourse community of Applied Linguistics, which are mostly manifest in the metadiscoursal devices and items present in the JAs of the field.

Theoretical Framework

Metadiscourse: Issues and Definitions

The philosophy behind the term metadiscourse is very well brought up by Hyland (2005) as follows:

Essentially metadiscourse embodies the idea that communication is more than just the exchange of information, goods or services, but also involves the personalities, attitudes and assumptions of those who are communicating. Language is always a consequence of interaction, of the differences between people which are expressed verbally, and metadiscourse options are the ways we articulate and construct these interactions. This, then, is a dynamic view of language as metadiscourse stresses the fact that, as we speak or write, we negotiate with others, making decisions about the kind of effects we are having on our listeners or readers (p. 3).

As mentioned previously, the concept has greatly found its way in the different discussions of discourse analysis particularly in recent years. However, in the literature dealing with discourse analysis the concept of metadiscourse has received varied attention in terms of definition and conceptualization. In other words, metadiscourse, in spite of its increasing significance, appeal, and rationale, has been defined and perceived of quite differently and has been employed rather with variance to signify various facets of language functions (Hyland, 2005). To begin with, Crismore (1983) describes metadiscourse as a degree of discourse to the effect that “it is the author’s intrusion into the ongoing discourse, and is used by the author to direct rather than inform the reader” (cited in Toumi, 2009, p. 64). This broad variance also includes broad definitions, such as ‘writing about writing’ (Williams, 1981) or ‘discourse about

discourse or communication about communication' (Vande Kopple, 1985) on the one hand, and more narrow ones, such as 'writing about the evolving text rather than referring to the subject matter' (Swales 2004, 121) (cited in Burneikaite, 2008, p. 38).

Another definition of metadiscourse has been provided by Adel (2006). He defines metadiscourse as "text about the evolving text, or the writer's explicit commentary on her own ongoing discourse" (p. 20). She divides metadiscourse to two major types of 'metatext' and 'writer-reader interaction.' In the former, the reader is helped through the text, and the central points of guidance include text wording, text structure, and discursual actions. Instances of metatext include '*in the present study,*' '*will be elaborated on in the following section,*' '*to summarize,*' '*see Appendix I,*' '*roughly speaking,*' '*in brief*' etc. In the latter, metadiscourse functions as a way in which the writer communicates with the imagined reader via different ways that aim to establish and sustain an interaction with the reader. This function also helps the author to have an impact on the reader by directly speaking to him/her in different ways. Typical examples of this function are '*You will probably think that . . . ;*' '*Does this sound . . . to you?;*' '*Correct me if I'm wrong, but . . . ;*' '*as you will see . . . ;*' and '*dear reader.*'

Metadiscourse: The Scope

According to Hyland (2004 & 2005), the notion of metadiscourse is becoming more and more significant in inquiries related to writing and composition pedagogy, reading, structure and features of texts, participant interactions, historical linguistics, cross-cultural variations, and rhetorical issues. He further mentions that this increasing significance has been well reflected in works in the following research areas: casual conversation, school textbooks, oral narratives, science popularizations, undergraduate textbooks, postgraduate dissertations, Darwin's *Origin of Species*, advertising slogans, company annual reports, rhetorical differences in the texts written by different cultural groups, medieval medical writing, scientific discourse from the late seventeenth, effective comprehension, ESL and native-speaker student writing, and persuasive and argumentative discourse.

Metadiscourse has been also around in spoken discourse. Spoken metadiscourse, for instance, as "a set of rhetorically structured communicative and interactional strategies used by speakers to signal, highlight, mitigate, or

cancel parts of their ongoing discourse and their varying relevance to different addressees and/or audience members” has been used to analyze parliamentary debates (Ilie, 2003, p. 71).

Metadiscourse, based on what has been previously mentioned above, has been taken to be ‘discourse about discourse’ in general. Some scholars such as Cheng and Steffenson (1996) have taken a different stance and have made a distinction between discourse and metadiscourse to acknowledge the fact that metadiscourse is not necessarily discourse about discourse, or talk about talk, or text about text as frequently mentioned in discourse studies. These scholars further argue that while writing two purposes are served. In the first place, a writer enjoys an explicit aim of generating a written text which is realized on the first level of ‘*primary discourse*’ which aims to broaden propositional content about an issue. Second, there is an implicit purpose of communicating with the reader. This goal is met through the second level entitled ‘*metadiscourse*’ which passes judgments on the written text itself and addresses the reader with its remarks.

Within the past three decades the issue of metadiscourse has seen different models/taxonomies (Vande Kopple,1985; Crismore and Farnsworth,1990; Mauranen 1993, cited in Blagojevic, 2004, p. 62) all of which have worked through a somehow similar theoretical framework (except for Adel’s (2006) model which added further theoretical dimensions) with some slight differences. In the present study, Hyland’s (2005) model of metadiscourse was preferred over other ones at least for two good reasons:

1. It has broaden previously established models/taxonomies, and
2. It is uncomplicated, all-encompassing, more up to date, and straightforward.

Hyland’s Model of Metadiscourse: An Interpersonal View

Hyland’s classification of metadiscourse is primarily based in the functional approach which looks at metadiscourse as the conduit through which authors allude to the reader, the author, or the text. The distinction made between ‘*interactive*’ and ‘*interactional*’ aids in the functional approach have been used in this model to take into account the ‘*organizational*’ and ‘*evaluative*’

properties of discourse. The model also acknowledges 'stance' and 'engagement' properties, and adds to previously formulated models.

The Interactive Facet of the Model

According to Hyland (2005), this facet:

concerns the writer's awareness of a participating audience and the ways he or she seeks to accommodate its probable knowledge, interests, rhetorical expectations and processing abilities. The writer's purpose here is to shape and constrain a text to meet the needs of particular readers, setting out arguments so that they will recover the writer's preferred interpretations and goals. The use of resources in this category therefore addresses ways of organizing discourse, rather than experience, and reveals the extent to which the text is constructed with the readers' needs in mind (p. 49).

2. The Interactional Facet of the Model

On the other hand, interactional dimension of the interpersonal model of metadiscourse deals with:

the ways writers conduct interaction by intruding and commenting on their message. The writer's goal here is to make his or her views explicit and to involve readers by allowing them to respond to the unfolding text. This is the writer's expression of a textual 'voice', or community-recognized personality, and includes the ways he or she conveys judgements and overtly aligns him- or herself with readers. Metadiscourse here is essentially evaluative and engaging, expressing solidarity, anticipating objections and responding to an imagined dialogue with others. It reveals the extent to which the writer works to jointly construct the text with readers (p. 50).

These two facets are each further divided into five components called 'metadiscourse resources' which are briefly discussed here.

Interactive resources

Transition Markers. This subcategory primarily consists of adverbial phrases and conjunctions that aid the reader in interpreting pragmatic features and connections in discourse. The major function of this category is showing addition (*and, furthermore, moreover, by the way*), comparison of both similar (*similarly, likewise, equally, in the same way, correspondingly*) and different (in contrast, however, but, on the contrary) arguments, and consequence connections (*thus, therefore, consequently, in conclusion, admittedly, nevertheless, anyway, in any case, of course*).

Frame Markers. Their main purpose is to make the text clear to the reader as they function to sequence, label, predict, and shift arguments. The elements in

this category include additive connections (*first, second, then, next, at the same time*), labeling different stages of discourse (*in sum, by way of introduction, to summarize*), presenting goals of discourse (*I argue here, my purpose is, I hope to persuade*), showing topic shifts (*right, OK, well, let us return to*).

Endophoric Markers. They include items that direct the attention of the reader to other sections of the text (*see Figure 2, refer to the next section, as noted above*).

Evidentials. They include metadiscoursal tools and devices that represent opinions, comments, judgments, etc. from other sources (*Brown, 2001, p. 57*). As Hyland (2005) puts it, such items “Guide the reader's interpretation and establish an authorial command of the subject” (p. 51).

Code Glosses. They provide the reader with additional information via paraphrasing, elaborating, and exemplifying to guarantee that the audience can recover and understand the meaning and interpretation intended by the author. Examples include *this is called, in other words, that is, this can be defined as, for example*.

Interactional Resources

Hedges. They include elements such as *possible, might, and perhaps* that “indicate the writer's decision to recognize alternative voices and viewpoints and so withhold complete commitment to a proposition” (Hyland, 2005, p. 52).

Boosters. In contrast to hedges, boosters include devices such as *clearly, obviously, and demonstrate* to propose that the writer “recognizes potentially diverse positions but has chosen to narrow this diversity rather than enlarge it, confronting alternatives with a single, confident voice” (p. 53).

Attitude Markers. They signal the writer's affective attitudes towards the facts and propositions mentioned in the text. They include attitude verbs (*agree, prefer*), sentence adverbs (*unfortunately, hopefully*) and adjectives (*appropriate, logical, remarkable*).

Self-Mentions. They signal the author's explicit presence in discourse. Examples include *me, mine, exclusive we, our, ours*.

Engagement Markers. They include devices that “explicitly address readers, either to focus their attention or include them as discourse participants” (p. 53). Examples include *you, your*, inclusive *we*, interjections (*by the way, you may notice*), imperatives such as *see, note* and *consider*, and obligation modals such as *should, must, have to*.

The Study

Aim of the Study and Research Questions

As mentioned previously, metadiscourse and metadiscourse strategies play a key role in academic writing particularly when it comes to productive, efficient, and impressive communication between the writer and the reader. The first and major purpose of the present study, thus, was to investigate the similarities and differences that exist among the metadiscourse strategies used by Iranian writers and those of English academics in the field of Applied Linguistics.

Furthermore, based on the conception of ‘the writer’s responsibility for effective communication’ adopted from Greenberg’s linguistic typology, it has been shown that “English academic discourse relies on writer’s responsibility for an effective communication, while for example, in Japanese, Korean and Chinese discourses, it is the listener (reader) who is responsible for understanding what the speaker (writer) intends to say” (Blagojevic, 2004, p. 61). The second purpose of the study, therefore, was to investigate the same phenomenon among Iranian writers writing in English in Applied Linguistics journals. What makes this area of research more interesting and important is the fact that Iranian scholars in the field of Applied Linguistics are contributing to and publishing in, with an increasing rate, both Iranian and Non-Iranian journals, hence the significance of the discourse they use in their academic works. Therefore, the following research questions were formulated for the present study:

1. Do Iranian academic writers in the field of Applied Linguistics, when writing in English, employ the similar metadiscourse strategies to the ones employed by native speakers of English writing JAs in the field of Applied Linguistics?

2. 2. Does Iranian academic discourse community of Applied Linguistics take the responsibility for effective communication when writing in English?

Materials

The materials used in the present study consisted of 40 JAs written in English by Iranian (native speakers of Persian) and English (native speakers of English) authors in the field of Applied Linguistics, 20 of each. The articles were not the same length. To overcome this problem, as will be mentioned later, metadiscourse patterns have been also presented in percent to make the frequencies uniform and comparable. The articles in the native English group were randomly selected from different journals of the field published in different years (1995-2010). JAs in the native Persian group were randomly selected from different issues (years 2008-2010) of a prestigious journal published in Iran, i.e., TELLSI (Journal of Teaching English Language and Literature Society of Iran). The topics of the JAs in both groups covered a wide range of issues in the field of Applied Linguistics including second language acquisition, teacher education, sociolinguistics, language testing and assessment, teaching and learning language skills, CALL, EIL (English as an International Language), pragmatics, discourse analysis, ESP (English for specific purposes)/EAP (English for academic purposes), psycholinguistics, etc. For a complete list of the papers see the Appendix on page 17.

Method and Procedure

The corpora used for the purpose of the study were analyzed and probed into through the identification and categorization of metadiscourse items following Hyland's interpersonal model of metadiscourse. A detailed description of the model will be provided later. The study made use of a quantitative approach for textual analysis using frequency counts and percentages. First of all the total sentences of the articles in both corpora were counted. Quotations and other types of text which were not directly mentioned by the author (s) were not included in this analysis. Then the analysis was done by determining each and every metadiscourse item and then labeling the item to its parallel category (the corresponding metadiscourse resource). Since metadiscourse is highly contextual by temperament (Hyland, 2004), the corpora were further analyzed by another colleague to ensure that the metadiscoursal items had

been identified and labeled correctly. Subsequently, the labeled items were tallied, and then the total number of items related to each category was divided by the total number of sentences of its corresponding corpus such that the final results could be also presented in percentage. This was done to overcome the problem of the dissimilar length of the JAs of the corpora such that based on the percentages the results could be compared with each other. Therefore, 3 types of results could be obtained: the existing metadiscourse as a whole in each corpus, the existing interactive and interactional metadiscourse separately, and finally the metadiscourse present in each metadiscourse resource. The following table shows Hyland's interpersonal model of metadiscourse which is primarily divided into two categories of interactive and interactional metadiscourse.

Table 1: The Interpersonal Model of (Taken from Hyland, 2005, p. 49)

Category	Function	Example
Interactive	Help to guide the reader through the text	
Transitions	Express relations between main clauses	In addition; but; thus; and
Frame markers	Refer to discourse acts, sequences or stages	Finally; to conclude; my purpose is
Endophoric markers	Refer to information in other parts of the text	Noted above; see figure; in section 2
Evidentials	Refer to information from other texts	According to X; Z states
Code glosses	Elaborate propositional meaning	Namely; e.g.; such as; in other words
Interactional	Involve the reader in the text	
Hedges	Withhold commitment and open dialogue	Might; perhaps; possible; about
Boosters	Emphasize certainty and close dialogue	In fact; definitely; it is clear that
Attitude markers	Expresses writers' attitude to proposition	Unfortunately; I agree; surprisingly
Self-mentions	Explicit reference to author(s)	I; we; my; me; our
Engagement markers	Explicitly build relationship with reader	Consider; note; you can see that

Categorization System and Terminology

The following abbreviations and orthographic conventions were used in the study for the ease of analysis and reference.

JANE: Journal articles written in English by native speakers of English

JANP: Journal articles written in English by native speakers of Persian

NS: Number of sentences

Inv Fr: Frequency of interactive resources

Inl Fr: Frequency of interactional resources

%: Percentage

TM: Total metadiscourse

Results, Analysis, and Discussion

For the purpose of clarity and brevity, in this section solely representative cases of the categories of interpersonal model of metadiscourse along with their possible variants found in the two corpora have been included. The native Persian corpora yielded 3612 sentences while the native English corpora comprised of 4157 sentences totally.

Interactive Resources/Items in the JANP Corpus

a) Transition Markers, Code Glosses, and Evidentials

For the sake of comparison, the reliability estimates of TSES and its factors, i.e. "efficacy in instructional strategies," "efficacy in classroom management," and "efficacy in student engagement" were reported .94, .91, .90, and .87 respectively (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

b) Frame Markers

Summarizing the above aspects of teaching in relation to TOEFL iBT, the changes produced by TOEFL iBT were seen to be superficial rather than substantial.

c) Endophoric Markers

According to Table 1, the number of textual themes was much more than the number of interpersonal themes in both groups.

Interactional Resources/Items in the JANP Corpus

a) Hedges

One possible reason for this relationship may be that as learners achieve greater autonomy, they become capable of adopting and using more efficient strategies, which in turn, improve their reading comprehension ability.

b) Boosters

As is evident, there are no considerable differences between the means of the control groups on the pre and post tests.

c) Attitude Markers

A surprising number of learners (i.e., 76.74%) expressed the belief that their listening ability directly depend on their knowledge of words.

d) Self-Mentions

Therefore, we chose to check different factor solutions and found the 3-factor solution as the most interpretable one.

e) Engagements

Now if we suppose that the construct can be defined and there is a universally-agreed theory to support such a definition, then how can we solve the problem of terminologies used in this definition?

Interactive Resources/Items in the JANE Corpus

a) Transition Markers

Nonetheless, recognition works here as a dynamic in accomplishing a particular significance for teacher professional identity.

b) Frame Markers

The purpose of this paper is to consider further how the ZPD may be applied to interlanguage pragmatics.

c) Endophoric Markers

A closer examination of the relationships between the subscales adds more intriguing information (see Table 2).

d) Evidentials

Assistance in the ZPD may be called scaffolding (Wood et al., 1976), and the accomplishments made with assistance may be termed assisted performance (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991).

e) Code Glosses

In other words, these authors seem to differentiate identity and face in terms of individuality versus relationship; in other words, they treat identity as situated within an individual and they treat face as a relational phenomenon.

Interactional Resources/Items in the JANE Corpus

a) Hedges

We know that recasts do not often lead to learner uptake in oral production (Lyster, 1998), but, in Chandler's case, the rewriting activity made the recast salient because it pushed students to "repeat" it, which might explain why they were able to transfer this knowledge to the next draft.

b) Boosters

Taken together, this body of research has demonstrated the need to account for teachers' professional identity experiences. Teachers' talk about and experience of professional identity is central to the beliefs, values, and practices that guide their engagement, commitment, and actions in and out of the classroom.

c) Attitude Markers

In this relatively short turn, Avery laid out the theme that would shape the teachers' identity talk for the next significant portion of the conversation: that learning in school

demands the ability to persist in the face of challenge, working through problems rather than avoiding them.

d) Self-Mentions

The research evolved from the personal experience of my return to the foreign language classroom as an adult. My first language is English, and I wished to learn Spanish. I attended Spanish as a foreign language classes at two universities in Texas, and although I made excellent grades, it was a disappointing, discouraging experience.

e) Engagements

As you will see in the following analysis, however, the identity work accomplished through the genre of personal storytelling both encompassed and went beyond this immediate purpose.

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that Iranian writers in the field of Applied Linguistics employ a remarkably high rate of metadiscoursal items on the whole (144.43%), which is almost 10% lower than the metadiscoursal items used by native writers of English (154.91%) who write academic papers in the same field (see Table 2).

Table 2: Metadiscourse items in JANE and JANP corpora as a whole

Corpus	NS	Inv Fr	%	Inl Fr	%	TM	%
JANP	3612	3719	102.96	1498	41.47	5217	144.43
JANE	4157	4475	107.64	1965	47.26	6440	154.91

Tables 2, 3, and 4 clearly show that writers in both groups have employed more interactive than interactional items, and that evidentials and transitions have been the most frequent forms followed by frame markers and code glosses. This indicates that such metadiscourse devices are a significant element in academic authorship. The high employment of transitions, which show internal connections (Hyland, 2005), is obviously a remarkable property of academic prose. The same results for transitions and evidentials have been also reported by Hyland (2004 & 2005) based on the results obtained from postgraduate (both master and PhD) writing. However, hedges and engagement markers were also among the most frequent devices in his analysis. The percentages concerning both the use of interactive and interactional metadiscourse are higher in the English native speakers' JAs, for 5% and 6%, respectively (see Table 2). A closer look at the metadiscoursal forms within both interactive and interactional resources clearly shows that the percentage deviations for most of the metadiscoursal devices are not higher than 2%, except for the category of evidentials, based on which one

comes to the conclusion that Iranian authors are less inclined than English writers to be so much preoccupied with establishing their academic credentials. This might indicate that Iranian writers' reviewing the related literature, and their wish for showing their awareness of it, might be less compelling. Therefore, there is a dire need of raising awareness in the Iranian discourse community of Applied Linguistics about this important feature of academic writing since citation, in the words of Hyland (2005), is:

central to the social context of persuasion, as it helps provide justification for arguments and demonstrates the novelty of the writer's position, but it also allows students to display an allegiance to a particular community and establish a credible writer identity, showing a familiarity with the literature and with an ethos that values a disciplinary research tradition (p. 56).

Table 3: Interactive resources and items present in JANE and JANP corpora

Corpus	JANP	%	JANE	%
Type of Interactive Resource				
Transition Markers	936	25.91	1101	26.48
Frame Markers	765	21.17	852	20.49
Endophoric Markers	292	8.08	426	10.24
Evidentials	963	26.66	1294	31.12
Code Glosses	763	21.12	802	19.29
Total	3719	102.96	4475	107.64

When it comes to code glosses the whole situation is somehow different. That is to say, Iranian writers have shown to use these items (21.12%) more than their counterparts, i.e., native speakers of English do (19.29). This indicates that Iranian writers have a higher tendency to predict their audience's knowledge base and to ensure that the audience is able to recover his/her intended meaning. This might be due to the fact that Iranian writers have the fear of being misunderstood, because of their being non-native speakers of English, by their readers. As a result, they try to resort to devices and tools that metadiscourse provides them with. This is a finding which has not been reported in other similar studies and seems to be culture-specific, i.e., it is not related to a particular discipline such as Applied Linguistics, but to the writer's native language conventions, attitudes, and style of writing.

Table 4: Interactional resources and items present in JANE and JANP corpora

Corpus	JANP	%	JANE	%
Type of Interactional Resource				
Hedges	441	12.20	584	14.04
Boosters	359	9.93	472	11.35

Corpus	JANP	%	JANE	%
Attitude Markers	421	11.65	532	12.79
Self-mentions	156	4.31	243	5.84
Engagement Markers	121	3.34	134	3.22
Total	1498	41.47	1965	47.26

On the whole, the results of the study show that, in spite of some differences that are present both in the frequency of items and in the preferences of the two groups, both Iranian and native speakers of English writing in English and publishing in different journals of Applied Linguistics take the responsibility of establishing effective communication with their readers via using similar tools of metadiscourse.

Conclusion

Based on the analyzed corpora and the information and data yielded from them, and also according to the discussions advanced in this paper, it is obvious that Iranian discourse community of Applied Linguistics is well aware and has the knowledge of metadiscourse resources/strategies to a high degree when writing JAs in English. This shows the fact that, in spite of some differences and preferences present in the employment of metadiscourse items in the Iranian authorship compared to those of the international discourse community, Iranian discourse community of Applied Linguistics follows and observes the conventions set, either explicitly or implicitly, by the international discourse community of Applied Linguistics to promote effective communication between writers and readers, hence being easily and efficiently understood by the international discourse community and readership. The model proposed by Hyland, in addition, proved very useful and comprehensive in our study. One point, however, should be taken into account when dealing with studies of the same type accomplished here. It should be mentioned that writing, after all, is a phenomenon which might totally vary from individual to individual. That is to say, idiosyncratic styles pertaining to different writers might have a great impact on the way they write. This will have remarkable implications for the application of the results of a study like the present paper and other similar research papers. Having this point in mind, other research studies can be run to explore other aspects of the metadiscourse issue. An area which has the potential to be investigated is gender-specific differences/similarities with respect to the use of

metadiscourse items in the same discipline or across different fields of study. Furthermore, qualitative and quantitative studies can be accomplished to investigate authors' awareness and knowledge of metadiscourse strategies via interviews, questionnaires, and think aloud protocol analyses.

References

- Abdi, R., Rizi, M. T., & Tavakoli, M. (2009). Marking 'manner' metadiscursively: Conceptualizing metadiscourse within the framework of cooperative principle. *Iranian Journal of Language Studies*, 3(2), 143-152.
- Abdi, R., Rizi, M. T., & Tavakoli, M. (2010). The cooperative principle in discourse communities and genres: A framework for the use of metadiscourse. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42, 1669-1679.
- Adel, A. (2006). *Metadiscourse in L1 and L2 English*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins B.V.
- Blagojevic, S. (2004). Metadiscourse in Academic Prose: a Contrastive Study of Academic Articles Written in English by English and Norwegian Native Speakers. *STUDIES ABOUT LANGUAGES*, 5, 60-67.
- Brooks-Lewis, K. A. (2009). Adult Learners' Perceptions of the Incorporation of their L1 in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 30(2), 216-235.
- Brown, G. (2008). Selective listening. *System*, 1-12.
- Burneikaite, N. (2008). Metadiscourse in Linguistics Master's Theses in English L1 and L2. *KALBOTYRA*, 59(3), 38-47.
- Camiciottoli, B. C. (2003). Metadiscourse and ESP reading comprehension: An exploratory study. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 15, 28-44.
- Chai, C. (2006). Writing plan quality: Relevance to writing scores. *Assessing Writing*, 11, 198-223.
- Cheng, X., & Steffenson, M. S. (1996). Metadiscourse: A technique for improving student writing. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 30(2), 149-181.
- Cohen, J. L. (2010). Getting recognised: Teachers negotiating professional identities as learners through talk. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26, 473-481.
- Evans, S., & Green, C. (2007). Why EAP is necessary: A survey of Hong Kong tertiary students. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 6, 3-17.
- Farrokhi, F., & Ashrafi, S. (2009). Textual Metadiscourse Resources in Research Articles. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*(212), 39-75.
- Flege, J. E., Birdsong, D., Bialystok, E., Mack, M., Sung, H., & Tsukada, K. (2006). Degree of foreign accent in English sentences produced by Korean children and adults. *Journal of Phonetics*, 34, 153-175.

- Freese, A. R. (1999). The role of reflection on preservice teachers' development in the context of a professional development school. *TEACHING AND TEACHER EDUCATION*, 15, 895-909.
- Fulcher, G. (1995). Variable competence in second language acquisition: A problem for research methodology? *System*, 23(1), 25-33.
- Gue'nette, D. (2007). Is feedback pedagogically correct? Research design issues in studies of feedback on writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16, 40-53.
- Harwood, N. (2002). Taking a lexical approach to teaching: principles and problems. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 12(2), 139-155.
- Horwitz, E. K. (2000). Teachers and Students, Students and Teachers: An Ever-Evolving Partnership. *The Modern Language Journal*, 84, 523-535.
- Hyland, K. (2004). Disciplinary interactions: metadiscourse in L2 postgraduate writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13, 133-151.
- Hyland, K. (2005). *Metadiscourse*. New York: Continuum.
- Hyland, K., & Hamp-Lyons, L. (2002). EAP: Issues and directions. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 1, 1-12.
- Ilie, C. (2003). Discourse and metadiscourse in parliamentary debates. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 2, 71-92.
- Lodge, K. (2003). Phonological translation and phonetic repertoire. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 13(2), 263-276.
- Marquardt, T. P., & Gillam, R. B. (1999). Assessment in communication disorders: some observations on current issues. *Language Testing*, 16(3), 249-269.
- McKay, S. (2003). Teaching English as an International Language: The Chilean Context. *ELT Journal*, 57(2), 139-148.
- MULLOCK, B. (2006). The Pedagogical Knowledge Base of Four TESOL Teachers. *The Modern Language Journal*, 90, 48-66.
- Ohta, A. S. (2005). Interlanguage pragmatics in the zone of proximal development. *System*, 33, 503-517.
- Seidlhofer, B. (2009). Common ground and different realities: world Englishes and English as a lingua franca. *World Englishes*, 28(2), 236-245.
- Shohamy, E., & Inbar, O. (2006). Assessment of Advanced Language Proficiency: Why Performance-based Tasks? *CPDD 0605*. The Pennsylvania State University, Center for Advanced Language Proficiency Education and Research.
- Spencer-Oatey, H. (2007). Theories of identity and the analysis of face. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 39, 639-656.

- Swales, J. M. (1990). *Genre Analysis: English for Specific Purpose in Academic and Research Setting*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Toumi, N. (2009). A Model for the Investigation of Reflexive Metadiscourse in Research Articles. *LANGUAGE STUDIES WORKING PAPERS*, 1, 64-73.
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, A. W. (2001). Teacher efficacy: capturing an elusive construct. *TEACHING AND TEACHER EDUCATION*, 17, 783-805.

Appendix

Jornal Articles Used in the study for Analysis

A) Journal articles written in English by native speakers of Persian

- Abbasian, G. (2009). ELT Educational Context, Teacher Intuition and Learner Hidden Agenda. *TELLSI*, 3(9), 65-99.
- Aghagolzadeh, F., & Khosronejad, A. (2008). Gender on the Scope of Written Text in Persian and English Short Stories. *TELLSI*, 2(8), 53-93.
- Ahmadian, M., & Tavakoli, M. (2009). The effects of different types of planning on the oral production of morphosyntactic features. *TELLSI*, 3(11-12), 101-135.
- Akbari, R., & Abednia, A. (2010). Second language teacher's sense of self-efficacy: A construct validation. *TELLSI*, 4(1), 69-103.
- Alavi, S., & Karami, H. (2010). Differential item functioning and ad hoc interpretations. *TELLSI*, 4(1), 1-19.
- Babapour, S. (2009). The effect of peer-tutoring on Iranian elementary students' chievement in listening, reading, and writing in English. *TELLSI*, 2009(11-12), 155-190.
- Birjandi, P., & Lotfi, G. (2009). Exploring EFL learners' beliefs about listening comprehension difficulties: A qualitative approach. *TELLSI*, 3(11-12), 1-33.
- Hassaskhah, J., & Chavoshi, S. (2010). Interactional modifications in text-based online chat and EFL question development. *TELLSI*, 4(1), 19-49.
- Jahangard, A., Moinzadeh, A., & Tavakoli, M. (2010). Vocabulary learning and learners' ability to transfer their knowledge into L2 reading comprehension: A case for translation. *TELLSI*, 4(1), 125-151.
- Jalilifar, A. (2010). A contrastive discourse analysis of English newspaper headlines: Facing sysntactic challenges in translation. *TELLSI*, 4(1), 49-69.
- Khani, R., & Kamali, K. (2009). A comparative study of thematic progression and organization in subdiscipline articles of applied linguistics in local and international journals. *TELLSI*, 3(11-12), 61-81.

- Kiany, G., Ghafar Samar, R., & Jafari, S. (2010). The effects of planning condition, task structure, and gender on EFL learners' written performance. *TELLSI*, 4(1), 103-125.
- Modarresi, G. (2009). Collocational errors of Iranian EFL learners in written English. *TELLSI*, 3(11-12), 135-155.
- Nemati, M., & Ahmadi Shirazi, M. (2009). Writing Assessment Perspective: Too Simplistic or too Sophisticated? *TELLSI*, 3(9), 27-65.
- Rezaee, A. A., & Salehi, M. (2008). The Construct Validity of a Language Proficiency Test: A Multitrait Multimethod Approach. *TELLSI*, 2(8), 93-111.
- Riazi, A., & Bahrami, A. (2009). Iranian scholars and scientific publication in English: Attitudes, problems, and strategies. *TELLSI*, 3(11-12), 33-61.
- Sahragard, R., Rahimian, J., & Rahmani Anaraki, R. (2008). The effects of changing the deletion direction and deletion ration on the validity and reliability of the C-test. *TELLSI*, 2(8), 23-53.
- Tajeddin, Z., & Estaji, M. (2009). Examining Washback of Language Assessment within an Educational Context: Voices from Teachers and Examiners. *TELLSI*, 3(9), 1-27.
- Tavakoli, M. (2009). The Role of Motivation in ESP Reading Comprehension Test Performance. *TELLSI*, 3(9), 99-117.
- Zarei, A., & Ghahremani, K. (2009). On the relationship between learner autonomy and reading. *TELLSI*, 3(11-12), 81-101.

B) Journal articles written in English by native speakers of English

- Abdi, R., Rizi, M. T., & Tavakoli, M. (2009). Marking 'manner' metadiscursively: Conceptualizing metadiscourse within the framework of cooperative principle. *Iranian Journal of Language Studies*, 3(2), 143-152.
- Abdi, R., Rizi, M. T., & Tavakoli, M. (2010). The cooperative principle in discourse communities and genres: A framework for the use of metadiscourse. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42, 1669-1679.
- Adel, A. (2006). *Metadiscourse in L1 and L2 English*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins B.V.
- Blagojevic, S. (2004). Metadiscourse in Academic Prose: a Contrastive Study of Academic Articles Written in English by English and Norwegian Native Speakers. *STUDIES ABOUT LANGUAGES*, 5, 60-67.
- Brooks-Lewis, K. A. (2009). Adult Learners' Perceptions of the Incorporation of their L1 in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning. *Applied Linguistics*, 30(2), 216-235.
- Brown, G. (2008). Selective listening. *System*, 1-12.
- Burneikaite, N. (2008). Metadiscourse in Linguistics Master's Theses in English L1 and L2. *KALBOTYRA*, 59(3), 38-47.
- Camiciottoli, B. C. (2003). Metadiscourse and ESP reading comprehension: An exploratory study. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 15, 28-44.

- Chai, C. (2006). Writing plan quality: Relevance to writing scores. *Assessing Writing*, 11, 198-223.
- Cheng, X., & Steffenson, M. S. (1996). Metadiscourse: A technique for improving student writing. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 30(2), 149-181.
- Cohen, J. L. (2010). Getting recognised: Teachers negotiating professional identities as learners through talk. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26, 473-481.
- Evans, S., & Green, C. (2007). Why EAP is necessary: A survey of Hong Kong tertiary students. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 6, 3-17.
- Farrokhi, F., & Ashrafi, S. (2009). Textual Metadiscourse Resources in Research Articles. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*(212), 39-75.
- Flege, J. E., Birdsong, D., Bialystok, E., Mack, M., Sung, H., & Tsukada, K. (2006). Degree of foreign accent in English sentences produced by Korean children and adults. *Journal of Phonetics*, 34, 153-175.
- Freese, A. R. (1999). The role of reflection on preservice teachers' development in the context of a professional development school. *TEACHING AND TEACHER EDUCATION*, 15, 895-909.
- Fulcher, G. (1995). Variable competence in second language acquisition: A problem for research methodology? *System*, 23(1), 25-33.
- Gue'nette, D. (2007). Is feedback pedagogically correct? Research design issues in studies of feedback on writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 16, 40-53.
- Harwood, N. (2002). Taking a lexical approach to teaching: principles and problems. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 12(2), 139-155.
- Horwitz, E. K. (2000). Teachers and Students, Students and Teachers: An Ever-Evolving Partnership. *The Modern Language Journal*, 84, 523-535.
- Hyland, K. (2004). Disciplinary interactions: metadiscourse in L2 postgraduate writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13, 133-151.
- Hyland, K. (2005). *Metadiscourse*. New York: Continuum.
- Hyland, K., & Hamp-Lyons, L. (2002). EAP: Issues and directions. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 1, 1-12.
- Ilie, C. (2003). Discourse and metadiscourse in parliamentary debates. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 2, 71-92.
- Lodge, K. (2003). Phonological translation and phonetic repertoire. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 13(2), 263-276.
- Marquardt, T. P., & Gillam, R. B. (1999). Assessment in communication disorders: some observations on current issues. *Language Testing*, 16(3), 249-269.

- McKay, S. (2003). Teaching English as an International Language: The Chilean Context. *ELT Journal*, 57(2), 139-148.
- MULLOCK, B. (2006). The Pedagogical Knowledge Base of Four TESOL Teachers. *The Modern Language Journal*, 90, 48-66.
- Ohta, A. S. (2005). Interlanguage pragmatics in the zone of proximal development. *System*, 33, 503-517.
- Seidlhofer, B. (2009). Common ground and different realities: world Englishes and English as a lingua franca. *World Englishes*, 28(2), 236-245.
- Shohamy, E., & Inbar, O. (2006). Assessment of Advanced Language Proficiency: Why Performance-based Tasks? *CPDD 0605*. The Pennsylvania State University, Center for Advanced Language Proficiency Education and Research.
- Spencer-Oatey, H. (2007). Theories of identity and the analysis of face. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 39, 639-656.
- Swales, J. M. (1990). *Genre Analysis: English for Specific Purpose in Academic and Research Setting*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Toumi, N. (2009). A Model for the Investigation of Reflexive Metadiscourse in Research Articles. *LANGUAGE STUDIES WORKING PAPERS*, 1, 64-73.
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, A. W. (2001). Teacher efficacy: capturing an elusive construct. *TEACHING AND TEACHER EDUCATION*, 17, 783-805.

On the Learnability of three categories of Idioms by Iranian EFL learners

Abbas Ali Zarei¹
Imam Khomeini International University²

Abstract

This study was carried out to investigate the differences among the comprehension and production of three categories of idioms (identical, similar, and different) by Iranian EFL learners. It also sought to explore the effect of the knowledge of Persian idioms on the production of the corresponding English Idioms. To this end, 60 male intermediate level learners of English participated in the study. Two independent one-way ANOVA procedures and three separate paired-samples t-tests were used to analyze the data. Results showed that both comprehension and production of identical and similar idioms were easier than different idioms. Results also indicated that knowledge (awareness) of Persian idioms influenced the production of identical idioms positively while it influenced the production of different idioms negatively. Awareness of Persian idioms did not affect the production of similar idioms in any meaningful way.³

Key Words: similar idioms, different idioms, identical idioms, idiom learning

Introduction

One of the observable phenomena in the process of second language learning is the influence of the mother tongue. The influence of the mother tongue is salient, especially in learning situations where students' exposure is limited to only a few hours of formal classroom instruction. This influence is particularly salient in areas such as idioms, the correct use of which requires a relatively high level of L2 knowledge. Native speakers of English frequently employ idioms in their daily conversations. It is believed that the use of idioms can boost fluency and that "a strong knowledge of idioms will help students to be better speakers and negotiators. And they will be in a much better position to take advantage of the opportunities that come their way" (Abismara, 2002). Cooper (1999) believes that idiomatic expressions are frequently encountered

¹ aazarei@ikiu.ac.ir, aazarei@yahoo.com, Cell phone: 0912-2818077, Phone: +98281 3680507,
Correspondence address: Room 821, Faculty of humanities, Imam Khomeini International University, Qazvin,
Iran

² Qazvin, Iran

³ این پژوهش با استفاده از اعتبار پژوهشی دانشگاه بین المللی امام خمینی (ره) قزوین با شماره 751413-91 حمایت شده است.

in both oral and written discourse; therefore, they deserve special attention in language programs and should not be relegated to a position of secondary importance in the curriculum.

The relative paucity of research in the area of transfer in the learning of idioms combined with the relative dearth of research in the area of the role of transfer from Persian in the learning of identical, similar, and different idioms warrants the present study, which aims at finding answers to the following research questions:

1. Does idiom type influence the comprehension of idioms?
2. Does idiom type influence the production of idioms?
3. Does the knowledge of Persian idioms influence the production of different kinds of English idioms?

Literature review

Among the many features of the English language that perform the dual function of adding beauty to it and, at the same time, increasing the difficulty level of learning it is the use of figurative expressions such as similes, proverbs, metaphors, and idioms. Idioms – the focus of attention in the present study – can be looked at from various perspectives. From one perspective, a general distinction can be made between compositional and non-compositional idioms. The meaning of a non-compositional idiom is not comprehended from its individual parts (Mäntylä, 2004). In other words, their meanings are arbitrary rather than figurative. The meaning of a compositional idiom relates to the meaning of its components. A similar distinction is made by Dimitrova (2005), who states that non-compositional idioms are those idioms which cannot be analyzed. Compositional idioms, on the other hand, are those idioms whose meaning can be deduced from the meaning of their constituents and, therefore, they can be analyzed in a compositional way.

The compositionality of idioms can, in turn, partially account for idiomatic variability. Idioms are not completely frozen; there can be minimal structural variability. For example:

We will give him a taste of his own medicine

We are giving him a taste of his own medicine

We gave him a taste of his own medicine

We have given him a taste of his own medicine. (Ifill, 2002:7)

One of the factors that define whether idioms are frozen or not is the compositionality of idiomatic expressions. For example, the idiom *shoot the breeze* meaning *to chat* is a non-compositional idiom and has limited flexibility.

Yesterday I was shooting the breeze before you came back.

**The breeze was shot by me.*

**We shot the interesting breeze.*

The meaning of idiomatic expressions such as *spill the bean* meaning *to reveal a secret* is derived from the meaning of its parts, *spill* meaning *to reveal* and *bean* meaning *a secret*. These idioms are compositional and show a high level of flexibility. In *spill the bean*, only topicalization and relativization are not allowed, so it shows a high level of flexibility.

The beans were spilled.

He did not want to talk about his vocation but he spilled the bean.

**The beans on the cake he spilled.*

**The beans that we kept so long were spilled.*

Apart from syntactic variability, there can sometimes be a limited extent of lexical flexibility in the use of idioms. In most sentences, a speaker can use synonyms to make new sentences with the same meaning. But some idiomatic expressions are fixed and their components are not replaceable with synonyms. Consider the following two sentences:

(1) a. *He kicked the bucket.*

b. ** He kicked the bin.*

(2) a. *We have had our ups and down.*

b. ** We have had our differentials in elevation.*

The words in these two idioms are not changeable. These idioms are fixed and their individual elements cannot be replaced by synonyms. (Gibbs, 1994). However, there are a few idiomatic expressions that are flexible and their components can be replaced by synonyms without losing their figurative meanings. Ifill (2002) gives the following examples:

(1) *floating/walking on the air*

(2) *won't budge/give an inch*

(3) *gets/jumps/leaps on the bandwagon*

Although these idiomatic expressions are flexible, their flexibility is only limited to a few synonyms. Thus, lexical flexibility in such idioms is limited. All of the options for variability are semantically similar, but then not all semantically similar words can be replaced.

Idioms and culture

Pinnavaia (2002) believes that the first thing about idioms that learners need to be aware of is the culture and history of the people who generated them. Pinnavaia further contends that idioms are not considered as a part of language; they are considered as a part of culture. Because cultures are localized, idioms are not usually very useful outside of that local context. One specific instance is an Arabic idiom, *Osman's shirt*. Understanding this Arabic idiom may be difficult for foreigners, because they do not know the history and culture of Arab people. Transferring specific idioms to other languages creates problems if the language learner is not familiar with the target language and culture. However, some idioms can be more universally used than others; they can be easily translated, and their metaphorical meaning can be more easily deduced (Mahmoud, 2002).

Background knowledge and visual imagery also influence the understanding of idioms. Idioms such as *walking on the thin ice* can be easily interpreted as something dangerous. This interpretation is deduced by using visual imagery and background knowledge about ice (Vicker, 2000). On the other hand, understanding the meaning of idioms such as *face the music* is difficult because the meaning is not deduced from visual imagery. Mahmoud (2002, P. 4) states that "there are language specific idiomatic expressions in Arabic reflecting the Arab culture and environment". This implies that having background is necessary to learn certain types of idioms.

Taxonomy of Idioms

Fraser (1970) classifies idioms into three categories: transparent, semi-transparent and opaque idioms. *Transparent idioms* are idioms in which there is a close relationship between figurative and literal meanings. For instance, in *show/have green/red light*, there is a direct translation equivalent in Persian. Moreover, lexical and syntactical variability can be seen in the above example. In *semi-transparent* idioms, literal and figurative meanings are linked by one of

their components. But the relationship between literal and figurative meanings is not as obvious as in transparent idioms. For instance, *pull faces* meaning *face twisting* does not link figurative and literal meanings directly. This idiom is flexible both semantically and syntactically (*make/pull faces/face*). *Opaque idioms* are idioms whose literal meaning is completely different from their figurative meaning. In other words, there is no link between literal meaning and figurative meaning. For instance, in *face the music* meaning *to accept criticism for something you have done*, there is no link between the figurative and literal meanings. It is worth noting that opaque idioms have minimal variability in comparison with transparent and semi-transparent idioms.

According to Nunberg (1978), idiomatic expressions are classified into normally decomposable, abnormally decomposable, and semantically non-decomposable idioms. Normally decomposable idioms are idioms in which a part of meaning is used literally (e.g. *buck* in *pass the buck*). Abnormally decomposable idioms are expressions in which the reference of an idiom's parts can be identified metaphorically (e.g. *the question* in *pop the question*). The third category of idioms is semantically non-compositional idioms (opaque idioms), in which there is no relationship between the idiomatic meaning and the figurative meaning of its constituents. This class of idioms fits the traditional approach to idiomatic expressions. One example of semantically non-compositional idioms is *chew the fat* meaning *to have a chat with someone*, the meaning of which cannot be inferred from the meaning of its individual components.

Gibbs (1987) classifies idioms into four groups: syntactically frozen idioms, syntactically flexible idioms, transparent idioms, and opaque idioms. Syntactically frozen idioms cannot be syntactically changed into the passive and still retain their figurative meaning (e.g. *drive someone up the wall*). Syntactically flexible idioms keep their figurative meaning when transformed into the passive form (*Roger kept the tabs on them* or *Tabs were kept on them (by Roger)*). Transparent idioms and opaque idioms are similar to those of Fraser's classification.

Cacciari and Glucksberg (1991) present a typology of idioms regarding their degree of compositionality and transparency. This typology is classified into

three categories: Transparent idioms, quasi-metaphorical idioms, and opaque idioms.

Finally, Irujo (1986) classifies idioms into three groups: identical idioms, similar idioms, different idioms. Identical idioms have a word-for-word translation in the learners' native language. Similar idioms are meaningfully and syntactically similar to their first language equivalents. Different idioms are those which are used to express the same idea in the same situation as in the native language, but are semantically and syntactically different from the first language idioms.

Language transfer

During the fifties and the late sixties, contrastive analysis (CA) was recognized as a major influential factor in foreign language teaching and learning. CA is based on the assumption that language learners tend to transfer features of their mother language to their learning of the target language.

Traditionally, errors were seen as signs of blocking students' progress. An example of this view is the attitude of Audio-lingual method in which errors had to be corrected at any cost. But then, the view to errors changed and errors were regarded not as something that hinders students' progress, but as a sign of progress in learning. "This latter approach assumes that learner's errors are in some sense systematic and not random, otherwise there would be nothing for the teacher to learn from them" (Corder, 1981, P. 66).

Based on CA, when the similarities between the structure of the learner's native language (NL) and that of the target language (TL) makes the learning of the new habit easy, positive transfer occurs. In other words, if the L1 and L2 have similar features, learners may be able to transfer their L1 features positively. When old habits impede the formation of a new habit, negative transfer or interference is believed to occur and learning becomes difficult (Yule, 1996).

Transfer in the learning of idioms

Irujo (1986) investigated the relationship between idioms and language transfer. She conducted a study to determine the effects of language transfer on the comprehension and production of idioms. She concluded that the learning and production of identical idioms is easier than similar and different idioms. She further held that the recognition and production of similar idioms

is easier than different idioms. In short, Irujo's (1986) study of L2 advanced learners of English from Venezuela had three important findings:

- a) Participants were able to generalize the meaning of identical idioms in Spanish into their English equivalents, although there were slight differences in their forms.
- b) Similar idioms were understood as well as identical idioms, but there was interference from the first language.
- c) Participants understood and produced fewer different idioms correctly.

She further asserts that when the first and the second languages have identical idioms, the use of transfer can be positively effective. A Persian example would be:

'gorg dar lebase mish'

Wolf in clothing sheep

"a wolf in sheep's clothing". (Shafiee, 2007, P. 35)

Moreover, Irujo concluded that within each idiom type (similar idioms, identical idioms, and different idioms), those idioms which were comprehended and produced more accurately were those which were frequent in both cultures, those whose meanings were transparent, and those which contained somewhat simple vocabulary and structure. Therefore, Irujo recommends that teachers avoid presenting infrequent, highly colloquial idioms with difficult vocabulary and structure.

Mahmoud (2002) conducted a similar study on the role of language transfer in the learning of English idioms by Arab language learners. He classified idioms into 5 categories: (a) formally and semantically similar (b) formally similar, semantically different (c) semantically similar, formally different (grammatically different or lexically different) (d) English specific and (e) Arabic specific idioms. He warns that learners should be aware of the transfer strategy and its outcomes. He also suggests that negative and positive transfer be discussed with learners and that English classes focus on idiomaticity as well as fluency and accuracy.

A similar study was done in Iran by Sadighi and Fahandezh (1999). They classified idioms into four categories: similar idioms, identical idioms, different

idioms, and English specific idioms. They investigated the role of language transfer to determine the extent of positive, negative, and zero transfer in the reconstruction of these idioms. They found that the use of language transfer strategy has an important role in the processing of these idioms both positively and negatively.

Another study was carried out by Shafiee (2007) dealing with idioms learning of EFL students at varying levels of proficiency. In his study, students' performance on various tests of idiomatic knowledge was investigated. He concluded that idiom type is an important factor influencing the learning of idioms by EFL learners at different levels of proficiency. He also demonstrated that intermediate level students did better on similar idioms than they did on conceptually familiar idioms. Likewise, their performance on conceptually familiar idioms was significantly better than on conceptually unfamiliar idioms. Advanced students did almost equally well on similar idioms, although their performance on conceptually familiar idioms was poor. It also turned out that level of proficiency affected the students' performance on the idiom type tests since the more proficient students outperformed intermediate level students on all tests of idiom type.

The aim of the present study is to investigate the effect of three kinds of idioms (i.e. identical, similar, and different) on the comprehension and production of Iranian intermediate level learners of English.

Method

Participants

The participants of the present study were 60 male English students at Zabansara institute in Koohdasht. The age of the participants ranged between 16 and 25. They were selected for this study on the basis of cluster sampling procedure. They were then homogenized and their proficiency level was intermediate.

Materials

The materials used in this study include the following: a pretest was given before the teaching of different kinds of idioms to make sure that the idioms were not already known to the participants. It included 90 multiple choice

idiom items, of which 30 items were similar idioms, 30 identical idioms and 30 different idioms. Participants were able to recognize some of the similar and identical idioms in the pretest. Those idioms the meanings of which were recognized in the pretest were removed. Out of the remaining idioms, 60 idioms, including 20 similar idioms, 20 identical idioms and 20 different idioms were selected to be included in the posttests. The posttests of the study were of three kinds: in the first test, the participants were administered a multiple choice test to measure the comprehension of different kinds of idioms. In the second test, the English meanings of idioms were given and the participants were supposed to provide an appropriate idiom for each definition. In the third test, fill-in-the-blank items as well as the Persian equivalents of the idioms were given to the participants, and they were required to fill the blanks with an appropriate idiom corresponding to the Persian equivalent. Since the posttests were directly based on the materials taught, their content validity was taken for granted. The reliability of the posttests were estimated through the KR-21 formula, and the reliability indices of the first, second, and third test turned out to be .76, .84, and .79, respectively.

The materials taught to the participants contained 35 chapters of an idiom book entitled *'English Idioms in Use'* by McCarthy & O'Del, designed for intermediate level learners.

Procedure

Having selected the participants with the afore-mentioned characteristics and having randomly assigned them to three groups, an intermediate test of Interchange 2 was administered to determine the proficiency level of the participants and to homogenize them. To homogenize the participants, the mean score and standard deviation were computed, and those learners whose score was more than one standard deviation away from (above or below) the mean were excluded from all subsequent analyses. The participants were then given a multiple choice test containing 90 items of different idiom types as a pretest. Some identical and similar idioms whose meanings were recognized by the participants were removed from the treatment and the posttests.

The treatment included 35 chapters of the book *'English Idioms in Use'*, containing over 300 idioms, which were taught during a semester. The teaching method was deductive. The classes were presented with different

kinds of idioms, but the participants were also encouraged to guess the meaning of idioms in Persian. They were even able to guess the meaning of few similar and identical idioms in some cases. Moreover, they were asked to write short stories by using idioms as homework every session. Idioms were taught by using pictures, fill-in-the-blank exercises, making short stories. In addition, their attention was drawn to the English form and meaning as well as the Persian equivalents of idioms.

At the end of the experimental period, the three posttests with the above-mentioned features were administered to all the three groups and the obtained data were submitted to statistical analyses.

Data Analysis

To investigate the first research question, a one way ANOVA procedure was used to find out whether idiom type had any significant effect on the comprehension of different kinds of idioms. Another one way ANOVA was used to find out if idiom type had any significant effect on the production of various types of idioms. To answer the third research question, three separate matched t-test procedures were used for three groups of idioms (similar, identical, and different idioms) to find out if the knowledge of Persian idioms affected the production of English idioms.

Results and discussion

Results

The first research question sought to see if there were any significant differences among the three groups in the comprehension of different kinds of idioms. To this end, a one-way analysis of variance procedure was used. Descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation, etc. are summarized below:

Table 1: The descriptive statistics needed for the ANOVA on idiom comprehension

idiom types	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
similar idioms	60	11.53	3.47
identical idioms	60	12.11	2.94
different idioms	60	8.95	2.28
total	180	10.86	3.23

As it can be seen in Table 1, the identical idioms group has the highest mean ($\bar{x} = 12.11$), followed closely by similar idioms group ($\bar{x}=11.53$). Different idioms group has the lowest mean ($\bar{x}=8.95$). The results of the ANOVA procedure are given in Table 2.

Table 2: The result of the ANOVA procedure on idiom comprehension

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	340.83	2	170.41	19.71	.000
Within the groups	1529.96	177	8.64		
Total	1870.80	179			$\omega^2=.17$

According to Table 2, since the F-value is statistically significant ((F = 19.71, P < .001), we can safely claim that there are significant differences among the groups. To locate the differences among the groups, a post-hoc Scheffe' test was run, which yielded the results summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Multiple Comparisons on idiom comprehension

idiom types (I)	idiom types (j)	Mean Difference(I-J)	Std. Error	Sig
different idioms	similar idioms	-2.58 (*)	.53	.000
similar idioms	identical idioms	-.58	.53	.55
different idioms	identical idioms	-3.16 (*)	.53	.00

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

A look at Table 3 makes it clear that although the differences between the similar and identical idioms groups is not statistically significant, they are both significantly better than the different idioms group.

The second research question sought to investigate the differences among the groups in the production of different kinds of idioms. The relevant descriptive statistics are given in Table 4.

Table 4: The descriptive statistics needed for the ANOVA on idiom production

idiom types	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
different idioms	60	8.80	3.91
identical idioms	60	12.28	2.91
similar idioms	60	12.00	2.24
total	180	11.02	3.46

As it can be seen in Table 4, the identical idioms group has the highest mean ($\bar{x} = 12.28$), followed closely by the similar idioms group ($\bar{x}=12.00$). The different idioms group has the lowest mean ($\bar{x}=8.80$). To see whether or not the differences among the groups are statistically significant, another one-way ANOVA procedure was run. The results of the ANOVA procedure are given in Table 5.

Table 5: The result of the ANOVA on idiom production

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	449.07	2	224.53	23.35	.000
Within groups	1701.78	177	9.61		
Total	2150.86	179			$\omega^2=.19$

Based on Table 5, since the F-value is statistically significant (F = 23.35, P < .001), it can be claimed that there are significant differences among the groups. To locate the differences, a post-hoc Scheffe' test was used, which yielded the results summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Multiple Comparisons on idiom production

idiom types (I)	idiom types (j)	Mean Difference(I-J)	Std. Error	Sig
different idioms	similar idioms	-3.20 (*)	.56	.00
similar idioms	identical idioms	-.28	.56	.88
identical idioms	different idioms	3.48 (*)	.56	.00

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

A look at Table 6 makes it clear that although the difference between the similar and identical idioms groups is not statistically significant, they are both significantly better than the different idioms group.

The aim of the third research question was to see whether or not the knowledge of Persian idioms influences the production of English idioms. To this end, three independent paired samples t-tests were used to compare the performance of the participants on the second and third post-tests, where they were required to write an idiom for the given English definitions, and fill the blanks with English idioms based on the given Persian equivalents.

The first t-test procedure was used to study the effect of the knowledge of Persian idioms on the production of the corresponding different idioms in English. Table 7 contains the summary of the descriptive statistics:

Table 7: Paired samples descriptive statistics for the different idioms

Idiom types	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
English idioms	8.80	60	2.24	.28
Persian idioms	7.91	60	1.48	.19

Table 7 shows that the mean of the participants on the Persian idioms test is lower than that of the English idioms test. To see whether or not the difference between the means is statistically significant, a paired samples t-test procedure was used. The result of the procedure is given in Table 8.

Table 8: Paired samples t-test for the Different Idioms

	Paired Differences		T	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)
	Mean	SD			
English/Persian different idioms	.88	1.15	5.94	59	.000 $\mu^2 = .37$

As Table 8 indicates, since the significance level of the t-test procedure is .000, it can be concluded that the difference between the two means is statistically significant. Therefore, it can be claimed that the knowledge or awareness of the Persian equivalents negatively influences the production of different idioms in English.

The same procedure was gone through to investigate whether or not the knowledge of Persian idioms influences the production of similar idioms in English. Table 9 summarizes the descriptive statistics.

Table 9: Paired samples statistics for the similar idioms

Idiom types	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
English idioms	12.00	60	3.91	.50
Persian idioms	12.16	60	3.60	.46

Table 9 shows that there is only a slight difference between the means of the participants on the two tests indicating that probably there are no significant differences between the groups. Still, to make sure whether or not the difference between the means is statistically significant, the paired samples t-test procedure was used, yielding the following results:

Table 10: Paired samples t-test for the similar idioms

	Paired Differences		T	df	Sig.(2tailed)
	Mean	SD			
English/Persian Similar idioms	-.16667	.94181	-1.371	59	.07 $\mu^2 = .03$

As Table 10 indicates, since the significance of the t-test procedure is more than .05, it can be concluded that the difference between the two means is not statistically significant. Therefore, it can be claimed that the knowledge or awareness of the Persian equivalents does not influence the productions of similar idioms in English.

The third t-test procedure sought to see the effect of the knowledge of Persian idioms on the production of identical idioms. Table 11 contains the relevant descriptive statistics.

Table 11: Paired sample statistics for the identical idioms

Idiom types	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
English idioms	12.28	60	2.91746	.37664
Persian idioms	13.11	60	2.61736	.33790

Table 11 shows that the mean of the participants on the Persian idioms test is higher than that of the English idioms test. To make sure that the difference between the means is statistically significant, the third Paired Samples t-test procedure was used. The result of the analysis is given in Table 12.

Table 12: Paired t-test for the identical idioms

	Paired Differences		t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
	Mean	SD			
English/Persian identical idioms	-.833	.740	-8.7	59	.000 $\mu^2 = .56$

According to Table 12, the significance level of the t-test procedure is indicative of statistically significant difference between the two means. Therefore, it can be claimed that the knowledge or awareness of the Persian equivalents positively influences the production of identical idioms in English.

Discussion

The findings of the present study suggest that the recognition and production of identical idioms is easier than similar and different idioms, and that there is a trend that the comprehension and production of similar idioms are easier than those of the different idioms, although the differences are not statistically significant. These results match those of Irujo's (1986) study but are different from the results of Shafiee's (2007) study because in his study, the recognition and production of similar idioms turned out to be easier than identical and different idioms. The results of the present study are not altogether unexpected. It is not entirely unexpected for similar and identical idioms to be easier than different idioms for both recognition and production because there can be transfer of knowledge from the native language. In case of different idioms, however, not only is there nothing for the learners to resort to, but also the mother tongue idioms could act as a source of difficulty hindering learning due to negative transfer. Yet again, the proponents of the weak version of the contrastive analysis hypothesis would argue against this saying that similar idioms should be more problematic because of the minute differences which are often overlooked.

Another finding of the present study is that the knowledge (awareness) of Persian idioms influences the production of identical idioms positively while it influences the production of different idioms negatively. Awareness of Persian idioms does not affect the production of similar idioms in any meaningful way. There are areas of conflict between these findings and those of Irujo (1986) in which knowledge of Spanish idioms influenced the learning of identical and similar idioms positively, but the awareness of Spanish idioms did not influence the learning of different idioms. These findings are also different from those of Shafiee (2007), who found that the awareness of Persian idioms influenced the learning of similar and identical idioms positively, but the effect of such knowledge on similar idioms was more prominent in comparison with identical idioms. As a matter of fact, it looks rather unusual for similar idioms not to be influenced by transfer from native language. But that is what this study suggests. Further research is probably needed to resolve the present conflicts.

Conclusion

This study seems to suggest that both recognition and production of identical idioms are comparatively easier than those of both similar and different idioms. The findings also suggest that knowledge of L1 (in this case Persian) idioms can have varying effects on the production of L2 (in this case English) idioms depending on whether the target language idioms are identical with, similar to, or different from the native language idioms. These findings can have implications for learners, teachers, as well as syllabus designers. A clear understanding of how L1 can influence the comprehension and production of L2 idioms can help facilitate learners' task of tackling one of the thorniest areas of language. The same understanding can also affect teachers' classroom practices. They may decide to alter some of their practices in an attempt to provide the learners with better learning conditions. They may, for instance, decide to include or exclude the use of mother tongue equivalents when presenting L2 idioms. Syllabus designers may also take these findings into account when preparing course books. The inclusion of certain types of materials in course books is probably one of the effective ways of encouraging teachers less aware of the theoretical developments to modify their teaching practices.

References

- Abismara, N. (2002). Read Write Think: Lesson Plan. Figurative Language: Teaching Idioms. *International Reading Association*, American University of Beirut. Retrieved July 7, 2007 from <http://www.tesolonline.com/articles/completearticles.php?index=331&category=24>
- Cacciari, C. & Glucksberg, S. (1991). Understanding Idiomatic Expressions: the contribution of word meanings. In: G.B. Simpson (Editor). *Understanding word and sentence*. Elsevier science publishers BV (North Holland). Chapter 9, pp. 217– 240.
- Cooper, T. C. (1999). Processing of Idioms in L2 learners of English. *TESOL Quarterly*, 33, 233-262.
- Corder, S. P. (1981). *Error Analysis and Interlanguage*. Oxford University Press.
- Dimitrova, K. (2005). *Comparison of Some Theories of Idioms in English. Lexical Idiosyncrasies in Syntax and Logical* 5, 2- 28.
- Fraser, B. (1970). Idioms within a transformational grammar. *Foundations of language* 6, 22-42.
- Gibbs, R. (1987). Linguistic factors in children's understanding of idioms. *Journal of Child Language* 14 (3), 569 – 586.
- Gibbs, R. (1994). *The Poetic of Mind: Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ifill, T. (2002). *Seeking the Nature of Idioms: A Study in Idiomatic Structure*. Harvard College.
- Irujo, S. (1986) Don't put your leg in your mouth: Transfer in the Acquisition of Idioms in a Second Language. *TESOL Quarterly* 20 (2), 287- 304.
- Mahmoud, A. (2002). Interlingual Transfer of Idioms by Arab Learners of English. *The Internet Tesl Journal*, 8 (12). Retrieved September 18, 2007, from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Mahmoud/Idioms.html>
- Mäntylä, K. (2004). *Idioms and language users: the effect of the characteristics of idioms on their recognition and interpretation by native and non-native speakers of English*. University of Jyväskylä.
- Nunberg, G. (1978). *The Pragmatics of Reference*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Linguistics Club.
- Pinnavaia, L. (2002). *The Grammaticalization of English Idioms: A Hypothesis for Teaching Purposes*. Mots Palabras Words.
- Sadigi, F. & Fahandezh Sa'di, J. (1999). Transfer Strategy and the Production of English Idioms in a Foreign Language Setting. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanity of Shiraz University*, 14 (2), 11-28.
- Shafiee, S. (2007). *A piece of Cake or Hard nut to Crack: Investigating Intermediate and Advanced EFL Learners Performance on Different Tests of Idiom Types*. Esfahan: Esfahan University Press.

Vicker, B. (2000). Building Competency with Figurative Language One Idiom at a Time. *The Reporter*, 5(3), 17-21

Yule, G. (1996). *The Study of Language* (2nd). Cambridge University Press.

An analysis of the English class discourse in the Iranian high schools

Behzad Barekat¹
Saeedeh Mohammadi²
University of Guilan

Abstract

One of the decisive factors of students' success in second language learning is employing interactive strategies, or using the term of Bakhtin, dialogic discourse pattern, by the teacher. Following Bakhtin's conceptualization of discourse (1981), monologic and dialogic patterns can be considered as the opposing ends of the teacher's discourse continuum. On these lines, the current research intended to find out whether the Iranian high school teachers use a monologic or dialogic discourse in their classes. To accomplish this goal, a comprehensive exploration carried out to enumerate the features differentiating monologic and dialogic discourse, which proved to be around thirteen. Then, interviews were conducted with ten high school English teachers, based on the features of the two patterns of discourse already found. One case study was also conducted to boost the reliability of interview's findings in which a teacher's classes were observed, video-taped, transcribed and analyzed for recognizing the type of discourse pattern used by the teacher. The analysis of the data from both interviews and the case study through grounded theory and conversation analysis revealed that the teachers used a monologic discourse pattern in their classes.

Key Words: discourse, discourse pattern, monologic discourse, dialogic discourse

Introduction

The most important problem in teaching English in an EFL context is how to prepare learners to use the English language so as to be capable of participating in conversations inside and outside the class. At first sight, classrooms are full of discourse and dialogue, observable in the frequent back and forth between students and teachers in everyday formal and informal talk. But, as O'Connor and Michaels (2007) argue, most of these class activities are more indicative of a monologic stance. In fact, as Bakhtin (1981) has widely discussed, a distinction shall be made between dialogic and monologic discourse. A monologic teacher is concerned with the transmission of knowledge and in doing so s/he firmly controls the class. During dialogic

¹ BehzadBarekat@yahoo.com

² saeedehm63@gmail.com, Phone: 09127441126

teaching, in contrast, the teacher makes every effort to help pupils share and create meanings.

On the same lines, the present paper aims at identifying the situation of Iran in terms of discourse pattern to be used in the English classes which is one of the main causes of the students' linguistic lacks and achievements. In other words, whether the teachers use a monologic discourse pattern or a dialogic one can highly contribute to the learners' various capabilities.

The current study can fill a gap in the Iranian context to investigate teacher-student interactions in English classrooms in public schools from the perspective of the kind of discourse pattern used in the classroom. In other words, whether the teachers use a monologic discourse pattern or a dialogic one can highly contribute to the learners' various capabilities. Among the few studies along this line situated in the Iranian context, qualitative data in particular is very thin and most of the studies have been done at the level of university or institutes and less have been in school level.

The aim of current research is thus to deeply investigate how the teachers use the language in the class and recognize the type of discourse pattern to be used by the teachers. To arrive at this overall aim, we had two research questions:

1. What is /are the difference(s) between monologic and dialogic discourse pattern in EFL classes?
2. Do the teachers use monologic discourse pattern in their classes or a dialogic one?

Literature review

This section incorporates the exploration of the major issues related to the present study. As we aspire to analyze how English is used in the classes in terms of discourse pattern to be used by the teachers, we firstly examine the status of EFL in Iran schools. Then, we briefly take a look at the teachers' roles in EFL classes. Putting a step forward, we then, investigate the discourse and its analysis in the classroom. Lastly, the two types of discourse patterns used in the classrooms are deeply put into consideration i.e. monologic discourse pattern and dialogic discourse pattern.

The situation of EFL in Iranian public schools

As cited in Talebinezhad and AliAkbari (in progress) “the dominant trend in ELT context in Iran is toward more, not less, language teaching” (p. 21). The variety of English institutes in Iran signifies the great tendency to learn English. However, English instruction that happens in Iran schools mostly focuses on learning and memorizing grammatical rules and does not lead to the development of oral abilities. According to Dahmardeh (2009) in countries like Iran, there is a constant pressure on teachers to prepare their pupils for school exams. However, given the fact that the vast majority of language exams in Iran fail to assess students’ real communicative abilities, teaching communicative skills remains as a neglected component in most Iranian EFL classes in public schools. Although there are many language institutes outside the classroom giving way for students to attend and learn the language, the time devoted to language instruction in Iran schools is mostly wasted because even the memorized rules are forgotten after a while.

Among the important reasons of students’ lacks in English performance are the syllabus and textbooks imposed to the teachers in schools giving no room for any creativity and innovation. As Dahmardeh (2009) maintains,

all the textbooks for the schools are produced by the Ministry of Education and no alternatives are available. These course books are taught in both private and public schools and all the teachers follow the same syllabus. A secondary school in Iran includes 4 years of studying and in each level there is one book for Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). English language teachers are supposed to cover one book during each educational year (p. 46).

The role of the teacher in the EFL classes

As Ellis (1990) asserts, the reality of most classrooms is that the teacher has the power of controlling most of the interactions which happen in the class. This is reflected in the preponderance of teacher acts over student acts. Teachers open and close interactional exchanges, while students are restricted to replying. Teachers elicit and students supply responses. However, the teachers can elect not to use this power or only use part of it.

Jonson (1995) suggests that the teachers establish and maintain classroom discourse patterns. In her research, she concluded that the teachers are responsible for establishing and maintaining discourse patterns and that the discourse patterns are a reflection of the teachers’ beliefs. Many other

researchers have concentrated on the teachers in establishing different instructional discursive patterns in the classroom such as Webb, Franke, Ing, Chan, De, Freund, and Battey (2008) and Hermans (2007), to name a few.

Classroom discourse analysis

One of the recent approaches in studying language in various aspects of use is discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is the examination of language use by members of a speech community. It involves language form and function and studies both spoken interaction and written texts. It identifies linguistic features that aid in our interpretation and understanding of different texts and types of talk (Demo, 2001). In fact, discourse analysts examine spoken, signed and written language, and may concentrate on any aspect of linguistic behavior, from the study of particular patterns of pronunciation, through word choice, syntactic and semantic representation, to the pragmatic analysis of how we organize our speech.

A classroom setting can be called a discourse in which different interactive exchanges may occur between the teacher and learners and among the learners themselves. As cited in Behnam & PourIran (2009),

classroom discourse is a special type of discourse that occurs in classrooms. Special features of classroom discourse include: unequal power relationships, turn-taking at speaking, patterns of interaction, etc. Classroom discourse is often different in form and function from language used in other situations because of particular social roles which learners and teachers have in classrooms and the kind of activities they usually carry out there (p. 118).

The research focusing on classroom discourse aims at recognizing what actually happens in the classroom that can make a difference to the learners' progress in learning EFL. As an instance, Hardman, Abd-kadir and Smith (2007) in a study, reported on an investigation of classroom interaction and discourse to determine the key issues which affect patterns of teacher–pupil interaction and discourse.

Monologic and dialogic discourse patterns

Bakhtin (1981) makes distinctions between the two types of discourse including monologic and dialogic discourse. Bakhtin (1984) deplores the typical organization of most of the classes as a nonproductive monologism:

In an environment of ... monologism, the genuine interaction of consciousness is impossible, and thus genuine dialogue is impossible as well. In essence idealism knows only a single mode of cognitive interaction among consciousness: someone who knows and possesses the truth instructs someone who is ignorant of it and in error; that is, it is the interaction of a teacher and a pupil, which, it follows, can only be a pedagogical dialogue (p. 81).

For Bakhtin, this form of discourse is similar to a communication disorder. In its most basic form, monologic discourse resists communication: "Monologism, at its extreme," Bakhtin (1984) writes:

denies the existence outside itself of another consciousness with equal rights and responsibilities. ... Monologue is finalized and deaf to the other's response, does not expect it and does not acknowledge in it any decisive force. ... Monologue pretends to be the ultimate word (pp. 292-93).

The studies conducted by Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser, & Long (2001), Molinari & Mameli (2010), Innes (2007), Pishghadam, Hashemi, & Adel (2010) suggest that monologic discourse is the dominant discourse pattern in different parts of the world. According to Nystrand et al. (2001) "repeated empirical findings that monologic discourse is prevalent across American classrooms clearly suggest that monologic discourse dominates within the classroom" (p.6). Indeed, monologic discourse is a prevalent pattern in most of the classes unless the teacher does something to change it.

In a more practical framework, we provide Nystrand's distinctions (1997) so as to get a general understanding of monologic and dialogic discourse patterns. What Nystrand et al. (1997) call monologic recitation Gutierrez' (1993) characterized as follows:

1. Classroom talk follows strict IRE discourse patterns.
2. Teacher selects student speakers.
3. Teacher shows little or no acknowledgment of students' self- selections.
4. Teacher initiates subtopics.
5. Teacher discourages or ignores students' attempts to introduce other subtopics.

6. Student responses tend to be short (one word/phrase); teacher does not encourage response elaboration, and there is minimal expansion of students' responses by teacher.
7. Teacher initiates test-like questions for which there is generally only one correct answer and indicates implied goal is to contribute specific right answers to teacher's questions (Nystrand et al., 1997: 26).

This is while the features of dialogic exchange are as the following:

1. Activity and discourse boundaries are significantly relaxed with more student responses between teacher initiation and evaluation; also student responses occasionally build on previous responses (chained) and contributes to the construction of shared knowledge.
2. Teacher frames and facilitates the activity and can respond at any time, but keeps utterances and intervention to a minimum.
3. There is a minimal teacher selection of students; students either self-select or select other students.
4. Teacher and students negotiate subtopics of discussion.
5. Teacher indicates implied goal as developing shared knowledge, but still includes a preference for correct information.
6. Teacher and students initiate questions for which there are no specific correct answers as well as questions that are constructed from students' previous responses.
7. Teacher sometimes acknowledges students' topic expansions as well as teacher's and other students' incorporation of these expansions into the ongoing lesson (Nystrand et al., 1997: 26-27).

Methodology

Participants

Ten high school teachers were selected for interview. From among the interviewees, one teacher was selected based on the location criterion and her willingness to participate in the study. The other criterion in selecting the

teacher was her ability in engaging the students in English language use in the class, albeit very little. The teacher was informed of the research steps and the main foci of the study. For observing and video-taping the classes, the permission of the chief of education office of Tarom town, the principal of the school and the students was obtained. 27 pre-university students from Fatemeh high school in Tarom town cooperated in the study.

Instruments

To minimize subjectivity and bias in the data collection, we used the strategy of triangulation or obtaining multiple data sources: both methodological triangulation (interview, classroom observation, analysis of transcripts,) and data triangulation (transcripts and video-taped lessons). For example, the evidence obtained from the class observation of the case study teacher's actual practices was used to complement the evidence gathered from our interview.

Regarding the interview instrument, we chose to use a structured interview as it suited best to our research purpose. To find which discourse pattern is used by the EFL teachers, we prepared ten interview questions based on the basic distinctions between the monologic and dialogic discourse patterns (the response to the first research question). Our case study also included the study of one English teacher in Tarom town teaching in high school level. The case study process involved the observation and video-recording of classes of the teacher and transcriptions of the events. We used a less structured observation in which the researcher may rely on field notes for description of the phenomena being observed, or transcripts of tapes of those events (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

Procedures

We used a structured interview to probe some representative teachers' responses in deeper detail and to find out exactly what their classroom discourse was (The interview questions are provided in appendix A.). We emailed the interview questions to a variety of experts and TEFL teachers and informed them of the interview objectives and bases to remove any problems and ambiguities. Applying the experts' and teachers' comments and suggestions, we came up with a number of ten questions each including some sub-questions. Having been aware of the research focus in advance, the ten

teachers were interviewed and the interviews were recorded for a deeper analysis. Then, the case study teacher and her respective classes were observed and video-taped in turn for a ten week period resulting in a total of 10 observational visits each constituting one session of one hour and thirty minutes. Through both case study and interviews we intended to make sure of the teacher's discourse pattern.

Data analysis

In case of the qualitative part of the present study, the approach to data analysis was "unstructured" in the sense that it was data-driven. Generally, in analyzing our data, we used a combination of grounded theory (Strauss, 1987) for analyzing the interviews and fine grained conversation analysis using Nystrand (1997)'s attributes of monologic and dialogic discourse as the reference for the analysis of classroom observation transcripts.

Interviews analysis

The process of analyzing the data derived from the interviews through grounded theory involved different steps. After transcribing the recorded files of interviews, the three phases of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) were exactly followed. In the first phase of *open coding* all the interviews were segmented into paragraphs and the main ideas of each paragraph were noted as the codes. Then, during *axial coding*, the interconnected codes were regarded as being under the same subcategory. Finally, in the third phase of *selective coding*, a core category was identified based on the interlinked subcategories which guided us to write the grounded theory. An example of a partial transcript is provided in table 1.

Table 1: A partial transcript of a teacher interview (16/8/2011)

I: interviewer

T: teacher

I: When teaching English, which language do you prefer to use? English or Persian?

T: I really prefer to use English, but I can't. Most of the time, the students don't like to communicate in English because they think they are unable to use English and understand it. The second reason is that we haven't enough time to communicate in English. If I do that I lose the time for my other works and the students don't like that. They always want to cover everything exactly and carefully.

I: Do you prefer to have control and power in teaching or in class management? Do you let your students air their views too? How much do you usually intervene in the class activities?

T: In class settings with a large number of students and crowded desks, I prefer to have power in class management but sometimes when the classes are not populated, I ask for the students' ideas and views in class management but again I have the authority to control the class. Most of the time, I let

the students to air their views but I am always who makes the last decision. Usually I intervene in the class activities a lot. I decide homework and class activities and nearly everything that happens in the class.

From the partial transcript above, six codes were obtained. The total analysis of the ten interviews provided a total of 120 codes. The irrelevant codes to the research purpose were eliminated and the codes that were nearly identical in meaning were combined under one code. The coding of the partial transcript is given in the following table.

Table 2: Coding of partial teacher interview

Code 1: not to use English language because the students think they are unable to communicate in English

Code 2: not to use English language because communicating in English makes the teacher lose the time of the class for other activities

Code 3: to have power and authority in populated classes

Code 4: to ask the students' ideas in less populated classes though making the last decision herself

Code 5: to intervene in the class activities most of the times (to decide homework and class activities)

Code 6: to guide the class in a way the teacher wants

Codes that contained similar properties were combined to form subcategories, as shown below. During the whole process of repetitive analysis, seventeen subcategories and nine core categories were emerged.

Table 3: Forming subcategories of the codes from the partial teacher interview

Subcategories of the codes	
Subcategory 1:	Teachers use Persian due to students' low English proficiency.(code1)
Subcategory 2:	Teachers use Persian due to time constraint.(code 2)
Subcategory 3:	Teachers have Control over the class activities to a great extent. (codes 3 &6)
Subcategory 4:	Teachers seldom ask about students' ideas.(code 4)
Subcategory 5:	Teachers intervene in the class activities a lot.(code 5)

Class transcripts analysis

The analysis of the transcripts, through conversation analysis, was done having the teacher and students utterances as the unit of analysis and characterizing discourse based on the Gutierrez'(1993) attributes of the monologic and dialogic discourse. The choice for characterizing the utterances according to Gutierrez'(1993) properties of monologic and dialogic discourse was made in light of the fact that the features listed characterize not only discourse patterns but also teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching as interpreted by Nystrand et al. (1997). These attributes have been mentioned in the concluding section of chapter two.

To show how the transcripts are analyzed, we provide a partial transcript of one of the randomly selected transcripts of class videos. The following excerpt is taken from a pre-reading activity a ranking exercise in the textbook.

T: "What's the topic of the lesson?"

Ss: "Giving speech"

T: "Ok, please open your books on page 12. There are some pre-reading questions here. The first question is "Does standing up in front of a group make you nervous?". "Nervous" means?"

Ss: "stressful, concerned"

S1: "No, it doesn't. We are not anxious when we stand up in front of a group."

T: "Thank you. The next question is "How about having to talk to that group as well?". What do you feel? Do you get nervous?"

S2: "Could we say "I speak very well in front of a group"?"

T: "Ok, you can say "I don't feel stressful so I can speak very well." Or you can say "talking to that group doesn't make me nervous"."

S3: "Or because I have self-confidence, I don't feel anxious."

T: "Very good. The next question: "Do you remember the last time you gave a lecture?" two weeks ago, two of you had lectures, how did you feel? Were you concerned? [saying in Persian]"

S4: "I hadn't confidence."

S5: "But I was relaxed."

T: "Ok, now please answer the second exercise. Rank the sentences from the most important to the least important about giving speech."

[Students work individually and then the teacher checks the answers]

(Class video, 25/10/2011)

In our analysis, each sentence is quantified as one utterance. As influenced by Brown (2001) conceptualization of question types, the teacher and student questions are classified as *display* (for which the teacher knows the response.) and *referential* questions (for which the teacher does not know the response). The analysis of the partial transcript resulted in 9 teacher initiated questions, 5 teacher initiated statements, 1 student initiated question, 0 student initiated statement and 7 student initiated responses. Setting the total transcripts of class videos against an analysis of the types of utterances that prevail in the classroom engenders the following table.

Table 4: Classroom discourse pattern for the whole transcripts

Utterance	Number of occurrences	Topic
Teacher initiated question	70	Display questions about reading, new vocabulary and grammar
Teacher initiated statement	68	Comments about reading, grammar, homework and book exercises
Student initiated question	9	Questions about homework and misunderstanding of meaning of a sentence or a word or a grammar point
Student initiated statement	0	
Student initiated response	75	Answers to display questions about reading, vocabulary and grammar

Results

Discussion

In this section, we will review the research questions one more time and discuss our findings in light of the research questions.

Research question 1

What is /are the difference(s) between monologic and dialogic discourse pattern in EFL classes?

To meet this research objective, a comprehensive exploration of the previous researches' findings was conducted and the fundamental ideologies of significant figures were carefully put into consideration. In result, a number of thirteen basic distinctions between the two discourse patterns were obtained.

Generally speaking, in the monologic discourse pattern, the teacher's and the textbook's voice are the only or the dominant voices. In contrast, in a dialogic discourse pattern, the teacher's voice is still an important voice but it is only one of the many voices. Following is a list of the aspects of such a difference.

1. In a monologic discourse pattern, the teacher formulates the questions to be asked from the students in such a way that a short answer is required. So, student responses tend to be short (one word/phrase). By contrast, in a dialogic discourse pattern the teacher asks questions which require longer answers and waits enough till the student gives the response.

2. In the monologic discourse pattern, the teacher does not take into consideration the students' ideas, needs, desires and contributions while in the dialogic one the teacher considers students' needs and contributions in his/her lesson plan and organization of the class activities.
3. In the monologic discourse pattern, there are a low number of student-initiated questions and statements while in the dialogic one, the teacher lets the students initiate the talk and ask as many questions as possible. Moreover, sometimes the number of questions asked by students is more than the number of questions asked by the teacher.
4. In the monologic discourse pattern, the teacher does not follow up on students' questions. She/he also does not encourage response elaboration, and there is minimal expansion of students' responses by teacher. So, the responses provided by students don't lead to further discussion. By contrast, classroom discourse is dialogic when the teacher follows up on students' contributions to modify or expand on them. In addition, the teacher asks questions that are constructed from students' previous responses.
5. In the monologic discourse pattern, students do not listen to other students very well and can't continue their talk whereas in a dialogic discourse pattern, *uptake* is generated in the class through student responses and questions occasionally building on previous responses (chained) and contributing to the construction of shared knowledge.
6. In the monologic discourse pattern, either the teacher initiates subtopics or the topics are based on the textbook. Moreover, the teacher discourages or ignores students' attempts to introduce other subtopics. While in a dialogic one the teacher and students negotiate subtopics of discussion and the teacher sometimes acknowledges students' topic expansions as well as teacher's and other students' incorporation of these expansions into the ongoing lesson.
7. In a monologic discourse pattern, there is a high frequency of calls on students for answers to questions and a low number of student volunteers. Most of the times, the only students participating in the class

are those called by the teacher. While in the dialogic one, there is a minimal teacher selection of students; students either self-elect or select other students.

8. In the monologic discourse pattern, the teacher initiates test-like questions for which there is generally only one correct answer. In other words, the teacher has a pre-determined response in the mind for the question s/he asks. Whereas, in the dialogic discourse pattern the teacher initiates *authentic questions* for which there are no specific correct answers in the teacher's mind.
9. In the monologic discourse pattern, all the class activities are organized and controlled by the teacher and authority of the teacher is clear. s/he prescribes the directions and boundaries and acts as a greatspeaker in the classroom. While in the dialogic discourse pattern, the teacher almost assumes a neutral position and only frames and facilitates the activities and respond at any time, but keeps utterances and intervention to a minimum.
10. In the monologic discourse pattern, the teacher indicates implied goal as to contribute specific right answers to teacher's questions while in the dialogic one the teacher indicates implied goal as developing shared knowledge, but still includes a preference for correct information.
11. In the monologic discourse pattern, the teacher asks questions with low cognitive level which requires a mere reporting or replication of another's voice rather the teacher, in the dialogic discourse pattern, asks questions with *high cognitive level which* can't be answered neither by reporting an event or reciting others' voices nor using the students' own prior knowledge. These questions need more critical thinking involving students' own voice and perspectives.
12. In the monologic discourse pattern, the teacher asks display questions the answers for which are known to the teacher and need short responses; whereas in the dialogic discourse pattern most of the teacher's questions are referential for which the teacher does not know the answer and they are answered through negotiation and exploration

of the topic. “Why” and “how” questions are of this type and require more justification.

13. In the monologic discourse pattern, the teacher gives feedbacks of low level evaluation to students’ responses. For example, s/he gives feedbacks like “very good” or “you are right” and gets back to the lesson; whereas in the dialogic discourse pattern, the feedbacks are of *high-level evaluation*. In this way, the teacher evaluates the students’ responses by making them explain more, clarify or give more information. Furthermore, the teacher gives feedback to the content of the student’s response rather than to its form.

Research question 2

Do the teachers use monologic discourse pattern in their classes or a dialogic one?

To discover whether the teachers use monologic discourse pattern in their classes or a dialogic one, two research instruments were applied: interviewing and case study. Firstly, structured interviews were conducted and then they were analyzed in connection with the case study to maximize the validity of the findings. As follows includes the discussion of the results concerning both interview and case study.

Discussion and interpretation of the interviews

The analysis of interviews using grounded theory resulted in nine core categories, each to be discussed in the following.

Core category 1: Using Persian in the class

With respect to this core category, there are two subcategories driven from twelve codes. From the two subcategories, it can be inferred that the *teachers use Persian language most of the times* in their classes and regard students’ low English proficiency as well as the lack of time as the main reasons for not speaking in English. In other words, they maintain that if there was sufficient time for all the class activities and the students were at the right level of English proficiency, they certainly used more English language in their teaching.

Core category 2: Having control and power in the class

The analysis of the interviews resulted in three subcategories and eighteen codes related to core category two. Considering the subcategories and their consisting codes, three points can be interpreted:

1. About all the teachers prefer to have control, power, and authority in their class management, activities and so on. They believe the reasons are the large number of students in the classes and problems in effective teaching.
2. Although the teachers respect their students' ideas if there is any, they seldom ask about their ideas regarding class topics and subtopics of discussion and almost never let their students choose the topics.
1. 3. The teachers intervene in all the class activities and control almost everything that happens in the classes. They maintain the reasons as: students' low level of proficiency, measuring students' progress exactly, helping them to go further and time limit.

The three points mentioned confidently account for a monologic discourse pattern.

Core category 3: Cooperating with the learners

Regarding this core category, we obtained two subcategories and ten codes. The analysis of the subcategories and codes shows that although the teachers cooperate with their students in most of the class activities, they involve their students in some mechanical activities like doing exercises on the board, providing materials, doing the teaching themselves and the like. These activities certainly do not make them speak in English and can't improve the learners' speaking ability. Therefore, though a dialogic discourse pattern may be used while doing activities cooperatively, the English language definitely is not applied in a dialogic discourse pattern.

Core category 4: Deciding on the lesson plan, syllabus and class management

Concerning core category 4, we had two subcategories obtained from twelve codes. Taking these subcategories and codes into account, it can be generalized that teachers highly follow the book topics and syllabi decided by the ministry of education and very rarely take the students' needs, contributions and concerns into consideration in their lesson plans and class

management. Yet, some teachers maintain that the main reason for not considering all the students' needs and concerns in deciding upon the lesson plans is that the school syllabi imposed by the ministry don't allow for any spontaneity or creativity. Overall, it can be concluded that the discourse pattern to be used in the classrooms is a monologic discourse pattern.

Core category 5: Managing the learning tasks and activities

From the analysis of the whole interviews, related to managing the learning tasks and activities, six codes were emerged which led to one subcategory. The analysis revealed that the teachers mostly manage the learning tasks and activities to be done individually and sometimes group work is used depending on the type of activity and the class time. It is generally conceived that for most of the learning tasks and activities, individual work is preferred by the teachers. However, for a dialogic discourse to be established in the classroom, learning tasks must be managed to be done in groups or as a class.

Core category 6: Making students cooperate with each other

Related to this core category, eight codes were obtained which led to one subcategory. Considering the found information, it is self-evident that most of the teachers prefer their students to cooperate with each other and assign activities for the students to work on in groups. Nevertheless, all this cooperation happens in Persian and the teachers do not ask their students to speak in English and give comments to each other using English language. If the students' cooperation happened in English, the establishment of a dialogic discourse pattern while using the language could be heightened.

Core category 7: Asking questions in the class

Related to core category 7, the interviews analysis generally resulted in twenty codes which led to three subcategories. Based on three points resulting from the analysis of the subcategories and codes, it can be highly recognized that the teachers' questioning behaviors bring about a monologic discourse pattern to a great extent.

2. The teachers mostly ask "display questions" which are questions for which the teachers know the answer and usually demand a single or short response. The questions mentioned by the teachers are raised with the intention of check students' understanding, elicit examples, and

arouse interest for a new topic. All the questions of this sort are display questions.

3. Teachers often ask questions which need short responses and these questions are usually followed by single responses and are not followed up by the other students.
4. Teachers seldom ask “authentic questions” which refer to questions for which the asker has not a pre-specified response and allows a range of responses, unlike recitation (or test) questions, in which a teacher asks a question with a prescribed answer in mind. The example questions given by the teachers in response to one of the interview questions are not authentic at all.

Core category 8: Managing students' questions

Through analyzing the interviews about managing students' questions, we obtained eight codes leading to two subcategories. The analysis showed that most of the teachers give importance to the students' questions; nevertheless, most of the students' questions are related to the lesson contents. We also found that the teachers very rarely follow up the students' questions. This means that the teachers in some way finish the talk raised by the students' questions and get back to the lesson. They do not let the other students follow what the students have said or asked about and the classroom talk does not move in directions prompted by the students' questions. In the other words, there is no “uptake” in the class and accordingly the discourse is in a monologic pattern.

Core category 9: Giving feedback to the learners

Concerning the core category of “giving feedback to the learners”, the two subcategories were emerged from nineteen codes. Through their analysis, we arrived at three outcomes, all implying that the teachers use a monologic discourse in their classes.

1. The teachers often give “low level evaluation” to the students' responses. In other words, the kinds of feedbacks they give to the learners don't make them continue their talk or think more and say how they think or why they give such responses.

2. The teachers focus on the form more than the content. The feedback sentences which they give to the students confirm their high attention to the form and grammar. To put it in better words, the teachers very rarely provide students with “content feedback”.
3. From the teachers’ example sentences for the feedbacks they give, it can be inferred that they seldom offer enough “wait time” which is the time the teacher allows the students to answer questions.

Based upon the points mentioned regarding all the nine core categories and seventeen subcategories, it can be generalized that the teachers use a monologic discourse pattern in their classes.

Discussion and interpretation of the case study

The transcription and analysis of the data in accordance with the attributes of monologic and dialogic discourse, accordingly, indicates that the class discourse pattern is characterized by factors associated with monologic discourse as defined by Gutierrez (1993) and features the following traits:

- There is a significant difference between the number of utterances made by the teacher in comparison to the number made by the students.
- There are a high number of display questions asked by the teacher, none of which are referential.
- There are a low number of student- initiated questions or statements. The ones that were made remained at a factual level as they related to topics like homework and grammar which were made in Persian and those related to the meaning of a sentence or word which were made in English.
- There is a high frequency of calls on students for answers to questions and a low student volunteers. Most of the times, the only students participating in the class are those called by the teacher.
- All the topics to be discussed in the class are based on the textbook and there is no possibility for the student’s selections of topics or subtopics.

- The responses provided by the students don't lead to further discussion and the teacher does not follow up on the student's responses.
- The answers provided by the students consist of only one or a few couple of words and the longer answers are the ones which are directly from the book and the students say what they have memorized.

In sum, all the mentioned traits resulting from the analysis of the case study teacher's class video transcripts indicate that the teacher uses a monologic discourse pattern in her classes rather than a dialogic one. This conclusion is, certainly, correlating with the interviews findings.

Conclusions

Our data confirm that teaching in Iran schools is very much a matter of teachers' talking and directing children's talk and controlling the class events. In line with the most recent studies on learning and teaching (Fisher and Larkin, 2008; O'Connor and Michaels, 2007), our study also gives evidence to the presence of a type of monologic discourse in Iran classes. This has been done through conducting interviews and case study. The analysis of interviews revealed that:

1. The teachers use more Persian language in the class.
2. They have control, power, and authority in their classes.
3. They almost never let their students choose the topics.
4. They intervene in all the class activities to a great extent.
5. They cooperate with their students in most of the class mechanical activities.
6. They highly follow the book topics and imposed syllabi.
7. They seldom consider students' needs, contributions and concerns in their lesson plans and class management.
8. They mostly manage the class activities to be done individually but sometimes group work is used depending on the type of activity and the class time.
9. They assign activities for the students to work on in groups but this cooperation happens in Persian.
10. They mostly ask "display questions".
11. They often ask questions which need short responses.
12. There is no uptake in the class.
13. They seldom ask "authentic questions".

- 14.They don't follow up on students' questions.
- 15.They often give "low level evaluation" to the students' responses.
- 16.They very rarely provide students with "content feedback".
- 17.They seldom offer enough "wait time.

Based on these findings, it can be widely concluded that the teachers use a monologic discourse pattern in their classes.

The analysis of classroom observation transcripts of our case study teacher had also the objective of affirming whether a monologic discourse pattern is used in the classes or a dialogic one. We found that classroom practices are dominated by a class discourse which concern with teacher telling and controlling the interaction, using display questions with pre-specified answers or test questions rather than referential, authentic questions of high cognitive level. Furthermore, there are very few student-initiated statements or questions and they never lead to further discussion in the class. Moreover, all the class discussion is around the book topics. All these results correlate with the basic traits of the monologic discourse and they lead us to this conclusion that the teacher uses a monologic discourse pattern in the class.

It can be generally conceived that, the classes observed here reveal a traditional teacher-controlled transmission mode of teaching with the focus on rote learning of vocabulary and grammar, mechanical practice, recalling from memory and knowledge rather than on language skills, meaningful interaction, and initiative use of language. The students taught through this didactic way never meet these requirements. Their responses fit to the teachers' standards and are based on the book contents.

Suggestions for further research

Due to the inherent limitations of the case study research approach, in this case being directed towards one English teacher and her classrooms in our own town, findings here might not be generalized to the wider English teaching community in Iran. Additionally, regional disparities make any such attempt to generalize to other EFL classrooms even less reliable. Therefore, future research should aim to gather more data from more EFL settings. Moreover, the current study could be replicated to see the results in places other than public schools like language institutes and universities which either teach English as a general course or for specific proposes.

References

- Alexander, R. (2004). Talking to learn: Teaching principles. *Published in TES Magazine*.
- Bakhtin. M.M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination*. Austin: Texas university press.
- Bakhtin, M. (1984). *Problems of Doestoevsky's poetics*. Trans. Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Behnam, Biok., PourIran, Yasamin. (2009). Classroom discourse: analyzing teacher-student interactions in Iranian EFL task based classrooms. *Purta Linguarum*, 12, 117-132.
- Brown, H.D (2001). *Teaching by principles* (2nd Ed.). London: Longman.
- Christoph, J.N., & Nystrand, M. (2001). Taking risks, negotiating relationships: one teacher's transition towards a dialogic classroom. *Research in the teaching of English*. 2001/09- 14003.
- Dahmardeh, M. (2009). Communicative textbooks: Iranian secondary school's English language textbooks. *Linguistic online*, 40(4). University of Bern.
- Demo, D A. (2001). Discourse analysis for language teachers. *Eric clearinghouse on languages and linguistics*. DIGEST EDO-FL-01-07
- Ellis, R. (1990). *Instructed second language acquisition*. Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Fisher, R., & Larkin, S. (2008). Pedagogy or ideological struggle? An examination of pupils' & teachers' expectations for talk in the classroom. *Language and Education*, 22(1), 1-16.
- Goulding, C. (1999). Grounded Theory: some reflections on paradigm, procedures and misconceptions. *Management Research Centre. University of Wolverhampton*. Working Paper Series. Number WP006/99. ISSN Number ISSN 1363-6839.
- Gutierrez, K. (1993). *Scripts, counterscripts and multiple scripts*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association. Atlanta, GA.
- Hardman, F, Abd-kadir, J and Smith, F. (2007). Pedagogical renewal: Improving the quality of classroom interaction in Nigerian primary schools. *International journal of educational development*, 28(1), 55-69.
- Hermans, L. (2007). *English in the EFL classroom: why not. Classroom discourse pattern and teachers' beliefs*. A PhD thesis.
- Johnson, K. (1995). *Understanding communication in second language classrooms*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge university press.
- Mackey, A., & Gass, S.M. (2005). *Second language research: methodology and design*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum associates.
- Molinari, L., & Mameli, C. (2010). Classroom dialogic discourse: an observational study. *Elsevier Ltd. Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2, 3857–3860.

- Nassaji, H., & Wells, G. (2000). What's the use of 'Triadic Dialogue'? An investigation of teacher-student interaction. *Applied Linguistics*, 21(3), 376-406.
- Nathan, M. J., Kim, S., & Grant, T. S. (2009). *Instituting change in classroom discourse structure: Human and computer-based motif analysis* (WCER Working Paper No. 2009-1). Madison: University of Wisconsin–Madison, Wisconsin Center for Education Research. Retrieved [e.g., February 15, 2008,] from <http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/publications/workingPapers/papers.php>
- Nystrand, M., & Gamoran, A. (1997). The big picture: Language and learning in hundreds of English lessons. In M. Nystrand (Ed.), *Opening dialogue* (pp. 30-74). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Nystrand, M., & Gamoran, A. (1991). Instructional discourse, student engagement, and literature achievement. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 25: 261-290.
- Nystrand, M. (with Gamoran, A., Kachur, R., & Prendergast, C.). (1997). *Opening dialogue: Understanding the dynamics of language and learning in the English classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Nystrand, M., Wu, L., Gamoran, A., Zeiser, S., & Long, D. (2001). Questions in time: Investigating the structure and dynamics of unfolding classroom discourse. *CELA Report*: No. 14005.
- O'conner, C., & Michaels, S. (2007). When is dialogue 'dialogic'? *Human Development*, 50, 275–285.
- Pishghadam, R., & Hashemi, M.R., & Adel, S.M. Reza. (2010). Dialogical interaction in formal and informal contexts: A study in an EFL situation. *The Iranian EFL Journal*, 6 (1), 27-71.
- Silverman, D. (1998). *Harvey Sacks: Social Science and Conversation Analysis*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Talebinezhad, M., Aliakbari, M. (in progress). Evaluation and justification of a paradigm shift in the current ELT models in Iran. *Linguistik online*. 10, 1(02), 21-28.
- Webb, N. M., Franke, M.L., Ing, M., Chan, A., De, T., Freund, D., Battey, D. (2008). The role of the teacher instructional practices in the student collaboration. *Contemporary educational psychology*, 33(3), 360-381.
- Wells, G. (1993). Reevaluating the IRF sequence: A proposal for the articulation of theories of activity and discourse for the analysis of teaching and learning in the classroom. *Linguistics and Education*, 5, 1-37.
- Wells, G. (1999). *Dialogic inquiry: toward a sociocultural practice and theory of education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Appendix A: Interview questions

When teaching English, which language do you prefer to use? English or Persian?

Do you prefer to have power in teaching or in class management? Do you let your students air their views too? How much do you *usually* intervene in the class activities?

Do you like to get help from your learners and cooperate with your pupils? How do you do that?

Who decides on the topics taught in the class? Do you have a role in designing your own syllabus and lesson plan? Do you consider your students' needs, concerns and contributions, in that respect? What do you do exactly? Can you clarify your response with some examples?

How do you *normally* manage the learning tasks to be done? (Individually or group work or any other).

How do you make your students help each other, work together, and share ideas in the class? Do you ask your students to listen to their friends in order to follow their talk when they say something in English?

Do you ask questions when you are teaching? When do you normally ask questions?

Do you ask questions for which you have no pre-determined response in mind? How often do you ask your students questions that need longer answers? Can you exemplify the typical questions you usually ask your students at different steps of you teaching?

Do your students ask questions using English language? Are their questions important for you? And can they influence on the choice of your class topics and contents? How often do you ask your students' ideas about the topics for discussion in the class?

How do you give feedback or evaluate your students' responses? (Exemplify the sentences you use when your students say something right or wrong.) How often do you give feedback to what the student really tries (its content) to say rather than its grammar?

An Investigation of the Construction of English Learners' Identities in Iranian EFL Contexts: Schools and Institutes

Marzieh Asadi¹
Islamic Azad University²

Abstract

The topic of identity has moved from the periphery to the core in second language acquisition research (Choi, 2009). The topic has drawn many attentions in recent years. Most studies done in this respect focus on the identity in the inner circle where English is taught as a second language. Less attention has been paid to identity construction in EFL contexts where English is taught as a foreign language.

The status of English as a foreign language in Iran is a bit different from other countries where English is taught as a foreign language. This difference arises from the fact that English is presented in two different contexts in Iran: formal settings of schools and less formal settings of institutes. These settings are quite different from each other in many respects such as teachers, textbooks, instructional methods, and learners' motivation to learn. Because factors such as teachers, textbooks, and instructional methods are the key components of any EFL settings, they cause learners to manifest two different identities in the two settings of schools and institutes.

According to what was cited above, the focus of this study was first to investigate how learners constructed their identities as bilinguals in EFL settings and second to explore how their identity changed in the two settings of EFL in Iran, i.e. schools and institutes. For this purpose, the research method of interview was adopted to collect the data from eight Iranian female EFL learners participating in the study. A qualitative content analysis was used in order to analyze the data.

The results of the study revealed that learners constructed a new identity by learning English, knowing about its culture and people, creating imagined communities of native speakers. But, this new identity did not cause them to forget their L1 identities and values. Learners manifested different identities in the two settings of school and institute and they attributed this change to the differences that existed between the two settings.

Introduction

Issues surrounding learner identities have been discussed and researched extensively in the field of second language acquisition (Yoshizawa, 2010). A

¹ PhD student at Tarbiat Modares University

² Aligudarz branch

great deal of attention has been paid to this topic on recent years. So, the topic of identity no longer remains on the periphery in second language acquisition research (Choi, 2009). As Norton (1995) points out, interest in identity has resulted from the recognition that learning a second language does not entail merely obtaining linguistic knowledge, but it is concerned with how the language learners perceive themselves, including their abilities, communicative styles, values, and belongings to community (Cited in Choi, 2009: 130). In fact, foreign language learning is perceived as part of an identity construction process.

Another impetus for studying identity according to Gee (2003) is the recognition that teaching second language unavoidably involves helping learners negotiate their identities and forge new identities. Zacharis (2010) also points out that learning English is more than acquiring linguistic aspects of language. Rather, it is a complex social practice involving a transformation of learners' multiple identities. Kearney (2004: 47) states that while individual factors such as age, previous language learning experience, attitude and many others have been studied in the field of second language acquisition, identity as an overarching factor brings together numerous issues and may offer an accurate picture of how individuals deal with learning a second language. She further maintains that while some studies in SLA focus on outcomes as they are related to a single variable like age, motivation, or attitude; identity more adequately captures the complexity of learner's engagement with language learning and allows us to reconsider what constitutes success and who gets to decide what success is in language learning. The advantage of such studies on identity is that it allows us to recognize the agency of individual learners in defining their own goals and in attempting to realize them. Because traditionally, language learners have been considered poor copies of native speakers and defective users of the target language. A more contemporary view of language learning acknowledges that language learners are legitimate owners and users of the second language, who perform their own representations of the language and have identities in their own right (Pennycook, 1994, Cook 2002, Pavlenko 2002, Kramsch 1998, Cited in Zacharis, 2010).

In short, as Kearney (2004:65) states “Research on identity revalorizes the language learner and illuminates the ways in which learners navigate the process of Language learning”. In general research on identity advances our knowledge of the process of language learning”.

Review of Literature

A focus for many studies in the field of second language acquisition is on how learners of an additional language acquire an abstract language system. The theoretical perspective that form the basis for many of these studies see the goal of language acquisition research as understanding the development of a system of formal linguistic structures in the individual brain. But, recent research in SLA indicates that learning a second language is more than acquiring a set of grammatical, lexical, and phonological forms of the language. More importantly, “It is a reconstruction of selves” (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2002, cited in Zacharis, 2010:27). In other words, learning of a second or foreign language may have multiple meanings for learners.

Theoretical Perspectives on Identity

Identity has been viewed from various angles and different perspectives. Regarding the existing paradigms on identity, there are two different models. Based on the first paradigm named as the Western, mono- cultural, cognitive view, the individual is considered as an independent, free, and self-contained person. In this respect, the philosopher Tyler (1985,1989, 1993) argues that in Western thought the individual has been conceptualized as metaphysically independent of society, obscuring the way in which an individual is constituted by language and culture which can only be maintained and renewed in the communities he is part of (Cited in Day, 2002:16). This atomistic view of self and identity is quite different from the second paradigm, in which the society plays an important role in the construction of the identity of the individuals. This paradigm is known as the constructivism and considers the human identity to be partly cognitive or individualistic and partly social (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Brown, 2007, cited in Razmjoo, 2010:100). There are some theories which support the second paradigm and one of them being social identity theory and the second cross-cultural theory. According to the social identity theory, identity is bipolar: social and personal (Tajfel, 1998). Regarding the

cross-cultural theory, self or identity represents two ideas, namely, independent-self and interdependent-self (Cited in Razmjoo, 2010:100).

Identity and SLA

Approaches to identity in SLA research have changed considerably over the past decades, reflecting shifts in thinking about how and why second and foreign language learning takes place, and especially the nature and effects of interactions between the learners and contexts of learning (Ricento, 2005). Much of research by applied linguists and second language acquisition researchers concerns the ways in which identity is constituted through and by language, so they have developed frameworks for exploring how learner's identity influences and is influenced by various settings in which learning takes place (Ricento, 2005). Early works in SLA was influenced by the theories of social identity developed by Tajfel (1981). He understood social identity as being derived from an individual's membership in a social group (Ricento, 2005). Drawing on this work, Giles and Johnson (1981,1987) developed their ethnographic identity theory in which language was posited as a prominent marker of group membership and social identity. If a change in group membership involved linguistic adaptation, one result could be subtractive bilingualism or even language erosion and loss over time. (Ricento, 2005). So identity was conceptualized as a group attribute. Another theory related to the notion of identity is the Schumann's Acculturation model (1976, 1978) and the concept of social distance operationalized in his model. He assumes that less social distance entailed greater social solidarity between two cultures. In other words, the greater identification with the target culture, the more motivated the learner will be to acquire the target language.

Another model from SLA research which is related to identity is by Gardner and Lambert (1972). They propose concepts of attitude and motivation and the roles they play in foreign language learning. According to them there are two types of motivation: instrumental and integrative; there are also two sets of learning outcome, linguistic and nonlinguistic (Gardner, 1985). Instrumental motivation refers to such purposes for learning the foreign language such as career development, to study in another country, etc. Integrative motivation refers to a desire of the learner to integrate themselves with the target people and become part of their group. Linguistic outcomes consist of target language

proficiency; nonlinguistic outcomes consist of more general changes in the learner. By non-linguistic outcomes, they mainly focus on the concept of bilingualism and maintain that the nonlinguistic outcomes of English learning deserve much of EFL teachers' attention because language learning can bring about identity changes to learners (Cited in Yihong, 2007:133).

The problems to this approach first is that it assumes a static identity on the part of the language learner (Peirce,1995) and second the price of acceptance into another culture is the loss of one's identities or the adoption of dual identities (Ricento, 2005). In other words, there is a myth in the EFL pedagogy that to succeed academically, English language learners need to minimize, if not getting rid of, their L1 identities and adapt to native-speaker norms and standards (Zacharis, 2010). English teaching methods like suggestopedia in which the learners were supposed to pick an English name was the outcome of these ideas (Zacharis, 2010). What was overlooked in these ideas was that learners' L1 culture is an integral part of their identities and cannot simply be replaced (Zacharis, 2010). As a result, these notions were challenged in the SLA research especially regarding L2 learners' identities.

More Recent Approaches to Identity in SLA

The relationship between identity and language learning is of interest to scholars in the fields of second language acquisition (SLA), language education, sociolinguistics, and applied linguistics. It is best understood in the context of a shift in the field from a predominantly psycholinguistic approach to SLA to include a greater focus on sociological and cultural dimensions of language learning- what has been called the "social turn" in SLA (Kearney, 2004). This shift in the field of SLA, brings out the subjective aspects of language learning to the forefront and provides a complex view of the language learner (Kearney, 2004). Thus, while much research on language learning in the 1970s and 1980s was directed toward investigating the personalities, learning styles, and motivations of individual learners, contemporary researchers of identity are almost concerned with the diverse social, historical, and cultural contexts in which language learning takes place, and how learners negotiate and sometimes resist the diverse positions those contexts offer them (Kearney, 2004). Further, identity theorists question the view that learners can be defined in binary terms as motivated or unmotivated, introverted or

extroverted, without considering that such affective factors are frequently socially constructed in inequitable relations of power, changing across time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways within a single individual (Kearney, 2004).

More recent approaches to identity in SLA were mainly influenced by sociocultural theory. Language in the sociocultural perspective is seen as a source for participation in the kinds of activities our everyday lives comprise and participation in these activities is both the product and process of learning (Zuengler and Miller, 2006, cited in XU, 2010). According to Joseph (2004:21, cited in XU, 2010), the relationship between identity and language is that “people’s identity inheres in their voices, spoken, written or signed and their identities are always present in what they say and in understanding of what others say”. Another concept related to the understanding of identity is the concept of the community of practice and theory of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991, cited in XU, 2010) which focuses on the relationship between learning and situated social situations and conceptualises learning as one of the participations in a community of practice. For Lave and Wenger (1991), learning and identity are inseparable. Through legitimate peripheral participation, an apprentice’s contributions to ongoing activity gain value in practice and provide evidence for self-evaluation of effort, thus providing inherent motivation to learn. Moving toward full participation in practice involving part of the community and developing a sense of identity as a master practitioner (Day, 2002:16). This, Lave and Wenger acknowledge, entails changes in cultural identity and social relations (Cited in Day, 2002:16). In a similar way, Ochs (1993) draws our attention into how we use language to display our identities and memberships in groups.

As it can be seen, within sociocultural approaches (e.g., Bakhtin, 1986; Bourdieu, 1991; Lantolf, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978; cited in Ricento, 1995: 895) identity is not viewed as a fixed, invariant attribute in the mind of individual learner. Instead, one’s identity is multifaceted, shifting, and fluid in different zones of time and space. As a result, identity is presented as multi-faceted, dynamic, and interactionally produced and negotiated (Kearney, 2004:49).

Like the sociocultural researchers, those working within critical and poststructural perspectives in the second language field also take a socially

situated view of identity. For these theorists, language should be seen as a social practice and individuals should be seen as having a complex identity, changing over time and space (Day, 2002). Furthermore, poststructuralists in the field of SLA have been trying to understand what identity is, how it relates to a larger society, and most importantly how it affects one's language learning process. (Day, 2002). Poststructuralists claim that "Identity is a site of struggle in a way that subjectivity is produced in a variety of social sites, all of which are structured by relations of power in which the person takes up different subject positions which may be in conflict with each other" (Norton, 1995; 2000, cited in Yoshizawa, 2010:35). "Identity is understood as diverse, contradictory and dynamic: multiple rather than unitary, decentred rather than centered. In addition, identities change over time: characteristics such as attitudes and motivation change over time and social space" (Yoshizawa, 2010:35).

Moreover, many scholars cite Bonny Norton's theorizing of identity (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 1997; Norton, 2000), as pivotal in framing contemporary theory of identity and language learning. Post structuralism, particularly that associated with Christine Weedon (1997) and Pierre Bourdieu (1991), is central to Norton's theories of identity, and her construct of *investment* complements constructs of motivation in SLA (XU,2010). Norton (2000, cited in XU, 2010:2) defines identity as "a sense of who we are and how we relate to social world". Norton (1995, 2000) argues that "a learner may be a highly motivated language learner, but may nevertheless have little investment in the language practices of a given classroom or community". Thus, while motivation can be seen as a primarily psychological construct, investment is framed within a sociological framework, and seeks to make a meaningful connection between a learner's desire and commitment to learn a language, and their complex identity. The construct of investment has sparked considerable interest and research in the field.

An extension of interest in identity and investment concerns the *imagined communities* that language learners may aspire to join when they learn a new language. The term "imagined community", originally coined by Benedict Anderson (1991), was introduced to the language learning community by Norton (2001), who argued that in many language classrooms, the targeted community may be, to some extent, a reconstruction of past communities and

historically constituted relationships, but also a community of the imagination, a desired community that offers possibilities for an enhanced range of identity options in the future (Yoshizawa, 2010). Kanno and Norton (2003) explain that “language learners also create imagined communities, which are groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom learners connect through the power of imagination” (cited in Yoshizawa, 2010: 37). Norton (2001) argues that “second language learners have images of the communities in which they want to participate in the future. These imagined communities have a large impact on their current learning although the learners are not yet members of such communities. Therefore, the learner investment is closely connected to their imagined communities and future affiliation with the community that they hope to gain access to” (Cited in Yoshizawa, 2010: 37). In other words, an imagined community assumes an imagined identity, and a learner’s investment in the second language can be understood within this context.

To sum up, the poststructuralist approach has challenged the notion that language learners’ identities are fixed, firmly anchored in the original culture and resistant to change (Norton, 1995, Pavlenko 2002). Instead, learners’ linguistic and cultural identities are seen as multiple - learners can be members of multiple ethnic, social and cultural communities - contradictory, changing, and permeable over time. Learners can not only cross the borders between two cultures, but they can re-position themselves and modify their previous selves without having to completely lose their old personas (Ricento, 2005).

To conclude the review part, a point worth considering is that according to Yoshizawa, (2010:35) “So far, research on identity has mostly focused on the identity issues in ESL context or in the core circle of English speaking countries”. In contrast, there is a dearth of research on learner identity in EFL contexts, i.e. where English is taught as a foreign language to see how imagined communities are created and affect learners’ identities in these contexts (Yoshizawa, 2010).

According to what was cited above, i.e. the significance of studying learners’ identities in the second language acquisition process as well as lack of research in this respect, especially in EFL settings; the main purpose of this study was to investigate the learners’ identities in the two EFL contexts in Iran: schools and

institutes. Furthermore, this study mostly relied on contemporary views on identity of second language learners, i.e., sociocultural and poststructuralists views to see how learners' identities changed in these two settings.

English Status in Iran

Since English language teaching in the formal education system of schools in Iran lacks the capability to equip learners with the required level of English to pass the university entrance exam or meet their communicative needs, students usually resort to language institutes to achieve their goals. These private institutes are active throughout the country and a lot of students are attracted to them. The context of learning English in these institutes is very much different from formal settings in schools from lots of respects such as teachers, materials, methodology, and peers, and even motivation to learn English. So, concerning the variability of identity in different settings, it could be inferred that learners might manifest two different identities in these contexts which is worth noticing.

Thus, the main focus of this study was to investigate how learner identity changes in the two different settings of learning English: formal settings in schools and less formal settings in institutes.

Method

According to Ricento (2005) "Because identities are constantly changing, dynamic, and socioculturally constructed, their study requires a qualitative research methodology that permits a more in-depth exploration of each case" (Cited in Choi, 2009). Therefore, this study adopts a qualitative research method and interprets the data accordingly by analyzing the transcribed recordings by qualitative content analysis. Why the researcher chose this method is that as Miller and Crabtree (1999) point out, the interview genre with its turn-taking conversations and expectations for participant roles, etiquettes, and even linguistic phrases is usually shared cultural knowledge. It is exactly because interviewing is a known communication routine that the method works so well as a versatile research instrument- in fact, although there is a range of qualitative research techniques available to the researchers, the interview is the most often used method in qualitative inquiries. It is

regularly applied in a variety of applied linguistic contexts for diverse purposes (Cited in Dornyei, 2007:134). The typical qualitative interview is a one-to-one professional conversation that has a structure and a purpose to obtain descriptions of the life world of interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of described phenomena (Kvale, 1996:5, cited in Dornyei, 2007:134). Another point which is worth noticing here is that the interview was a semi-structured one.

Research Questions

Since qualitative research has an exploratory nature (Dornyei, 2007), and it is an effective way of exploring new areas, the following exploratory research questions guided this study:

1. What are some of the general characteristics of the learners' identities?
2. How do learners construct their identities as bilinguals?
3. How is the learner identity different in school and institute settings? What are the causes of this change?

Participants

The participants of this study were 8 female students, six of them high school students and two of them undergraduate university students who also took part in English language programs in Shokuh institute. Indeed, the one original intact class of the institute was used. The participants had the experience of taking part in two EFL settings of English learning: formal settings of schools and less formal settings of institutes. Their ages ranged between 16- 23 years old.

Data Collection Procedures:

Data were collected by conducting interviews with the learners at the institute. According to Dornyei (2007), the typical qualitative interview is a one-off event lasting about 30-60 minutes. However, as Pollinghorne (2005) argues, one-shot interviews are rarely able to produce the full and rich descriptions necessary for worthwhile findings. So, he recommends that researchers administer a sequence of three interviews with the same participants to obtain sufficient depth and breadth. So, the researcher conducted a three-phase interview with

the participants. In the first phase, the researcher tried to get more familiar with the learners and introduced them some of the interview questions and reduced learners' anxiety resulting from taking part in the interview. In the second phase, the researcher introduced most of the questions of the interview and asked learners to think about them. The reason was that identity itself is a very complicated psychological construct and very difficult for the learners to digest. So, in the first two phases, the researcher did not record the learners' voices. It was in the third phase that the researcher began to ask the learners all the interview questions and recorded their voice. Because the interview consisted of approximately 74 questions, it was conducted during the three sessions in order to be more comprehensive and arrive at a full account. Each interview lasted from 45 to 60 minutes. The interview was a semi-structured one because although there was a set of pre-planned guiding questions and prompts, the format was open-ended and the interviewee was encouraged to elaborate on the issues raised in an exploratory manner. According to Dornyei (2007:136) the interviewer in the semi-structure interview provides guidance and direction (hence the –'structured' part in the name), but is also keen to follow up interesting developments and to let the interviewee elaborate on certain issues (hence the 'semi-' part). The semi-structure interview is suitable for cases when the researcher has a good enough overview of the phenomenon or domain in question and is able to develop broad questions about the topic in advance but does not want to use a ready-made response categories that would limit the depth and breadth of the respondent's story .

Here, the structure of the research interview should be more elaborated. The interview framework was mainly extracted from the identity structure analysis (ISA) developed by weirnreich (1979-1996). This conceptual framework draws upon psychological, sociological, and social anthropological theory to formulate a system of concepts that help explain the notion of identity. "ISA refers to the structural representation of the individual's existential experience, in which the relationship between self and other agents are organized in relatively stable structures over time, but which become further elaborated and changed on account of new experiences" (weirnreich 1979-1996). It enables social realities to be related to identity processes. According to ISA people's identities are addressed and brought into being by interaction

with others. Identity processes encompass biographical experiences, historical eras, and cultural norms in which the self's autonomy varies according to the flux of power relations with others. The definition of identity according to Weirreich (1969-1989) is:

"A person's identity is defined as the totality of one's self-construal, in which how one construes oneself in the present expresses the continuity between how one construes oneself as one was in the past and how one construes oneself as one aspires to be in the future".

This definition is an inclusive one. It refers to the totality of one's identity at a given time. It applies to the young child, adolescent, and older adult in various phases of lifecycle. This definition also refers to the totality of identity with which there are significant aspects, such as ethnic, gender, occupational identity among many other aspects. These aspects are, of course, not separate identities (as they are frequently reified to be within the literature), but are interwoven in complex ways.

This definition further indicates that peoples' identities have foundations in past experiences. Continuity from past experiences through current episodes towards future aspirations links together the component parts of one's identity (Weirreich & Saunderson, 2003).

The ISA instrument which forms the basic framework of our interview consists of : entities –facets of self, others, institutions, agencies, etc. by means of bipolar constructs– discourses which the participants use to talk about, describe, and interpret themselves and their social environment.

Entities: 'Entity' is an abstract term used to refer to any feature of self and the social world that may be the subject of discourses between people in the social world. It consists of:

- **Current self:** In some respects the notion of one's current self is amorphous in that the current moment may be instantaneously 'now ', but more often this moment is elongated into a period of time during which the current event or state of affairs continues. What one feels and how one expresses oneself varies in general according to social context (being by oneself, being with one's friends, being at work, being with one's own people, being with another community) and mood state

(being anxious, being depressed, feeling at one with oneself). Evidently, there are potentially numerous contextual current selves. This Current Self is “Me as I am now”.

- **Past self:** What constitutes significant aspects of oneself in the past will be dependent on biographical events, and one's memories and reconstructions of these events. What one was as a pre-school infant, a child, an adolescent and a young adult, and one's transitions from one phase of life to another - going to college, getting married, procreating - could be significant 'past selves'. It is expressed as “Me as I used to be”.
- **Metaperspective of self:** The expression of the selves I am for others, the "me as others see me" as these others often perceive oneself differently, are the public manifestation of one's private self.
- **Aspirational (ideal) self:** A person's 'aspirational self' consists of two main features, being, on the one hand, the projected desires, orientations, and 'goals' of the person (aspirations in a positive sense) and, on the other, those potential states and characteristics that the person would rather disown (aspirations in a negative sense) as these are agentically appraised. This ideal self is "Me as I would like to be". The entities also consist of the person's liked and disliked persons, family and close friends and the communities with which a person has contact (Weinreich & Saunderson, 2003).

Bipolar constructs: In the terminology of personal construct psychology, two contrasting texts would constitute the two poles of a bipolar construct. From the perspective of ISA either the one or the other pole of this construct might be endorsed as an identity aspiration. For instance in the context of business, the bipolar constructs can be: have a deep concern for others vs. puts the pursuit of commercial success before other consideration. Some people may change towards a preference for the one pole over the other, but feel themselves to be in a dilemma, wanting to express concern and achieve commercial success simultaneously.

As it was mentioned above, the main framework for the present interview consisted of entities and constructs taken from ISA instrument. Since ISA studies have not been conducted in the field of language acquisition, it was

researcher's task to draw items from the literature based on different theories of identity in SLA and put them in the ISA instrument under entities and construct parts. The researcher also used the Furness & Tate Aimhigher West learner identity questionnaire (2010) and used some questions of it related to the work. Furthermore, the researcher used interview questions from a doctoral dissertation by Falsafi (2010) on learner identity. Since the major focus of this study was to see the different learner identities in two different settings of school and institute, the researcher tried to design the questions so that the comparison would be easier by drawing learners' attention to the two contexts, for example friends in school and institute or English learning at school and institute. This was more conspicuous in bipolar constructs where two contrasting poles were rendered. For instance the person is satisfied with English learning at school vs. is satisfied with English learning at institute.

Data Analysis

As it was referred to above, the recordings of the interviews first were transcribed and then analyzed by qualitative content analysis. Related themes were drawn and presented to explore more on learners' identities. Needless to say that because some of the learners' answers were very similar to each other and some of the answers were irrelevant and because of lack of space, the researcher only presents the answers that were new and relevant for the purpose of study.

Analysis of Research Question One:

What are some of the general characteristics of the learners' identities?

As it was mentioned above, the entities in the ISA instrument dealt with the current self, past self and ideal self which referred to the present, past and the future respectively. The questions which were presented under each of these asked participants how they describe themselves in general at present, in the past, and as they would like to be in the future. The reason for this sequence is the definition of identity in ISA presented by Weinrich (2003). So, here we deal with the following classification:

Participants' Current, Past, and Ideal Self in General

In response to the description of participants' current self in general, they answered by mostly talking about their personality traits, and to a lesser

degree talking about their likes and dislikes. Because of the lack of space and because the focus of the study was on EFL learners' identity, the answer by one of the participants is provided:

"...I am proud, revengeful. I don't get angry easily. I make friends easily. I am interested in studying...."

When asked about their past self in general, participants responded by talking about their past personality traits. Here is an example of the same person:

"I was shy; I couldn't say no easily, I wasn't very serious. I didn't take studying seriously".

In most cases, participants confessed that they have changed a lot from what they were in the past.

When they were asked about their ideal self, participants added more to what they were in the past and at present. For instance, they talked about their personality traits as well as their aspirations for the future related to their personal, social, and academic life. Again an example by the same person:

"I like to be more self-confident; to advance more in life, to communicate better with people, to learn things more quickly, to pass university entrance exam....."

In sum, the purpose of research question one was to get a general view of the participants and to see how they interpreted their selves in general and also what their interpretations of their identities were.

Analysis of Research Question Two:

How do learners construct their identities as bilinguals?

To answer this question, we dealt with the following classification respectively in entities part of the interview:

- a) Description of participants' current, past, and ideal self as an English learner
- b) The characteristics that distinguish them as English learners.
- c) The community of English native speakers

Participants' current self as an English learner, past self before starting to learn English, and their ideal self as an English learner.

In answering to describe themselves as an English learner, the participants claimed that they saw themselves as different when they considered

themselves as an English learner and this difference was a change towards the better. Some responses are provided here:

"I feel that I've gained more self-confidence by learning English. English learning helps me to be successful in society. Regarding English learning, I've gained a new identity because I've become familiar with a new culture and a new way of thinking..."

"By the time that I've started to learn English, my identity has changed. I feel I am different from those who do not know English..."

"As an English learner, I've become familiar with a new culture which is different from my last experiences. I could make myself familiar with it and I've accepted my new identity...."

"By English, I like to travel to other foreign countries to get familiar with more cultures and ways of thinking. I think I've gained a new identity"

The participants' perception of their past self before starting to learn English were mainly not satisfactory for them. Before starting to learn English, they saw themselves not up-to-date and English was very difficult for them to learn. They also said that they had different viewpoints. So generally speaking, they were not content with their position before starting to learn English. Some example answers are as follows:

"Before starting to learn English, I consider myself as illiterate. When I saw those who were younger than me and could speak English easily, I really felt ashamed of myself.

"I had lots of problems with English and I could not meet my family's expectations".

"I didn't like to learn English and I didn't pay attention to it".

"I couldn't understand English. Everything about English was so difficult for me. I wasn't interested to learn English".

The learners' perception of their ideal self as an English learner was being able to understand and speak it without any difficulty. Some sample answers are as follows:

"I like to speak English without any problems".

"My ideal self as an English learner is a person who can speak English very well".

"I like to improve my English and be able speak with English people".

"I like to learn English very well so that I can communicate with English people very easily and be able to translate books and films and become a good translator".

The characteristics that distinguish them as English learners.

As it was seen above, learners felt that their identities have changed after becoming an English learner. This change was the outcome of how they saw

themselves as different and their characteristics. Some sample answers are as follows:

“Learning English has caused me to change my behavior so that to have more self-confidence in comparison to those who don’t know it. I have an additional identity”.

“I think a person who knows English is very different from the one who doesn’t know it. After gaining a new identity you enter a new world”.

“Getting familiar with another culture has caused me to be more open-minded and be able to deal with different viewpoints more easily”.

“I think I am superior over those who don’t know English. This gives me more self-confidence and motivation”.

The community of English native speakers

Part of the dimension of learner identity is concerned with the participants’ attitudes toward language learning and target society. There is definitely positive dimension of identities that is influenced by their positive image of the target language community which they hope to belong to someday, by speaking the language of community (Norton & Kamel, 2003, cited in Yoshizawa, 2010:38). Therefore in this part, to further explore learners’ identities, the researcher asked questions which were related to the community of native speakers in order to find out what learners attitudes were towards target society. The questions were identification with target community, creating imagined communities (Norton & Kamel, 2003), and as a result of that their expectation of English speaking people, their tendency to make friends with the people of target community, and their willing to learn their culture. We elaborate on each of these by citing sample answers by learners.

Identification with target people community and perceive themselves as part of their group:

“I don’t like to identify with English people because I think they are not the same as us especially in our way of thinking. I don’t like their culture”.

“I don’t like to identify with them because our Islamic culture is very different from theirs. They don’t believe in Hijab and they are not very kind with each other, I mean their family relationships are very poor”.

“I like to identify with them and be like them in scientific aspects because they are very advanced scientifically, but their culture is very different from us especially regarding Hijab. In this respect I don’t like to identify with them”.

I like to identify with them because they are very different from us culturally. Getting familiar with their culture and being like them is very interesting for me”.

As it can be seen, these learners' behaviors and thoughts were informed by familial and religious principles and values and a strong identification with them. As a result, they could not identify with what they consider as contrary to their values. They were also critical about their culture and saw it as contradictory to theirs especially with respect to religious beliefs.

Creating imagined communities of the target people and their expectation of them

As it was mentioned in the review, Kanno and Norton (2003) explain that language learners also create imagined communities, which are groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom learners connect through the power of imagination. Norton (2001) argues that second language learners have images of the communities in which they want to participate in the future. These imagined communities have a large impact on their current learning although the learners are not yet members of such communities. Therefore, the learner investment is closely connected to their imagined communities and future affiliation with the community that they hope to gain access to (cited in Yoshisawa, 2010). Some example of learners answers are as follows:

"I like to create imagined communities in order to speak with them and improve my English. I expect them to be friendly and frank".

"Yes, I like because I want to have conversations with an imaginary person. I like to ask them about their culture and get familiar with their way of thinking. I think English speaking people are not friendly and don't like to make friends with us".

"I like to create imagined communities because in that case I have control over them and they depend on my thinking. In this way they can be effective on my learning. I think target people are dictators, selfish, rebellious. They are not very faithful in their family relationships".

"No, I don't like to create imagined communities of English people, I think they are very cold in their family relationships, everyone only thinks of himself/herself".

"I am very eager to communicate with English people both in imagination and in reality. I think they have modern ideas, they are not traditional. Generally I have a positive attitude towards them."

As it is clear, there were both positive and negative attitudes in this respect. Some of the learners' expectations of the target people were true but some of them were very unrealistic and they were affected by the information provided by the media. Learners liked to create imagined communities mostly to speak with native people and improve their language.

Making friends with native speakers and learning their culture

Learners' identity construction in a second language is also affected by their willingness to make friends with native speakers and learn their culture. This can lead to a positive attitude and willingness to invest in the language. Sample answers are as follows:

"I like to make friends with native speakers to see how they would treat an Iranian. I like to learn their culture in order to see whether my expectations about them were correct or not".

"In every friendship, we can learn new things. Making friends with target people also help me to learn new things as well as provides an opportunity to practice my English. I like to learn their culture but not to follow their culture".

I like to make friends with them in order to get more information about their culture and their way of thinking. I like to learn positive aspects of their culture not those who are against our religion".

"I like to make friends with natives and learn their culture provided that I don't forget my own culture".

The interesting point here is that learners liked to learn about the target culture but they did not want to follow their culture because they saw their values contradictory to theirs. Furthermore, they wanted to make friends with them in order to improve their language and learn more about their culture and see whether their expectations were true or not.

For analysis of research question two, there were some items in the bipolar constructs part of the interview. In this part, there were some contrasting poles that were used in order to find out about the learners' preference on each of them as well as explore more about their identities. These constructs had in them the concepts of attitude, motivation, etc. Two of them will be investigated here. Others are not mentioned because they were related to some questions in the interview and have already been mentioned like gaining a new identity or having more self-confidence.

You learn English because you like the language.

You learn English because you want to get a better job in the future.

This bipolar construct was put in the interview in order to find out whether learners were intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to learn English. All the eight participants chose the first one. This was an indication of the fact that all of them were intrinsically motivated to learn English. One of the participants chose both of them. This indicates that she was both extrinsically and

intrinsically motivated to learn English. The second bipolar construct is as follows:

You have positive attitude towards English speaking people.

You have negative attitude towards English speaking people.

All the participants chose the first one to show that their attitudes towards English speaking people were positive.

Analysis of research question two showed that learners invested in their language learning, create imagined communities of it, and constructed identities. Sources of information about native speakers for EFL learners who had not the experience of traveling to native speaking countries mainly came from the media, internet, and also the larger society in which they lived. How the society and the government view language has a great effect on the perception and expectation of the learners towards the target people and their cultures. They claimed that they have gained a new identity by learning English and they thought of knowing English as an advantage and a priority for themselves. They made an investment in learning English by trying to improve their language because their main impetus of creating imagined communities and making friends with natives was to improve their language. In addition to this, they expressed their ideal self as an English learner a person who is able to speak very well the language and be able to communicate with native speakers easily. Their answers on culture learning were positive because they wanted to know about native speakers' culture in order to see whether their expectations are true or not. But they didn't like to become like the target people because they valued their own culture and way of thinking. In other words, they displayed a strong affiliation or identification with their own Iranian culture. All of these indicate that learners prefer to preserve their L1 identity culturally, socially, and ethnically and in addition to their L1 identity construct a new identity in L2. This L2 identity should not stand against their L1 values and beliefs. They mainly wanted to gain positive values of the target culture and beliefs, those that are not in sharp contrast to their own way of thinking.

Analysis of Research Question Three

How is the learner identity different in school and institute settings? What are the causes of this change?

As it was mentioned before, English in Iran is presented in two different contexts: formal settings of school and less formal settings of the institute. These two contexts of English learning are very different from each other from many aspects such as the methods of teaching, teachers' personality and their relationship with learners, textbooks, and last but not least learners' motivation to learn English.

It was also cited that this study investigated learners' identities according to the theories of sociocultural and poststructuralists that take identity as fluid and changing in different contexts. Therefore, learners' identities must change in the two settings under investigation: school and institute.

In order to answer research question three, some questions in the entities part of the interview which were related to the English language community in Iran were used, for example English teachers at both settings, peers at both settings. The questions were taken from an identity questionnaire, Furness & Tate (2010). There were also some bipolar constructs related to the two settings which were used in order to find out which setting the learners preferred. Finally, the last part of interview contained some questions taken from Falsafi (2010) doctoral dissertation asking directly about the learners' identities in both settings. Each of these will be presented below.

The English language community in Iran (teachers, peers in both settings). The answers were analyzed according to the following classification:

- a) Learners' relationship with their teachers, the teachers' roles in their language learning, and how they describe their English teachers (both school/institute).
- b) Learners' peers at school/institute: whether peers encourage them to learn. How their peers affect their learning,

Sample answers by participants on the issues of the first classification are as follows:

- The learners' relationship with their teachers:

"I have a good relationship with both my school and institute teacher. I think the reason is that I like English so I don't have problems with my English teachers in both settings".

"My relationship with my school teacher is confined only to class. I don't like her. In contrast, I have a good relationship with my institute teacher, I feel comfortable with him and can easily speak with him".

"Because I am a good student, I have a good relationship with my school teacher, I have a good relationship with some of my institute teachers not all of them".

"My relationship with my institute teacher is better than my school one, because my institute teacher is more friendly".

"My school teacher is very strict. I don't have a good relationship with my school teacher. There is always a distance between us. But I have a very good relationship with my institute teacher. I can even talk about my personal matters with him".

As it can be inferred from learners' answers, because school context is a formal one, learners mostly didn't have a good relationship with their school teachers. However, the context in institute is less formal so learners' relationships with their teachers were more satisfactory for them. Those who have a good relationship with their school teachers attributed this either to their interest in English or being a good student not to the goodness of the school teacher.

- The role of their English teachers in their learning (both school /institute teachers).

"My school teacher always discouraged me and I got the lowest score from her. My institute teacher's role is really great".

"My school teacher had no role in my learning and didn't encourage me at all. My institute teacher encourages me to learn and try harder".

"My school teacher has a very effective role in my learning and she always encouraged me to go to extra classes in order to improve my English. My institute teacher has a great role in my learning."

"My school teacher just explained the lesson for us, if we didn't study, we won't pass. But my institute teacher has a very effective role. He shows us the way how to learn English".

Most learners consider the role of their institute teacher more effective in their English learning.

- How learners describe their teachers (both school/institute).

"My school teacher was proud, very serious, and strict. Her behavior was not good with us may be because she taught us a foreign language. My institute teacher is very patient, very kind, helps us all in order to progress, works very seriously".

"My school teacher was very proud, unfriendly, and strict. She was proud because she knew an additional language. My institute teacher is not bad. Generally speaking, institute teachers are better. They communicate with their learners more easily and try more".

“My school teacher is very serious, good-willed. She doesn’t waste the class time. These characteristics have caused us to be good at English. My institute teachers are very on time, eloquent; explain the lessons very well for us in order to understand”.

“My school teacher was very strict and serious. She just tried to make us understand the lesson. The class was always silent. My institute teacher has a good relationship with learners. He is sometimes serious and sometimes funny. His aim is that his learners understand the lesson”.

My school teacher is very friendly. My institute teacher is very friendly too. He tries to make us progress in English learning. He works compassionately”.

“Being very cold, and strict are the important characteristics of my school teacher. She thinks that because she knows all materials we should also know them. If we ask a question for the second time, she becomes angry. In contrast, school teachers are very friendly and have emotional relationship with students. They work with weaker students more without receiving extra money”.

It is quite conspicuous that teachers’ personalities were also affected by formal settings of school and less formal settings of institute. This has a direct effect on learners’ identity and their way of thinking. So, most learners saw their institute teacher as more ideal and consequently were more motivated to learn English. The behavior of some of the school teachers made learners hate English and not having any motivation to learn it. So, the first identity difference for these learners arising from teachers’ personality, role, relationship is that learners were more motivated and more satisfied to learn English at the institute.

- Learners’ peers at school/institute: whether peers encourage them to learn. How their peers affect their learning,

The second classification of the entities part was about peers. The philosophy behind this is that according to Smith and Tropp (2002:2), part of our identity is relational. That is, it is determined by other people with whom we have direct personal relationship (cited in Razmjoo, 2010:104). These people can be members of family and close friends. Here, the focus was on peers. Sample answers by learners are provided here:

“My friends at school don’t encourage me but at the institute we have somehow cooperation with each other. Because at school we were not interested in learning English, we didn’t talk with each other. At the institute, I speak English with one of my friends and she affects my learning a lot”.

“I always talk with my school friends about English learning and we encourage each other to learn more. The situation is the same at the institute. At my school, there is competition between me and my friends so we affect each other learning. I have the same feeling at the institute”.

“My friends at school encourage me very little. At the institute, sometimes they encourage me. At school, my friends affect my learning because of the competition between us. My friends at the institute affect my learning in a way that I have more motivation to learn.

“I received no encouragement from my friends at school. They were very indifferent. They didn’t affect my learning because they all hated language class and studied just because they were forced to study. At the institute, my friends encouraged me to study more because we have group work. They have a basic role in my learning”.

“Because at school there was a sense of competition between us, no one encouraged the other to learn. And also my friends don’t like English, so they didn’t affect my learning in a positive way. At the institute, the situation is better. My friends encourage me because the sense of completion is less than school. When I see my friends trying to speak English, this affects me a lot to learn and try”.

There are some contrasting viewpoints in this part. Some learners view competition a motive to learn, but others don’t. But generally speaking, it might seem that the role of peers at the institute encouraged learners more and affected their learning in a more positive way in comparison to their peers at school.

- Bipolar constructs: As it was mentioned earlier, there were some bipolar constructs in the interview to directly find out about learners’ preferences in two settings. They will be investigated in the following:
 - ✓ Prefers to learn English at school.
 - ✓ Prefers to learn English at institute.

Six participants preferred to learn English at institute and two preferred to learn at school. When they were asked about the reason, two learners stated that it was not because the quality of learning or the method of teaching that they chose school, but just because of the emotional relationships with some of their friends that they preferred school.

- ✓ Is satisfied with teachers at school.
- ✓ Is satisfied with teachers at institute.

Six participants chose the second construct. Their explanations for choosing the second construct was not that teachers were more successful academically at institute, rather the reason was that they were more comfortable with their institute teachers and the distance between them were less. But two of learners chose both of them. This could be an indication of the fact that

teachers at institute were successful at meeting both the learners' educational and emotional needs.

- ✓ Is pleased with the English teaching method at school.
- ✓ Is pleased with the English teaching method at institute.

Six of the participants chose the second construct, but two of them chose both of the constructs. When asked about the reason, the two learners confessed that they also liked the teaching methods at school because they were used to it and it was the matter of habit. All the participants confessed that they prefer the method at the institute because it was more up-to date in comparison to the school method. They also stated that the method and consequently the textbooks at institute enabled them to learn how to speak in English and learn a new culture. They praised the method and the textbook for having variety and not being monotonous.

- ✓ Considers school environment more conducive to learning.
- ✓ Considers institute environment more conducive to learning.

Seven participants chose the second construct because they thought that they had less anxiety when they were at institute. They also stated that the institute environment were more attractive and interesting for them. Just one participant chose the first construct. When was asked about the reason, she said she preferred formal learning environments to informal ones.

As it can be seen, most learners preferred institute over school because they thought they could be more successful at language learning in that context. This may imply that they feel the difference between their identities in the two settings and preferred one over the other because of the reasons that they mentioned.

- Questions asking directly about the learners' identities in both settings, asking about the causes of change in their identity in both setting, and which identity they liked more. Sample answers are as follows:

"My identity changes in different contexts of school and institute. The reason for this change might be my lack of interest at school for English learning or the indifference of my teacher. But at institute I became more interested in learning English. I like my

institutional identity more because I learned more and I became more motivated to learn English”.

“I think I am different in both settings because at school there is a great competition between students. The only motivation for us to learn is getting good grades. The teachers force learners to learn. But at institute there is no force. We go there by our own will and we are more motivated to learn. Because I am more relaxed at the institute and try more to learn English, I like my identity at the institute more than school”.

“Yes, my identity is different in both settings. At school I was more successful in comparison to my classmates and this gave me more motivation and perseverance. But at institute, I am weak and this discourages me. I like my school identity more because I was stronger and more successful at school”.

“Definitely my identity as an English learner changes in different settings of school and institute. The main causes for this difference are teachers, methods of teaching, scores. I like my institutional identity more because I learn better at the institute”.

“My identity is different in both contexts. I didn’t care about studying English at school but at institute studying English is very important for me. I like my institutional identity more because I try more there, I’ve gained a lot there that I’ve not gained at school like acquiring speaking skills and being able to communicate with other people who know English”.

“Yes, I have different identities at school and institute settings .I took English more seriously at school because there was a sense of competition between us. But the situation is not the same in the institute. In it, we are more relaxed, the teacher is not so strict. The context is friendlier. The two contexts are very different so we change in each of them. I like my institutional identity more because studying at institute gives me more self-confidence and satisfies me more”.

As it can be seen, learners attributed their identity change in the two settings to various reasons and criteria. These criteria were difference between teachers, methods of teaching, context of learning, learners’ own values and priorities, and personality factors. Most learners preferred their institutional identities because of its calmness and consider it to be a matter of their success. They didn’t like the formalness at school which created anxiety for them in their way of learning English. Few learners preferred school and school identity because they liked more formal settings and they considered themselves stronger at school academically.

More importantly, it can be inferred that learners became more mature to pay attention to their being human, their identities in EFL settings, as well as their needs, wants, desires, and values. They did not just pay attention to linguistic factors, but nonlinguistic factors also became important for them. They expected their teachers to pay attention to their humanity as a learner not just the language. The main reason for most of them to prefer institute and their

institutional identity were to a greater degree the nonlinguistic factors and to lesser degree linguistic ones.

Conclusion

This study attempted to answer three exploratory research questions. The analysis of research question one revealed some general characteristics on learners' identities, for instance how they perceived their current, past, and ideal selves. This research question was a kind of introductory one for the research because the main focus of the study was firstly to investigate participants' identities as an English learner and secondly and more importantly to see how their identities changed in different settings of English learning Iran: schools and institutes. Research question two (how the learners construct their identities as bilinguals) was analyzed by investigating learners' current, past, and ideal self as an English learner, the characteristics that distinguished them as an English learner, and the community of native speakers. Analysis of research question two revealed that learners were satisfied with their current self as an English learner in comparison to their past self that they did not know English. They felt a change in themselves after learning English and this change was towards the better. For instance, learning English had the outcome of gaining more self-confidence, gaining more information, becoming familiar with a different culture, being able to communicate with other people around the world. These characteristics caused them to distinguish themselves from others who did not know English. Moreover, their ideal self as an English learner was a person who could speak English very fluently and communicate with natives very easily.

As it was cited earlier, part of the identity construction of the learners relied on their investment in the target language, their attitudes towards its speakers, creating imagined communities of speakers, as well as identification with them. Analysis of learners' answers related to the above points revealed that learners were willing to create imagined communities in order to speak with native speakers and improve their language. They were inclined to learn the target culture and be familiar with their way of thinking but not at the cost of losing their cultural identity. In fact, learners were very biased to their cultural, religious, and familial values and did not want to lose them. So, in addition to gaining an L2 identity, they wanted to preserve their L1 identity.

Research question three (how does learner identity changes in the two EFL settings in Iran: school and institute and what are the causes of this change) was analyzed by first considering English language community in Iranian EFL contexts: teachers and peers in settings, then investigating constructs, and finally directly asking about the change. Analysis of research question three revealed that because the two contexts were very different from each other from many aspects such as teachers and their relationship with learners, peers, teaching methods, textbooks; learners manifested two different identities in the two settings. Most learners liked and preferred their institutional identity because they thought in that settings they were more valued as learners and had less anxiety, so more motivated to learn.

As a result, teachers should pay attention to learners' identities when designing courses, preparing materials, and teaching approaches because all these items can have a direct effect on shaping learners' identities in EFL contexts. As Yoshizawa (2010:37) points out learner identities in the EFL contexts may be affected by unique social factors that are dramatically different from learning English in ESL contexts. The EFL environment's distinctive geographic location, social values, and ideologies behind the curriculum are factors affecting learner identities. Therefore, more works should be done to investigate learner identity in EFL contexts of the outer circle because it has been neglected till now. To better understand the identity construction of language learners and most importantly how language is acquired, more studies must be done in the context where English is taught as a foreign language and more questions should be answered.

References

- Choi, J. (2009). Asian English learners' identity construction in an after school literacy site. *Journal of Asian pacific communication*, 19/1 (2009), 130-161. John Benjamins publishing company.
- Day, E. M. (2002). *Identity and the young English language learner*. Cromwel Press Ltd.
- Dornyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford University Press.
- Dornyei, Z & Ushioda, E. (2009). *Motivation, language identity, and L2 self*. Multilingual Matters.
- Falsafi, L. (2010). *Learner identity: A sociocultural approach to how people recognize and construct themselves as learners*. Doctoral dissertation: published.

- Furness & Tate (2010). *Example questions to elicit information about learner identity*. Aimhigher West.
- Kearney, E. (2004). Negotiating identity as a beginning foreign language learner. *Working Papers in Educational Linguistics*, 20/1 (2004), 47-69.
- Razmjoo, S. A. (2010). Language and identity in the Iranian context: The impact of identity aspects on EFL learners' achievement. *The Journal of Teaching Language Skills*, 2/2, 99-121.
- Ricento, T. (2005). *Considering of identity in L2 learning*. Retrieved February 26th from www. Google. Com.
- Weinreich, P. & Saunderson, W. (2003). *Analyzing identity*. Routledge.
- XU, X. (2010). *Identity and language learning: Exploring Chinese EFL learners' identities and language learning*. Retrieved May 25th from www. Google. Com.
- Yihong, G, Ying, Ch, & Yuan, Zh. (2007). Relationship between English learning motivation types and self-identity changes among Chinese students. *TESOL Quarterly*, 41/1, 133-155.
- Yoshizawa, A. (2010). *Learner identity construction in EFL contexts: Needs for research area expansion and examination of imagined identities in the imagined communities*. Retrieved May 25th from www. Google. Com.
- Zacharis, T. (2010). *Acknowledging learner multiple identities in the EFL classroom*. Retrieved May 25th from www. Google. Com.

The Impact of Phrasal Verb Avoidance on the Writing Ability of the University EFL Learners

Behzad Barekat¹
Berjis Baniasady²
University of Guilan

Abstract

This study endeavors to investigate the avoidance of English phrasal verbs by Persian EFL university learners. The question this study attempted to answer was whether the learners' writing ability can be affected by phrasal verb avoidance. To find the answer to this question, forty four intermediate undergraduate English majors were selected using an Oxford Placement Test (OPT) (Allen, 2004). Three elicitation tests (multiple choice, recall, and translation) were adopted for investigation from different perspectives, eliciting preference for either a phrasal verb or an equivalent one-word verb. The results revealed that the participants tended to adopt a play-it-safe strategy, preferring one-word verbs with general, multi-purpose meanings over phrasal verbs with specific, sometimes idiomatic meanings. The total mean score of the participants was used as a criterion to divide them into two groups. Based on how far above or below the mean their scores were, the participants were placed in either of the two groups A (participants with higher amount of avoidance) and B (participants with lower amount of avoidance). The next step followed was to investigate whether the participants' phrasal verb avoidance would affect their writing performances. To accomplish this purpose, the participants were asked to perform a writing task. Their compositions were read and evaluated by two independent raters using Weigle's (2004) essay scoring criteria. A T-test was run for this study as the statistical means for the hypothesis testing process and the results revealed a significant difference between the writing performances of the two groups. The participants in group B had a better performance than the participants in group A. Drawing from this finding, it can be concluded that there exists a close relationship between phrasal verb avoidance and the participants' writing ability.

Key Words: Avoidance, phrasal verb, Persian EFL learners, writing ability

¹ BehzadBarekat@yahoo.com

² berjisbaniasady@gmail.com

Introduction

Statement of the topic area

The fundamental question in the field of second language acquisition is how learners acquire a second language. A tremendous amount of research has been devoted to the area of learner language. It has been thought that the errors second language learners make can provide a window to the understanding of the internal processes of second language acquisition. In the history of second language acquisition, there have been at least two significant approaches in the analysis of learner difficulty in acquiring a second language.

The first approach, contrastive analysis, endeavored to predict the areas of difficulty and non-difficulty learners would face by comparing the linguistic system of the learners' native language with that of the target language. The second approach, error analysis, attempted to empirically investigate the actual errors produced by second language learners in the target language and sought to explain their cause. Although the evidence from error analysis studies points to the fact that contrastive analysis is an inadequate predictor of learner difficulty and non-difficulty with target language material, a drawback has been pointed out concerning the error analysis approach, which observed only the errors actually done by learners of a second language. Schachter (1974) argued that the error analysis approach is deficient because it is incapable of explaining the phenomenon of avoidance.

In general, avoidance behavior is believed to occur "when specific language structures are under-represented in the learner's production in comparison with native-speakers production" (Eliss, 1986, p. 293). The explanation for this phenomenon is that second language learners will often try to avoid using a difficult item or structure in the second language, and will instead use an alternative item or structure, which they perceive as simpler.

The theoretical rationale for considering phrasal verbs in the investigation of the avoidance phenomenon is that Persian learners of English often confront difficulties with identifying, learning and ultimately using phrasal verbs. All of these difficulties can be daunting for learners to overcome in the process of incorporating this new type of lexical item to their productive vocabulary. As a result, they find it very difficult to incorporate the usage of phrasal verbs either

in their speech or in their writings. In their performance especially while writing in English, these learners tend to avoid this linguistic category and use the one-word verb instead. It explains why even students with an excellent command of English know relatively little about phrasal verbs and use them rarely. By frequently resorting to this strategy, the learners try to hide their weakness in using phrasal verbs. As a result, two problems appear. Firstly, the learner will not improve in that specific area and secondly, if the errors are overlooked actively, they may become fossilized.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

The aim of current research is to investigate the impact of phrasal verb avoidance on the writing ability of Iranian EFL learners. In order to accomplish this purpose, the following research questions were developed:

1. To what extent do Persian learners of English avoid using phrasal verbs?
2. Does their avoidance, if any, have any positive/negative effect on their writing performance?

To answer these research questions, the following hypotheses were proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Persian learners of English avoid using phrasal verbs to some extent.

Hypothesis 2: Persian learners' avoidance of phrasal verbs does not have any positive/negative effect on their writing performance.

Literature review

The issues explored in this study build on the results of previous investigations into L2 learners' avoidance of phrasal verbs. In this section, relevant literature underlying the relevance to the issues investigated in this study will be reviewed.

The Avoidance Strategy

The avoidance phenomenon was first brought to light by Schachter (1974) who drew attention to the importance, in error analysis, of examining not only the L2 forms actually produced by the learners of a foreign language in their attempts to express themselves in L2, but also the L2 forms they seem

consistently to *avoid* using. Since then, avoidance has been studied by many researchers.

In order to explain the avoidance behavior by L2 learners, two important claims have been made. One is that avoidance takes place when there are structural differences between L1 and L2. Within this view, avoidance is predictable by Contrastive Analysis (Schachter (1974), Kleinman (1977), Daught & Laufer (1985)). The other maintains avoidance is governed by universal principles. Within this view, avoidance is predictable on the basis of the semantic difficulty of L2 forms in question (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989).

Schachter (1974) examined Chinese, Japanese, Persian, and Arabic learners' avoidance of relative clauses. She concluded that "if a student finds a particular construction in the target language difficult to comprehend it is very likely that he will try to avoid producing it".

Further, Kleinman (1977) argued that the avoidance behavior implies that a learner is aware of a given word or expression of the target language, and that a learner makes an intentional choice to replace that feature of the target language by something else. As he maintained, one can speak of avoidance when the structure in question is known, but not freely used by the learner, otherwise it is an indication of ignorance.

Kleinmann (1977) examined four English grammatical structures performed by intermediate level native speakers of Arabic, Spanish and Portuguese. He demonstrated the learner's knowledge through comprehension tests before he examined ESL learners' avoidance behavior. The findings lend support to Schachter's (1974) point that avoidance can be predicted by the structural differences between the first and the second language. However, there is an interaction between linguistic and psychological factors.

Mehrpooya (2002) investigated the use of avoidance strategy by Iranian EFL learners when producing different idioms. The results indicated that the EFL learners' use of avoidance strategy was more evident when the idioms were mostly different from the idioms in their L1.

On the other hand, some researchers asserted that the structural difference between L1 and L2 alone may not be the only reason for avoidance. Bley-

Vroman and Hough (1988) challenged Schachter's proposal and proposed that the low production rate of English relative clauses by the Chinese learners would be an indication of the low frequency of relative clauses in Chinese. In another study, Li (1996) found that learners did not necessarily avoid structures that were apparently different in form from their L1. He concluded that subtle pragmatic differences made them subconsciously underproduce relative clauses.

Pazhakh (2006) explored the avoidance phenomena in English writings by intermediate and advanced Iranian EFL learners. Through the analyses of the learners' English writings, questionnaires and interviews, he found that avoidance is inversely related to English proficiency level. Besides, language proficiency level, there are many other factors influencing students' avoidance behaviors, such as the nature of the problem source, the learner's personality, and the learning situation.

Phrasal Verbs

One feature of English which many L2 learners find difficult is phrasal verbs. These verbs are considered problematic for a number of reasons. Research indicates the difficult nature of phrasal verbs may lead to avoidance causing learners to choose a single word synonym instead. Three common main reasons were given for possible avoidance: "(a) L1-L2 difference, (b) L1-L2 idiomatic similarity, and (c) inherent L2 complexity.

In most cases, the major problem with phrasal verbs is gaining insight into the meaning(s) of their particles and understanding why one particle is used and another is not. Furthermore, from a semantic perspective, phrasal verbs have what Laufer (1997) calls "*descriptive transparency*"; that is, the meaning cannot always be deduced by analyzing the inherent parts. That explains why a lot of learners still cannot get the meaning of an unfamiliar phrasal verb although they may know very clearly what the base verb and the particle defines (Rudzka-Ostyn, 2003).

An additional complication is that certain phrasal verbs are polysemous (*bring up* the tools from the basement = carry them up; *bring up* children = nurture; *bring up* a suggestion = mention) (Biber et al. 1999). To add to their semantic complexity, phrasal verbs may be synonymous with other phrasal verbs, as well. In most cases, they are similar in stylistic usage, for example *call back* and

ring back mean almost the same as *phone back*; *count on* and *bet on* mean almost the same as *bank on*.

Considering the aforementioned problems, no wonder phrasal verbs represent a feature of English much dreaded by learners, and therefore many of them tend to avoid these verbs. In the following section, previous research studies on phrasal verb avoidance are reviewed.

Avoidance of Phrasal Verbs

Research on the avoidance of English phrasal verbs was first conducted by Dagut and Laufer (1985). In their research, they observed a group of Hebrew-speaking students of English. The results of the study demonstrated that the majority of learners exhibited a strong preference for one-word verbs. They attributed this finding to L1–L2 structural differences.

Hulstijn and Marchena (1989) hypothesized that Dutch learners would still avoid phrasal verbs, not for structural reasons as the Hebrew learners did, but for semantic reasons. Their study offered two results about avoidance strategy. First, Dutch learners avoided those idiomatic phrasal verbs that they perceived as too Dutch-like. Since their findings showed that idiomatic phrasal verbs are avoided more than figurative ones, they claimed that the L2 learners of English avoid using phrasal verbs mostly because of semantic considerations.

Laufer and Eliasson (1993) took up both Dagut and Laufer's (1985) and Hulstijn and Marchena's (1989) lines of argument. Their study with Swedish learners investigated whether avoidance is due to semantic difficulties or structural (dis) similarities between the native and the target language. They concluded that the best predictor for strategy of avoidance was differences between first and second language.

Similarly, Liao and Fukuya (2004), whose subjects were Chinese learners of English, speculated that the structural differences between the L1 and L2 as well as semantic complexity of the phrasal verbs may be the reasons of avoidance. They observed a number of intermediate learners producing phrasal verbs much less frequently than both native speakers and advanced learners. Therefore, they suggested that the avoidance or non-avoidance of

phrasal verbs could be an indication of learners' interlanguage development rather than the L1–L2 differences or similarities.

The Relationship between Vocabulary and Writing

The interactions between vocabulary and writing skills are twofold. On the one hand, writing practice contributes to the development of vocabulary. On the other hand, vocabulary use in writing enhances the quality of the written text. L2 writers are reported to acquire much of their lexical competence via the written languages. Further evidence for the role of writing practice in the development of lexical competence is provided by Muncie (2002). In his experiment with Japanese learners, he found that vocabulary development correlates highly with writing practice. Similarly, a further study by Lee (2003) found that writing tasks maximize vocabulary learning opportunities and help learners develop L2 vocabulary by retaining new learned words.

The aforementioned research findings are indicative of the positive effect that writing has on vocabulary development. Vocabulary knowledge has been found to play an important role in writing as well. Teachers, researchers and learners all acknowledge the importance of lexical knowledge in the development of writing. Studies on the importance of vocabulary in L2 writing have been carried out by many researchers.

Leki and Carson (1994) suggested that the degree to which L2 learners' vocabulary knowledge influence their effective and proficient writing should not be underestimated. In an examination of learners' views concerning their EAP (English for Academic Purposes) courses, they found that learners ranked vocabulary as the most important factor in academic writing and claimed that vocabulary expansion was the key component needed to improve their writing performance. In a further experiment conducted by Polio and Glew (1996), students mentioned the importance of knowing appropriate vocabulary to write an essay and commented in the difficulties they confront when writing about a topic for which they lacked sufficient vocabulary.

Additionally, vocabulary is considered a criterion for assessing writing. The texts of proficient writers display a wider range and specificity of vocabulary. As Grobe (1981) stated, vocabulary is one of the most crucial elements in evaluating the quality of writing in the foreign language. Laufer and Nation

(1995) suggested that the proportion of core academic vocabulary in L2 writers' text correlated positively with higher rating of essays in standardized tests. Based on earlier studies, Nation (2001) concluded that an increase in the amount of academic vocabulary in L2 writing contributes significantly to the higher evaluations of the quality of L2 academic writing.

Therefore, based on what have been mentioned regarding the role of vocabulary, developing a large repertoire of vocabulary is crucial in achieving writing proficiency and phrasal verbs are no exception to this rule.

Methodology

Participants

The participants included in the present study were 86 undergraduate students of Guilan University. They were homogeneous in respect of age, nationality, mother tongue and both cultural and educational background. Based on the English Language Syllabus they went through in the past two years, it could be presumed that they should have had a reasonable exposure to the English Language during their education, and, hence, have attained a fair level of competence in the use of phrasal verbs. Therefore, they were expected to be able to communicate in English, at least in the writing tasks. The main consideration when selecting the participants was their level of English proficiency. As the present study's experimental materials involved structurally complex sentences, only learners at or above the intermediate level were included in our study. Out of a total number of 86 participants who took the proficiency test, 44 ones were selected to take the main tests.

Instruments

In order to collect data, the following instruments were used:

An Oxford Placement Test (OPT): The test was comprised of a 100-item multiple-choice Grammar Test, which consisted of several parts, testing different aspects of grammar. The reliability and validity of the OPT test were confirmed by several studies. This test is reliable since it consistently grade test takers at the right level. Moreover, it is considered to be valid because it has a strong theoretical basis and has been through a rigorous test design, pretesting

and piloting stage. It took about thirty minutes to complete. Marking of the test was done according to the User's Guide.

A Multiple Choice Test: When the participants were homogenized with the same level of proficiency, they were asked to take a multiple-choice test. Fifteen pairs of phrasal and one-word verbs were selected for this test. The phrasal verbs and test sentences used in this study were suitable to the students' proficiency level. They were selected from the book *'1000 phrasal verbs in context'* which contained phrasal verbs specifically designed for intermediate level learners.

For these verb pairs, 15 sentences were created. Among the 15 phrasal verb items, 11 were figurative and 4 were literal. This set of 15 sentences was also used in the recall and translation tests. The list of phrasal verbs, their categories, their one-word equivalents and their Persian translation were given in Appendix B.

In each sentence of the multiple-choice test, the verb in question was left blank. The participants were required to fill in the blank with one of the four verbs presented below the sentence: the phrasal verb, the equivalent one-word verb, and two distractor verbs. Unlike a normal multiple-choice test, the present test consisted of not one but two correct answers. Thus, the participants were given special instructions to choose the answer that they considered most suitable to complete the test. The following two sentences appeared in the instructions: *"Choose for each sentence the verb that in your opinion best fits the context and fill in that verb. Assume that these sentences have been written in normal, colloquial English"* (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989).

A Recall Test: In this test, the participants were given the same 15 sentences as in the multiple-choice test, written out in full with the phrasal verb. Five distractor sentences with one-word verbs were added.

A Translation Test: This test had the same 15 sentences as in the multiple-choice test, with the verb left out. At the end of each sentence, the Persian equivalent of the missing verb was given (see Appendix C).

A Writing Task: This task contained a narrative composition on the topic, *"If I Had a Million Dollars"*. The time allowed for the task was 40 minutes.

Procedures

Stage 1: An Oxford placement test was administered to the participants in order to determine their proficiency levels.

Stage 2: The next step was to find out whether and to what extent these phrasal verbs would be avoided by Persian learners of English. This step consisted of the administration of three elicitation tests (a multiple-choice test, a verb translation test, and a recall test) to the participants.

Stage 3: Two weeks later, a recall test was administered to the students. At the beginning of the class session, the participants were asked to remember the main ideas of the sentences in about 10 minutes. They were told that they would be tested at the end of the class to check how much they had remembered. After about 1 hour, they were given the same sentences, but this time with the verbs left out. They were given 10 minutes to fill in the verbs according to what they remembered. In order to prevent L1 influence no Persian equivalents were given in this test.

Stage 4: At this stage, a translation test was given to the students. There was a two-week gap between the recall and the translation test. In this test, the participants were asked to translate the phrasal verbs given at the end of the sentences into English in the provided 10 minutes.

Stage 5: In this step, the participants' performances on the elicitation tests were assessed to provide answer to the research question 1. Subsequently, based on their scores on the above mentioned tests, the participants were divided into two groups according to their amount of avoidance.

Stage 6: A week after the translation test, the participants were asked to write a narrative composition on the topic, "*If I Had a Million Dollars*". At this stage, the functions of the two groups were compared according to their performance on the writing task.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. To calculate the scores of the tests, the answers of each of the items, 1 to 15, were added up for each participant. The total possible number of correct answers was 45. Since there were two phrasal verbs among the four choices

(one correct, one distractor), only the correct phrasal verbs chosen by the participants were counted in the calculation. Then the total scores for each participant were calculated. To answer research question 1 and to further explore the choice between phrasal verbs and their one-word verb competitors, the relative proportion of occurrence of each was calculated.

After identifying the extent to which the participants resort to the avoidance strategy in using phrasal verbs, the next step followed was to investigate whether phrasal verb avoidance would affect the participants' writing performances. To this end, the performance mean of the participants in the mentioned tests was computed. The participants' mean score was 6.37 out of 15. Based on how far above or below the mean their scores fell, the participants were placed in either of the two groups A (participants with higher amount of avoidance) and B (participants with lower amount of avoidance). As previously stated, to accomplish this purpose the participants were asked to perform a writing task. The grading scale which was used to evaluate the writing tasks was the Weigle's (2004) essay scoring criteria (See Appendix E). To overcome the rater reliability problems, two independent raters were asked to evaluate the student' written products by using Weigle's (2004) essay scoring criteria. To estimate the inter-rater reliability, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (.74) was calculated using SPSS which revealed substantial agreement between the raters.

In order to statistically analyze the significant difference between the writing performances of the two groups, the analysis of independent-samples t-test was utilized. An alpha level of .05 was selected for rejecting the null hypothesis.

Results and Discussion

In this section, the results are analyzed and discussed to answer the two research questions.

Research Question 1: Do Persian learners of English avoid phrasal verbs?

To answer this research question, results from all three elicitation tests were analyzed. The results of the multiple choice test revealed that out of 660 possible uses of phrasal verbs (15 × 44) and one-word verbs, in 278 (42.12%)

cases, the participants selected phrasal verbs. 338 (51.21%) answers showed the preference of the participants for one-word verbs and the 44 (6.66%) remaining cases comprised wrong responses.

The results of the recall test indicated that out of the total 660 (15 × 44) phrasal and one-word verbs, in 280 (42.42%) cases the participants preferred phrasal verbs. In 341 (51.66%) cases the participants used one-word verbs. The 39 (5.90%) remaining cases included the wrong responses.

Regarding the verb translation, the results showed that out of out of 660 possible (15 × 44) translations, in 283 (42.87%) cases the participants translated the Farsi verbs into a phrasal verb. In 356 (53.93 %) cases the participants translated the Farsi verbs into a one-word verb. The 21 (3.18%) remaining cases were the wrong translations.

The scores of the three tests revealed that out of 1980 possibilities to choose phrasal verbs and one-word verbs, the participants selected phrasal verbs 42.47% of the time and one-word verbs 52.27% of the time, respectively. Evidently, a tendency to opt for multi-purpose one-word verbs with general meanings rather than for special-purpose phrasal verbs with specific, or even idiomatic, meanings was characteristic for the participants. It follows that the intermediate learners avoided using phrasal verbs and preferred the one-word verbs. Thus, Hypothesis 1 of this study is supported.

The L1-L2 structural difference (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Laufer & Eliasson, 1993; Liao & Fukuya 2004) between Persian and English might be a reason for the avoidance of phrasal verbs by the intermediate learners. The phrasal verb structure is a peculiarity of the Germanic languages (Dagut & Laufer, 1985; Darwin & Gary, 1999) which has no parallel in Persian. Furthermore, the combination of a verb and the particle following it never forms a semantic meaning which differs from the usual meanings of its individual parts. Therefore, in comparing the verb system of the two languages, the English phrasal verbs are left over with no Persian equivalents and it is not correct to list the English phrasal verbs such as: get over, look into, stand for and come about as the perfect correspondents to /behbud ya:ftan/ (recover); /bar-resi kardan/ (investigate) ;/nesha:n da:dan/ (represent); and /ettefaq ofta:dan/ (happen) respectively (Fallahi,1991; as cited in Moghimizadeh, 2007). Because

of this L1-L2 difference, the syntactic and semantic functioning of the particles in English phrasal verbs may be confusing to Persian learners of English.

It is equally important to note that in addition to inter-lingual factors, the participants' resistance to phrasal verbs can be explained in terms of inherent complexity of the structure of the English language itself. Due to the difficult nature of phrasal verbs, learners of English as a foreign language normally experience enormous difficulties while attempting to learn these verbs. As a result of these complexities, when speaking or writing in English a Persian learner finds it difficult to understand and produce phrasal verbs and prefers the alternative single word equivalents.

Besides the reasons mentioned above, there exist additional factors for adopting avoidance strategies which are worth considering. As cited by Pazhakh (2006), the fundamental causes of learners' avoidance behaviors can be roughly divided into two categories: objective causes and subjective ones. Objective causes are beyond the control of students and are related to external factors such as difference or similarities between English and Persian, lack of comprehensible input and output, deviations between foreign language competence and ideation proficiency, etc. On the other hand, subjective causes are attributed to internal factors such as the teachers and students' attitudes toward errors, the fear of difficulties, and the playing safe strategy, etc. Since avoidance is widely acknowledged to imply a psychological process, subjective causes assume that learners have the ability to use or partially use the complex and appropriate words and sentences, but they consciously or subconsciously avoid using them (Pazhakh, 2006, p. 8).

Research Question 2: Does their avoidance, if any, have any positive/negative effect on their writing performance?

To respond to this research question and to discover whether any significant difference existed between the writing ability of the two groups, the participants were asked to perform a writing task. As Table 3.2 shows, the results indicated a statistically significant difference between the scores of the two groups. Thus, Hypothesis 2 of this study is rejected.

Table 1: Group Statistics

	N	Mean	SD	SEM
Group A	23	27.3913	1.96536	.40981
Group B	21	30.0238	2.45701	.53616

Table 2: Independent Samples Test

t-test for Equality of Means						
	t	df	Sig.	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	-3.941	42	.000	-2.63251	-3.98054	-1.28447
Equal variances not assumed	-3.901	38.308	.000	-2.63251	-3.99829	-1.26672

To further investigate which group had a better performance in the writing task, each groups' mean score was taken into consideration. As obvious from Table 3.2., the performance of the two groups differed widely. Since Group B's mean is higher than Group A's mean, it can be claimed that the participants in Group B had a better performance than the participants in Group A. Drawing from this finding, it can be concluded that there exists a close relationship between phrasal verb avoidance and the participants' writing ability. In fact, phrasal verb avoidance negatively affected the participants' writing performance. This means that EFL teachers should recognize the role of phrasal verb avoidance while teaching writing.

Conclusions

This study explored phrasal verb avoidance by Iranian EFL learners. It also provided insights into the consequences that phrasal verb avoidance has on the writing ability of the L2 learners, thereby extending previous research which has only focused on establishing the avoidance concept and trying to improve its classification.

The results of the study showed that Persian learners tended to avoid using phrasal verbs. These findings suggest that avoidance or play-it-safe behavior may occur on certain occasions. Since phrasal verbs do not exist in Persian, the learners' avoidance can be explained in terms of L1-L2 difference. Moreover, Persian learners' avoidance might be attributed to the inherent complexity and the difficult nature of phrasal verbs.

In an attempt to find answer to the question related to the impact of phrasal verb avoidance on Persian learners' writing performance, two groups of

learners were compared in their writing performances. The analysis of the data attained through writing performance task indicated a statistically significant difference between the scores of the two groups. The participants in Group B whose scores were higher on elicitation tests outperformed the participants in Group A in the writing task. The claim to be raised from this finding is that phrasal verb avoidance has a negative impact on Persian learners' writing performance.

Pedagogical Implications

Although the current study is only a preliminary step towards untangling the mysteries of phrasal verb avoidance phenomenon, it recommends several implications as follows:

The findings of this research offer insights to language teachers. It is very worthwhile for teachers to realize the role of avoidance strategy in the improvement of EFL learners especially while teaching writing. It is hoped that the findings of this research can provide teachers with a framework that helps them guide learners towards overcoming the problem of phrasal verb avoidance. Since phrasal verbs are confusing to Persian learners especially at the level of production, it would be advisable for teachers and course designers do the followings in the process of phrasal verb instruction:

- In order to help the learners expand their knowledge of phrasal verbs, these verbs should be introduced at every opportunity in an EFL classroom.
- Teachers should be conscious of the fact that apart from resolving meaning and grammar problems, they should develop in their students the ability to comprehend phrasal verbs as they are used in authentic and meaningful activities.
- To reduce the problem of learning phrasal verbs, teachers need to provide teaching materials which contain sufficient colloquial conversations. Making use of authentic materials and literary texts which present these verbs in natural context would be beneficial.
- It is often claimed that phrasal verbs are used in informal register and specific written genres more than others like fiction and conversations.

Learners should appreciate that it is possible to use phrasal verbs in formal contexts as well. Therefore, teachers should gear writing assignments towards certain tasks that promote usage and production of phrasal verbs.

The findings of this research offer insights to textbook writers and test developers. Instead of traditional grammar lessons, curriculum developers and textbook writers may need to design textbooks or teaching materials with more informal conversations to provide practices on phrasal verbs. If possible, besides studying textbooks, students should be required to be involved in some actual communicative situations.

Test developers would utilize the findings of this research since by identifying the phrasal verbs which Persian EFL learners tend to avoid, they may focus on these verbs in evaluation. Moreover, it would be essential to include an assessment of the learners' ability to use phrasal verbs appropriately. Intermediate foreign language learners, including the subjects in the present study, are generally assessed as intermediate based primarily on their knowledge of syntax and general vocabulary. More weight may need to be put on the learners' ability to use formulaic sequences including phrasal verbs to arrive at a more accurate evaluation of the learners' proficiency level.

Limitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations that need to be addressed regarding the present study. The first limitation is related to the sample size. Due to curriculum and administrative limitations, convenience sampling procedures which involve choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents were applied in drawing sample for the study. The findings of this investigation are based on the performance of 44 participants who took part in this study and thus cannot be safely extrapolated onto the larger body of EFL learners until further research duplicating this study.

The second limitation has to do with the small numbers of English phrasal verbs used in the tests. As a result, the findings of the study cannot be generalized to all English phrasal verbs of this kind. In order to confirm the tendencies found in this study, further research on larger numbers of phrasal verbs with larger numbers of research participants over a longer period of time

is recommended. Apart from all these weaknesses, as this is an initial study on impact of phrasal verb avoidance on the writing ability of Persian learners, more research on this issue is needed.

Suggestions for Further Research

Acknowledging some limitations of the present study, certain suggestions can be made for further research. In the present study the participants were all intermediate learners. Another question which merits more investigation is whether or not different results would be obtained with beginner and advanced learners. Moreover, it would be advisable to compare the performance of the participants with different proficiency levels. Further, in this study gender was not taken into consideration as a variable, which can be a good topic for future research

It has been claimed that exposure to the L2 environment may play an important role in the avoidance or non-avoidance of phrasal verbs (Liao & Fukuya, 2004). Accordingly, it would be worthwhile to look into phrasal verb avoidance by comparing ESL and EFL learners at different levels of English proficiency.

When studying the avoidance phenomenon, attention needs to be paid to all those features which may interact with this factor in complex ways. The need for further research in this area goes without saying. Especially useful would be replication and expansion of the present study to include affective variables such as risk-taking, about which relatively little is known concerning second language learners. Further, final conclusions cannot be drawn only from quantitative measurement. More qualitative analyses of phrasal verb avoidance are still needed and are certain to provide new insightful evidence on this issue.

And finally, here we investigated the effect of phrasal verb avoidance only on one skill known as writing, while further research can open new avenues of research into other areas such as listening, reading, speaking and so forth.

References

Allan, D. (2004). *Oxford placement test*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Biber, D., Johansson, S., Leech, G., Conrad, S., & Finegan, E. (1999). *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. London: Longman.
- Bley-Vroman, R. & Houn, C. (1988). Why do Chinese use few relative clauses in English? *University of Hawai'i Working Papers in ESL* 7, 93-98.
- Dagut, M., & Laufer, B. (1985). Avoidance of phrasal verbs: A case for contrastive analysis. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 7, 73-80.
- Darwin, C., & Gray, L. (1999). Going after the phrasal verb: An alternative approach to classification. *TESOL Quarterly*, 33, 65-83.
- Ellis, R. (1986). *Understanding second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Errey, M. (2007). *1000 phrasal verbs in context*. Retrieved from http://www.teflgames.com/phrasal_verbs.html
- Grobe, C. (1981). Syntactic maturity, mechanics, and vocabulary as predictors of quality ratings. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 15, 75-85.
- Hulstijn, J. H., & Marchena, E. (1989). Avoidance: Grammatical or semantic causes? *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 11, 241-255.
- Kleinmann, H. H. (1977). Avoidance behavior in adult second language acquisition. *Language Learning*, 27, 93-107.
- Laufer, B., & Eliasson, S. (1993). What causes avoidance in L2 learning: L1-L2 difference, L1-L2 similarity, or L2 complexity? *Studies in Second Language*, 15, 35-48.
- Laufer, B., & Nation, P. (1995). Vocabulary size and use: lexical richness in L2 written production. *Applied Linguistics* 16, 307-322
- Laufer, B. (1997). *What's in a word that makes it hard or easy: Some intralexical factors that affect the learning of words*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lee, S. H. (2003). ESL learners' vocabulary use in writing and the effects of explicit vocabulary instruction. *System*, 31, 537-561.
- Leki, I., & Carson, J. (1994). Students' perceptions of EAP writing instructions and writing needs across the disciplines. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29, 81-101.
- Li, J. (1996). Underproduction does not necessarily mean avoidance: Investigation of underproduction using Chinese ESL learners. In L. F. Bouton (Ed.), *Pragmatics and language learning*, 7, 171-187.
- Liao, Y., & Fukuya, Y. J. (2004). Avoidance of phrasal verbs: the case of Chinese learners of English. *Language Learning*, 54, 193-226.
- Mehrpooya, A. (2002). *A study of the use of avoidance strategy by EFL learners in production of idioms*. M.A thesis: Allameh Tabatabai University.

- Moghimizade, R. P. (2007). Teaching Vocabulary in an EFL Environment: Problems and Prospects. *Southern Thailand English Language Teaching/Cultural Change Conference*.
- Moghimizade, R. P. (2008). *The Study of Syntactic Avoidance on the Written Production of Persian University Students Majoring in Teaching English as a Foreign Language*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University Sains Malaysia. Malaysia.
- Muncie, J. (2002). Process writing and vocabulary development: comparing lexical frequent profiles across drafts. *System* 30, 225–235.
- Nation, P. (2001). *Learning vocabulary in another language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pazhakh, A. (2006). An investigation on Iranian EFL learners' application of avoidance strategies in their writings. *Iranian Journal of Language Studies*. 1(1), 1-12.
- Polio, C., & Glew, M. (1996). ESL Writing Assessment Prompts: How Students Choose. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 5.1, 35-49.
- Rudzka-Ostyn, B. (2003). *Word power: phrasal verbs and compounds- A cognitive approach*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Schachter, J. (1974). An error in error analysis. *Language Learning*, 24, 205-214.
- Weigle . S.C. (2004). Integrating reading and writing in a competency test for non-native speakers of English. *Assessing Writing*, 9, 27-55

APPENDIX A: OPT Test

© Dave Allan 2004

Oxford Placement Test 1

Grammar Test PART 1

Name
Total Grammar / 100
Grand Total / 100

Look at these examples. The correct answer is ticked.

- a In warm climates people like likes are liking sitting outside in the sun.
- b If it is very hot, they sit at in under the shade.

Now the test will begin. Tick the correct answers.

- | | |
|--|----------|
| 1 Water <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is to boil <input type="checkbox"/> is boiling <input type="checkbox"/> boils at a temperature of 100°C. | 1 _____ |
| 2 In some countries <input type="checkbox"/> there is <input type="checkbox"/> is <input type="checkbox"/> it is very hot all the time. | 2 _____ |
| 3 In cold countries people wear thick clothes <input type="checkbox"/> for keeping <input type="checkbox"/> to keep <input type="checkbox"/> for to keep warm. | 3 _____ |
| 4 In England people are always talking about <input type="checkbox"/> a weather <input type="checkbox"/> the weather <input type="checkbox"/> weather. | 4 _____ |
| 5 In some places <input type="checkbox"/> it rains <input type="checkbox"/> there rains <input type="checkbox"/> it raining almost every day. | 5 _____ |
| 6 In deserts there isn't <input type="checkbox"/> the <input type="checkbox"/> some <input type="checkbox"/> any grass. | 6 _____ |
| 7 Places near the Equator have <input type="checkbox"/> a warm <input type="checkbox"/> the warm <input type="checkbox"/> warm weather even in the cold season. | 7 _____ |
| 8 In England <input type="checkbox"/> coldest <input type="checkbox"/> the coldest <input type="checkbox"/> colder time of year is usually from December to February. | 8 _____ |
| 9 <input type="checkbox"/> The most <input type="checkbox"/> Most of <input type="checkbox"/> Most people don't know what it's really like in other countries. | 9 _____ |
| 10 Very <input type="checkbox"/> less <input type="checkbox"/> little <input type="checkbox"/> few people can travel abroad. | 10 _____ |
| 11 Mohammed Ali <input type="checkbox"/> has won <input type="checkbox"/> won <input type="checkbox"/> is winning his first world title fight in 1960. | 11 _____ |
| 12 After he <input type="checkbox"/> had won <input type="checkbox"/> have won <input type="checkbox"/> was winning an Olympic gold medal he became a professional boxer. | 12 _____ |
| 13 His religious beliefs <input type="checkbox"/> have made him <input type="checkbox"/> made him to <input type="checkbox"/> made him change his name when he became champion. | 13 _____ |
| 14 If he <input type="checkbox"/> has <input type="checkbox"/> would have <input type="checkbox"/> had lost his first fight with Sonny Liston, no one would have been surprised. | 14 _____ |
| 15 He has travelled a lot <input type="checkbox"/> both <input type="checkbox"/> and <input type="checkbox"/> or as a boxer and as a world-famous personality. | 15 _____ |

subtotal /15

- 16 He is very well known **all in** **all over** **in all** the world.
- 17 Many people **is believing** **are believing** **believe** he was the greatest boxer of all time.
- 18 To be the best **from** **in** **of** the world is not easy.
- 19 Like any top sportsman Ali **had to** **must** **should** train very hard.
- 20 Such is his fame that people **would** **will** **did** always remember him as a champion.

The history of **aeroplane** **the aeroplane** **an aeroplane** is quite a **a quite** **quite** short one. For many centuries men **are trying** **try** **had tried** to fly, but with **little** **few** **a little** success. In the 19th century a few people succeeded **to fly** **in flying** **into flying** in balloons. But it wasn't until the beginning of the **this** **next** **last** century that anybody **were** **is** **was** able to fly in a machine **who** **which** **what** was heavier than air, in other words, in **who** **which** **what** we now call a 'plane'. The first people to achieve 'powered flight' were the Wright brothers. **His** **Their** **Theirs** was the machine which was the forerunner of the jumbo jets that are **such** **such a** **so** common sight today. They **could** **should** **couldn't** hardly have imagined that in 1969, **not much** **not many** **no much** more than half a century later, a man **will be** **had been** **would be** walking on the moon. Already **a man** **man** **the man** is taking the first steps towards the stars. Space satellites have now existed **since** **during** **for** around half a century and we are dependent **from** **of** **on** them for all kinds of **informations** **information** **an information**. Not only **are they** **they are** **there are** being used for scientific research in space, but also to see what kind of weather **is coming** **comes** **coming**. By 2008 there **would** **must** **will** have been satellites in space for fifty years and the 'space superpowers' will be **having** **making** **letting** massive space stations built. When these **will be** **are** **will have been** completed it will be the first time **when** **where** **that** astronauts will be able to work in space in large numbers. **Apart** **For** **Except** all that, in many ways the most remarkable flight **of** **above** **at** all was **it** **that** **that one** of the flying bicycle, which the world saw on television, **flying** **to fly** **fly** across the Channel from England to France, with nothing **apart** **but** **than** a man to power it. As the bicycle-flyer said, 'It's the first time **I realize** **I've realized** **I am realizing** what hard work it is to be a bird!'

- 16 _____
- 17 _____
- 18 _____
- 19 _____
- 20 _____
- 21 _____
- 22 _____
- 23 _____
- 24 _____
- 25 _____
- 26 _____
- 27 _____
- 28 _____
- 29 _____
- 30 _____
- 31 _____
- 32 _____
- 33 _____
- 34 _____
- 35 _____
- 36 _____
- 37 _____
- 38 _____
- 39 _____
- 40 _____
- 41 _____
- 42 _____
- 43 _____
- 44 _____
- 45 _____
- 46 _____
- 47 _____
- 48 _____
- 49 _____
- 50 _____

subtotal /35

Grammar Test PART 2

- 51 Many teachers **say to say tell** their students should learn a foreign language. 51 _____
- 52 Learning a second language is not the same **as like than** learning a first language. 52 _____
- 53 It takes **long time long a long time** to learn any language. 53 _____
- 54 It is said that Chinese is perhaps the world's **harder hardest more hard** language to master. 54 _____
- 55 English is quite difficult because of all the exceptions **who which what** have to be learnt. 55 _____
- 56 You can learn the basic structures of a language quite quickly, but only if you **are wanting will to are willing to** make an effort. 56 _____
- 57 A lot of people aren't used **to the study to study to studying** grammar in their own language. 57 _____
- 58 Many adult students of English wish they **would start would have started had started** their language studies earlier. 58 _____
- 59 In some countries students have to spend a lot of time working **on by in** their own. 59 _____
- 60 There aren't **no any some** easy ways of learning a foreign language in your own country. 60 _____
- 61 Some people try to improve their English by **hearing listening listening to** the BBC World Service. 61 _____
- 62 **Live Life Living** with a foreign family can be a good way to learn a language. 62 _____
- 63 It's no use **to try trying in trying** to learn a language just by studying a dictionary. 63 _____
- 64 Many students of English **would rather not would rather prefer not would rather not to** take tests. 64 _____
- 65 Some people think it's time we all **learn should learn learnt** a single international language. 65 _____
- Charles Walker is a teacher at a comprehensive school in Norwich. He **has joined joined joins** the staff of the school in 1998 and **has been working worked works** there ever since. 66 _____
- Before **move to move moving** to Norwich, he taught in Italy and in Wales, 67 _____
- and before that he **has been was was being** a student at Cambridge 68 _____
- University. So far he **isn't wasn't hasn't been** in Norwich for as long 69 _____
- as he was in Wales, but he likes the city a lot and **should would could** 70 _____
- like to stay there for at least another two years, or, **how which as** he 71 _____
- puts it, until his two children **have will have will be** grown up a bit. 72 _____
- He met his wife, Kate, in 1992 while he **was to live was living had been living** 73 _____
- abroad for a while, and they got married in 1996. 74 _____
- Their two children, Mark and Susan, **are were have been** both born in Norwich. 75 _____

subtotal /25

The Walkers' boy, **who which he** is five, has just started at school, but **his their her** sister **shall stay stays will be staying** at home for another couple of years, because she is nearly two years **younger more young the younger** than him. Charles and Kate Walker **are used use used** to live in the country, but now that they have children, they **have moved move moved** into the city. Charles wanted a house **next near close** the school **in order for to** get to work easily. Unfortunately **the a that** one the two of them really wanted was too expensive, so they **must should had to** buy one a bit further away. By the time the children **go will go will have gone** to secondary school, **that which what** Charles and Kate hope will be in Norwich, the Walkers **will have been have been will be** living there for at least fifteen years. They can't be sure if they **stay do stay will stay**, but if they **don't didn't won't**, their friends won't be too surprised.

76 _____
77 _____
78 _____
79 _____
80 _____
81 _____
82 _____
83 _____
84 _____
85 _____
86 _____
87 _____
88 _____
89 _____
90 _____

Look at the following examples of question tags in English. The correct form of the tag is ticked.

- a He's getting the 9.15 train, **isn't he** ~~hasn't he~~ ~~wasn't he~~ ?
- b She works in a library, ~~isn't she~~ **doesn't she** ~~doesn't he~~ ?
- c Tom didn't tell you, ~~hasn't he~~ ~~didn't he~~ ~~did he~~ ?
- d Someone's forgotten to switch off the gas, ~~didn't one~~ ~~didn't they~~ **haven't they** ?

Now tick the correct question tag in the following 10 items:

- 91 John's coming to see you, ~~hasn't he~~ ~~wasn't he~~ **isn't he** ?
- 92 It's been a long time since you've seen him, ~~hasn't it~~ ~~isn't it~~ **haven't you** ?
- 93 He's due to arrive tomorrow, ~~won't he~~ ~~isn't he~~ **will he** ?
- 94 He won't be getting in till about 10.30, ~~isn't he~~ ~~is he~~ **will he** ?
- 95 You met him while you were on holiday, ~~didn't you~~ ~~weren't you~~ **haven't you** ?
- 96 I think I'm expected to pick him up, ~~aren't I~~ ~~don't I~~ **are you** ?
- 97 No doubt you'd rather he stayed in England now, ~~didn't you~~ ~~wouldn't you~~ **shouldn't you** ?
- 98 Nobody else has been told he's coming, ~~is he~~ ~~has he~~ **have they** ?
- 99 We'd better not stay up too late tonight, ~~didn't we~~ ~~have we~~ **had we** ?
- 100 I suppose it's time we called it a day, ~~didn't we~~ ~~isn't it~~ **don't** ?

91 _____
92 _____
93 _____
94 _____
95 _____
96 _____
97 _____
98 _____
99 _____
100 _____

subtotal /25

APPENDIX B

Table 3: Pairs of Phrasal and One-word Verbs Used in the Study with Persian EFL Learners

Phrasal Verb (PV)	PV categorization	One-word verb	Persian equivalent
Let down	Figurative	Disappoint	نا امید کردن
Run into	Figurative	Meet	ملاقات کردن
Call off	Figurative	Cancel	لغو شدن
grow apart	Figurative	Separate	جدا شدن
show up	Figurative	Appear	حضور یافتن
Go off	Figurative	Explode	منفجر شدن
Made up	Figurative	Invent	از خود در آوردن
Give up	Figurative	Stop	ترک کردن
Bring up	Figurative	Raise	بار آوردن
Come back	Literal	Return	برگشتن
Put up with	Figurative	Bear	تحمل کردن
Find out	Literal	Discover	متوجه شدن
Hold on	Figurative	Wait	صبر کردن
Take away	Literal	Remove	برداشتن
Come in	Literal	Enter	وارد شدن

APPENDIX C

Test Sentences

After each sentence the following information is added in parentheses: in order of their appearance, the four alternative verbs presented in the multiple-choice test; following the slash, the Persian equivalent presented in the translation test (in infinitival form).

1. Jason felt terrible after he failed his exam. He said he'd _____ his family, his teachers and all the friends who'd helped him study.

(discard, disappoint, let down, carry on / نا امید کردن)

2. Today I _____ a cousin I hadn't seen for years. It was good to see each other after such a long time.

(went over, ran into, met, applauded / ملاقات کردن)

3. The reception in the garden was _____ because of a thunderstorm.

(canceled, went off, called off, encountered / لغو شدن)

4. Jenny and Kate used to be close friends, but they've _____ over the years. They hardly ever see each other these days.

(grown apart, separated, gone without, secluded / جدا شدن)

5. Many people _____ at the product launch because of the free drinks.

(claimed, appeared, showed up, looked up / حضور یافتن)

6. Fortunately, there weren't that many people in the building when the bomb _____.

(went off, tuned in, exploded, collapsed / منفجر شدن)

7. Alex was late for school, so he _____ a story about traffic jam.

(invented, made up, followed, looked over / از خود در آوردن)

8. When you are a chain-smoker it is incredibly difficult to _____ smoking.

(eliminate, stop, fall down, give up / ترک کردن)

9. Parents should do their best to _____ their children to be honest.

(dismiss, raise, bring up, come across / بار آوردن)

10. We are having a great time in France. I hope we can _____ again next year.

(take up, come back, return, leave / برگشتن)

11. We can't _____ the heat any longer. We're going to buy an air conditioner.

(bear, get over, bewilder, put up with / تحمل کردن)

12. Mr. Jones wanted to catch the train to London. He was late and he didn't know which platform the London train left from. He _____ which platform by asking a ticket collector.

(abandoned, discovered, find out, tried out / متوجه شدن)

13. We can't _____ much longer. If we don't get the deal soon, we will give up.

(hold on, starve, wait, go off / صبر کردن)

14. The waiters _____ the dirty dishes and wiped down the table before serving and dessert and coffee.

(removed, drop in, took away, mix / برداشتن)

15. The children _____ the bar from the back door.

(appeared, entered, put up, came in / وارد شدن)

APPENDIX D

Recall Test (Part I)

DIRECTIONS: Try to memorize the following sentences in 10 minutes. You will be tested later to check how much you have remembered.

1. Kim complained that no one invited him to the party and that he felt disappointed.
2. Jenny and Kate used to be close friends, but they've grown apart over the years. They hardly ever see each other these days.
3. Alex was late for school, so he made up a story about traffic jam.
4. Parents should do their best to bring up their children to be honest.
5. Many accidents are caused by carelessness.
6. Why is Sue still angry with John? I thought they'd talked things over and clear up their misunderstanding.
7. We can't hold on much longer. If we don't get the deal soon, we will give up.
8. You should jot down your ideas to make sure you don't forget them.
9. At the beginning of the class, the instructor distributed the quizzes among the students.
10. I wish I'd tried out this calculator before I bought it. It doesn't seem to be working right.

11. We'll stop the meeting now and carry on after lunch.
12. We can't put up with the heat any longer. We're going to buy an air conditioner.
13. I can't tolerate my roommate's lack of responsibility. He never pays his share of the rent on time.
14. When you are a chain-smoker it is incredibly difficult to give up smoking.
15. Many people showed up at the product launch because of the free drinks.
16. The reception in the garden was called off because of a thunderstorm.
17. Don't get so excited. Just relax and tell us what happened.
18. Today I ran into a cousin I hadn't seen for years. It was good to see each other after such a long time.
19. Fortunately, there weren't that many people in the building when the bomb went off.
20. Jason felt terrible after he failed his exam. He said he'd let down his family, his teachers and all the friends who'd helped him study.

Recall Test (Part II)

DIRECTIONS: Question 1-15 are incomplete sentences. Please read them carefully. Then, on your answer sheet, find the number of the question and try to fill in the verbs according to what you remember.

1. Jenny and Kate used to be close friends, but they've _____ over the years. They hardly ever see each other these days.
2. Alex was late for school, so he _____ a story about traffic jam.
3. Parents should do their best to _____ their children to be honest.
4. Why is Sue still angry with John? I thought they'd talked things over and _____ their misunderstanding.
5. We can't _____ much longer. If we don't get the deal soon, we will give up.
6. You should _____ your ideas to make sure you don't forget them.
7. I wish I'd _____ this calculator before I bought it. It doesn't seem to be working right.
8. We'll stop the meeting now and _____ after lunch.
9. We can't _____ the heat any longer. We're going to buy an air conditioner.

10. When you are a chain-smoker it is incredibly difficult to _____ smoking.
11. Many people showed up at the product launch because of the free drinks.
12. The reception in the garden was _____ because of a thunderstorm.
13. Today I _____ a cousin I hadn't seen for years. It was good to see each other after such a long time.
14. Fortunately, there weren't that many people in the building when the bomb _____.
15. Jason felt terrible after he failed his exam. He said he'd _____ his family, his teachers and all the friends who'd helped him study.

Recall Test (Answer Sheet)

DIRECTIONS: Please read the given directions for the previous section. Read the questions carefully. Then, find the number of question in this answer sheet and fill in the space. As you can see, two response columns are given. Write the exact original words you remember in the left-hand column (Column A). If you are not able to remember the original words, fill in another appropriate verb in the right-hand column (Column B).

Column A		Column B	
1.	1.		
2.	2.		
3.	3.		
4.	4.		
5.	5.		
6.	6.		
7.	7.		
8.	8.		
9.	9.		
10.	10.		
11.	11.		
12.	12.		
13.	13.		
14.	14.		
15.	15.		

APPENDIX E

Table 4: Essay Scoring Criteria, Adapted from S.C Weigle (2004), *Assessing Writing*, 9 (27-55)

Rhetoric: Content	Rhetoric: Organization	Language: Accuracy	Language: Range and complexity
9-10	9-10	9-10	9-10
The treatment of the assignment completely fulfills the task expectations and the topic is addressed.	Clear and Appropriate organization plan.	The essay is clearly written with few errors; errors do not interfere with comprehension	The essay uses a variety of sentence types accurately.
Fully developed range evidence for generalizations and supporting ideas is provided in a relevant and credible way.	Effective introduction and conclusion.	Includes consistently accurate word forms and verb tenses.	Uses a wide range of academic vocabulary.
Uses ideas from source text well to support thesis.	Connections between and within paragraphs are made through effective and varied use of transition and other cohesive devices.	Word choices are accurate and appropriate.	Source text language is used sparingly and accurately incorporated into writer's own words.
7-8	7-8	7-8	7-8
The treatment of the assignment fulfills the task expectations completely and the topic is addressed clearly.	Clear organization plan	The essay is clearly written but contains some errors which do not interfere with comprehension.	The essay uses a variety of sentence types.
Evidence for generalizations and supporting ideas is provided in a relevant and credible way.	Satisfactory introduction and conclusion	The essay may contain some errors in word choice, word form, verb tenses, and comprehension.	Good range of vocabulary used with at most a few lapses in register.
Ideas from source text used to support thesis.	Satisfactory connections between and within paragraphs using transitions and other cohesive devices.	-----	Some language from the source text may be present but is generally well incorporated into writer's own words.
5-6	5-6	5-6	5-6
The treatment of the assignment minimally fulfills the task expectations; some of the task may be slighted.	Adequate but simplistic organizational plan	Is generally comprehensible but contains some errors that distract the reader; at most a few errors interfere with comprehension.	Somewhat limited range of sentence types; may avoid complex structures.
Some evidence for generalizations and supporting ideas is provided	Introduction and conclusion present but may be brief.	The essay may contain some errors in word choice, word form, verb tenses, and comprehension.	Somewhat limited range of vocabulary

Rhetoric: Content	Rhetoric: Organization	Language: Accuracy	Language: Range and complexity
Ideas from source text are included but may not be explicitly acknowledged as such.	Connections between and within paragraphs occasionally missing	-----	May include extensive language from source texts with an attempt to incorporate text own language
3-4	3-4	3-4	3-4
The treatment of the assignment only partially fulfills the task expectations and the topic is not always addressed clearly.	Organization plan hard to follow	Contain many errors; some errors may interfere with comprehension.	Uses a limited number of sentence types.
Evidence for generalizations limited, and supporting ideas is insufficient and irrelevant.	Introduction and conclusion may be missing or inadequate.	Includes many errors in word choice, word form, verb tenses, and complementation.	-----
May not include ideas from source text, or may consist primarily of ideas from source text without	Connections between and within paragraphs frequently missing	-----	Extensive use of source text language with little integration with writer's words.
1-2	1-2	1-2	1-2
The treatment of the assignment fails to fulfill the task expectations and the paper lacks writing.	No apparent organization plan	Contain numerous errors that interfere with comprehension	Use simplistic and repetitive vocabulary that may not be appropriate for academic focus.
Evidence for generalizations and supporting ideas is insufficient and irrelevant.	Introduction and conclusion missing or clearly inappropriate.	Includes many errors in word choice, word form, verb tenses, and complementation.	Does not vary sentence types sufficiently.
-----	Few connections between and within paragraphs	-----	May rely almost exclusively on source text language

Developing an ELT Context-Specific Teacher Efficacy Instrument

Kobra Tavassoli
Supervisor: Ramin Akbari, PhD
Tarbiat Modares University

PhD Dissertation Abstract

Over the years, teacher efficacy has received great attention from different scholars and researchers in mainstream education due to its influence on students' learning, and different teacher efficacy instruments have been developed to measure this construct. Despite its importance, different problems are associated with the available teacher efficacy instruments, the most important of which is the generality of the statements/items in such instruments. To avoid these problems, this study aimed at developing a new teacher efficacy instrument whose items were specific to different contexts in ELT classes. Moreover, it aimed to find out possible relationships among ELT teacher efficacy and three other teacher variables – burnout, teaching style, and emotional intelligence – as well as to document probable differences among the components of ELT teacher efficacy with respect to teachers' gender, major, degree, and teaching experience. To this end, the following steps were taken. 1) Based on the information obtained from the literature and the researcher's conceptualization of a typical ELT class, a tentative theoretical framework of ELT teacher efficacy was developed. 2) Eighteen heterogeneous English language teachers' classes were observed and they were interviewed to see how efficacious they were. 3) Thirteen English language students were interviewed to discover who they considered an optimal English language teacher. 4) Four experts in teacher education were interviewed to understand their opinions about ELT teacher efficacy. 5) The tentative theoretical framework was crosschecked with the results obtained from observations and interviews. 6) A likert-scale ELT context-specific teacher efficacy instrument with scenario-based items was developed based on the theoretical framework; it was reviewed, piloted with 42 English language teachers, and revised. 7) The newly-developed ELT context-specific teacher efficacy instrument, along with instruments on burnout, teaching style, and

emotional intelligence were administered to 206 heterogeneous English language teachers. To answer the research questions of this study, different data analysis techniques were used. The results of factor analysis run on the newly-developed teacher efficacy instrument led to the revision of the tentative components of ELT context-specific teacher efficacy. Moreover, low significant correlations were observed among teachers' efficacy, burnout, teaching style, and emotional intelligence on the one hand, and a number of significant differences were seen in teachers' performance on the ELT context-specific teacher efficacy instrument with respect to their gender, major, degree, and teaching experience on the other hand.

An Ethnographic Study of English Teachers' Institutional Identity in High Schools, Language Institutes, and Universities

Hadi Azimi

Supervisor: Reza Ghafar Samar, PhD

Advisor 1: Gholam Reza Kiany, PhD

Advisor 2: Ramin AKbari, PhD

Tarbiat Modares University

PhD Dissertation Abstract

Teachers' inner qualities have recently attracted researchers in the area of teacher education. By analyzing teachers' characteristics, researchers look for finding means through which they can improve both teachers' professional conditions in particular and the educational states of affair in general. One of these means is different types of identity teachers may develop in their profession.

Among various variables affecting teachers' professional identity is the institutions they serve; the institutions that make them develop a special type of teacher identity named "institutional identity". This is a significant type of identity in teacher education because it raises key questions like: do teachers display different identities in different institutions? This question constitutes the focal point of discussion in this study.

Meanwhile, one is reminded that institutions differ in a variety of dimensions including their social status. The question is how different social status of institutions, say low and high social status, affect a teacher's perception and realization of his/her professional identity. To this question gender should be added as well, since gender can always be a determining variable in humanities. This study is an attempt to fill the research gap by answering the question of the effects of social status and gender on teachers' institutional identity in three different institutions where English teaching is prevalent, i.e. high schools, language institutes, and universities.

In so doing, ethnography was selected as the design. 12 male and female English teachers teaching at different high schools, language institutes, and universities with different social status were selected for data collection. Three major instruments, namely semi-standard interviews, focus group technique, and (non-)participant observation were implemented for data collection. The recorded data were then transcribed and merged with the notes taken. Then, making use of “content analysis”, patterns were extracted which served as the materials to define and describe the institutional identity of teachers in these three institutions.

The patterns extracted revealed the similarities and differences among the institutional identities of teachers regarding their related institutions. Description of each type of institutional identity in details, statement of the extracted similarities and differences, and explanations of the motives and consequences are among the outcomes of this study. The institutional identity questionnaire developed based on the data is another significant result of this study. According to findings, the three institutions differ in terms of the nine institutional identity factors. Also, male and female teachers in each institution type displayed different institutional identity states. Moreover, high and low status institutions found to hold diverse institutional identity qualities. The outcomes provide researchers in the realm of teacher education with a qualitative picture of teachers in various institutions where language is taught.

Key Words: Institutional Identity; English Teachers; Social Status; Gender; High Schools; Language Institutes

The power of critical literacy in mentoring: Iranian readers of English literature

Maryam Hesabi,
Supervisor: Dr. Ghahremani Ghajar
Alzahra University

MA Thesis Abstract

This study is an attempt to describe the power of natural mentoring in a critical English reading course. In response to many years of a one-way teacher oriented teaching approach, there have been some attempts in countries outside Iran to identify young learners as resourceful learning material themselves. Over a period of two semesters, the researchers as teacher-researcher and co-teacher full-time participant observer explore the following: (a) diverse ways for inviting twenty nine English Literature majors to voice their own spontaneous learning challenges in reading English literature through mentorship; (b) characteristics of a popular mentor in critical reading practice and the ways in which a mentor may share her voice with mentees; (c) how teachers create space for critical readers to position themselves as language and reading mentors and mentees interchangeably. For this purpose a qualitative case-study methodology is conducted at Alzahra University for an in-depth understanding of the language and act of reading when Iranian women English literature readers participate in a mentorship interaction. The findings indicated that the mentors/mentees and the teacher create a subtle relationship throughout the semesters by sharing how to read and search for literary texts; how to review literary texts after hearing each other's writing styles; how to voice their critiques with courage; how to overcome competition; and how to invite quiet members to their circles.

The Effect of Wikis' Collaborative Environment on the Improvement of Iranian EFL Learners' Writing Skill

Zahra Arabsarhangi

Advisor: Dr. Roya Khoii

Reader: Dr. Roxana Aminzadeh

Islamic Azad University, North Tehran Branch

MA Thesis Abstract

The present study was conducted to demonstrate the effect of wikis' collaborative environment on the improvement of Iranian EFL learners' writing skill. Wiki, Hawaiian word for quick, is a series of interlinked collaborative web pages that can be edited and added to by a group of learners. Nowadays, the availability of these online environments for practicing writing and delivering the materials in a web-based format has turned them into useful tools for teaching writing. In addition, the time demanding nature of writing and classroom time limitations have led some teachers to use these ideal platforms to boost their students' motivation to learn to write. The participants of this study consisted of 60 female elementary level students chosen from among 100 students studying English at Sherafat Junior High School in Tehran. After matching their scores, the students were later divided into three homogenous groups, one control and two experimental groups, each consisting of 20 students. Collaboration was the key concept in both experimental groups where the members wrote through collaborative work and were corrected by their peers. While the activities in one of the experimental groups were done in the wiki environment, those in the other experimental group were performed in the class following the norms of any collaboration-oriented class. The students in the control group wrote individually and were corrected by the teacher. Narrative writing on the basis of the writing process method was taught from the book *writing tutor* in all the three groups, and the same teacher taught them. After the 2-month treatment period, the same topic was given to all the participants to write a composition each on their own. It was concluded that there was a significant difference among the mean scores of the three groups and the students in the wiki group outperformed those in the

other groups. So, the null hypothesis was rejected. Although collaboration was the key element in the superiority of the two experimental groups over the control group in terms of writing, collaborative activities in a technology-oriented context employing the use of wiki pages contributed to greater progress in the acquisition of the writing skill and produced better student writers.

The Effect of Training in Reading Self-assessment on EFL Learners' Reading Comprehension, Reading Motivation and Reading Strategies Awareness

Mahnoosh Hamavandi
Supervisor: Dr. Kiany
Advisor: Dr. Akbari
Tarbiat Modares University

MA Thesis Abstract

Due to the growing focus on learner independence and autonomy, self-assessment has received considerable attention in recent years. Nevertheless, this idea is novel to most English language teachers and students in Iran where traditional assessment is still dominant. This study explored the effect of self-assessment on EFL learners' English reading comprehension, reading strategy awareness, and reading motivation. 192 advanced EFL learners who were all females studying in Iran Language Institute participated in this experimental study. 95 participants were in the treatment group, and 97 participants were in the control group. All participants completed the Survey of Reading Strategy (SORS), English Reading Motivation Questionnaire (ERMQ) and the Nelson-Denny Reading test (NDRT) during the second week of the semester (i.e., pretest) and during the final week of the semester (i.e., posttest). Participants in the treatment group also completed weekly Self-Assessment Questionnaires and kept reading journals throughout the semester for 10 weeks. Step-wise multiple regression independent and matched t-tests were used to analyze the predictive power of the SORS and the ERMQ subscales with respect to reading comprehension and to find the difference between the two groups in terms of their reading motivation, reading comprehension and reading strategies awareness. Results from the three post measurements indicated that students in the experimental group showed statistically significant gains on three post measurements as compared with the control group. In addition, the results indicated that among the three sub-scales of reading motivation questionnaire (ERMQ), reading self-efficacy was the only significant predictor of reading

comprehension. Likewise, global reading strategy which was a subscale of survey of reading strategies (SORS) turned out to be the single predictor of reading comprehension. In sum, the results of this study suggest that self-assessment should be integrated into regular EFL reading classes in order to help EFL learners become independent readers and ultimately lifelong readers. A detailed interpretation of these results as well as implications for foreign language education is provided.

Key Words: self-assessment, reading motivation, reading comprehension, reading strategies awareness

The Iranian English Language Learners' Perceived Social Self-Efficacy and their Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety

Mohammad Amerian
Supervisor: Dr. Hadi Frajami
University of Semnan

M.A. Thesis Abstract¹

In foreign language learning and education, social psychological variables are of utmost importance. These variables can highly affect the learners' performance and their achievement level, especially when they learn in a community of peers. One of the most influential psycho-social domains in language pedagogy is *Perceived Social Self-Efficacy*; "an individual's confidence in his/her ability to engage in the social interactional tasks necessary to initiate and maintain interpersonal relationships" (Smith and Betz, 2000). This thesis has been conducted to investigate the relationship between the perceived social self-efficacy of Iranian students of English and their foreign language classroom anxiety. The needed data were gathered by two standard questionnaires: Smith and Betz's (2000) 25-item Scale of Perceived Social Self-Efficacy (SPSSE) with reliability of .95 and in the areas of "making friends", "pursuing romantic relationships", "social assertiveness", "performance in public situations", "groups or parties", and "giving or receiving help", and Horwitz et al.'s (1986) 33-item Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) with reliability of .83 and subscales of "communication apprehension", "test anxiety", and "fear of negative evaluation". A total of 151 students (127 students of English Language and Literature in B.A. level and 24 students of Teaching English as a Foreign Language at M.A. level) participated in the study. After obtaining the raw data, the SPSS software (version 16) was used to change the data into numerical interpretable form. To determine the relationship between perceived social self-efficacy and foreign language classroom anxiety, correlational analysis was employed. Pearson Product-

¹ Defended on October 1, 2012

Moment correlation was used and the correlation coefficient (r) was $-.164$ ($p < .05$). The result showed that the participants' perceived social self-efficacy has a reverse relationship with their foreign language classroom anxiety. Also, further calculations were done about the type and rate of the influence of demographic variables (namely age, gender, educational level, and academic seniority) on students' PSSE and FLCA. As a whole, among males, a reverse relationship was observed between the two main variables. This reverse relationship was stronger for B.A. students than for M.A. students, although it was not recognized statistically significant. Moreover, senior B.A. students established the strongest negative correlation ($r = -.367$) among the participants from different classes. According to the One-Way ANOVA results, no meaningful relationship was observed between age, gender, educational level, and academic seniority of the participants, and their perceived social self-efficacy or foreign language classroom anxiety. Based on the findings of the study, the rate of perceived social self-efficacy (i.e. trust in self in social situations) seems to play a key role in the intensity of foreign language learners' anxiety and a vital parameter in their full-functioning and efficient learning.

Key Words: EFL (English as a Foreign Language) Learners, Attitude, Social Self-Efficacy, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety.

Notes

A series of 24 horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.



License NO. 191/102796
Email: modarestefl@yahoo.com
MeTEFL, Tarbiat Modares University
Jalal Ale Ahmad Highway, P.O.Box: 14115-111, Tehran, Iran