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Editorial

A Word to the Wise

Donald G. Perrin

Language learning has always used performance testing to determine proficiency. As a result of learning, the student must be able to speak, read, translate, and/or interpret a foreign language depending on the purpose and level of the course. Foreign language teachers, and that includes teachers of English as a Second Language and English as a foreign language, were early adopters of instructional technologies, starting with pictures, flash cards, and audio devices of different kinds. The first playback devices were gramophone and radio. The first record and playback device was the wire recorder which evolved into the tape recorder. This led to development of the Language Laboratory which was widely adopted starting in 1956.

The language laboratory made it possible for the student to practice speech and compare his or her results with a native language model. But its capabilities went far beyond drill and practice. It was a tool with a wide range of interactive teaching and learning capabilities. The high initial cost left many labs without budget for training teachers, purchasing materials, and equipment maintenance. This slowed its initial development, but enterprising teachers made their own materials and kept most of the equipment going.

In the United States, new budgets for learning technologies came after the Soviet Union launched Sputnik One on 4 October, 1957. The National Defense and Education Act provided dollars for research and development of new curricula, new teaching methods, and interactive learning technologies. In the next decade we see teaching machines and programmed learning, new curricula for physical and biological sciences, and adoption of computers (then mainframes) for teaching and learning. In the 1980's schools received their first personal computers – PC and Macintosh – and in the 1990s, global access to the resources of the Internet. Language teachers were quick to research the impact of these new developments for language teaching and adopt the successful options that were within their financial reach.

In this issue of the Journal, we see linguistics has benefited from advancement in technology, complemented by research, in Iran, There is also a study for teaching and learning Japanese, a syllabic languages that is not based on the Arabic alphabet and Latin Grammar.

Hopefully, at a later time, we can complement this issue with research on artificial intelligence and problems in the use of computers to interpret and translate documents from one language to another.

Editor's Note: Research is always seeking new insights to learning mechanisms to develop and refine new theories of learning. The resulting body of data and findings is of value to instructional designers, teachers, and administrators in development, application, and evaluation of learning resources and methodology. This is a thorough study based on *English as a Foreign Language* as taught to pre-university students in Iran.

Multiple Intelligence-Based Glossing Technique

Shiva Sadeghi

Iran

Abstract

Providing EFL learners with appropriate solutions to overcome the problems encountered in developing reading skill was the main challenge of this study. In an effort to identify the sources of the problems, two factors were identified to help overcome the problems: *glossing technique* and *Multiple Intelligence Theory (MIT)*. Further, the interaction between glossing technique and multiple intelligence theory (*MI-based glossing technique*) was considered another influential factor to remove the obstacles regarding reading comprehension failure. Taking the above mentioned points in mind, the current study was designed to explore the effectiveness of the two types of certain glosses (textual vs. pictorial), two types of particular intelligences (linguistic vs. visual/spatial) and the interaction between gloss types and intelligence types on reading comprehension achievement of EFL learners. A total of 96 Azeri female pre-university students studying in Faddak and Al-Zahra Pre-university Centres in Sarab constituted participants of the study.

Students were determined to be intermediate in both productive and receptive skills after conducting the proficiency test. After administering the multiple intelligence questionnaires, subjects with high visual/spatial and high linguistic intelligences were identified. Regarding the results gained in proficiency and multiple intelligence tests and regarding the nature of the reading passages, namely one with textual (L1 meaning-given) glosses and other with pictorial glosses with related multiple-choice questions, participants were assigned to four homogenous groups, i.e., high-visual/spatial intelligence + textual gloss (VTG), high-visual/spatial intelligence + pictorial gloss (VPG), high-linguistic intelligence + textual gloss (LTG) and high-linguistic intelligence + pictorial gloss (LPG) with 24 subjects in each. A two-way analysis of variance was conducted on reading comprehension measure with the glossing and intelligence as between-subjects factors. Following analysis of the quantitative data and comparing the mean scores of four groups, it was concluded that the main effect for gloss types was not statistically significant. Put another way, both pictorial and textual glosses enhanced reading comprehension ability of EFL learners equally.

Concerning the effect of second independent variable, intelligence, results of the study indicated that the main effect for intelligence types was statistically significant and differences in intelligence types led to the different amount of comprehension on the part of the subjects. Further, findings indicated that linguistic intelligence has been more conducive than visual-spatial one in developing reading comprehension achievement of EFL learners. And about the effect of interaction between gloss types and intelligences (MI-based glossing technique), results revealed that the main effect for interaction was statistically significant and existence of interaction between gloss types and intelligences affects EFL students' comprehension ability. The implication of this study will hopefully encourage and enrich the work of educational researchers when developing reading comprehension skills among EFL students.

Introduction

History has witnessed numerous transformations of second language (L2) teaching. Nonetheless, the teaching of reading reminded a central component of any L2 curricula-communicative or non-communicative. The reading end is to read for meaning or to recreate the writer's meaning. When readers do not comprehend, they are not reading (Chastain, 1988). Even though reading is an imperative skill, many language learners experience failure in reading and do not reach the desired level of proficiency in this respect. Bearing in mind the reading as an interactive cognitive process between the reader and the text (Chastain, 1988) the failure of most students is

attributable to two major factors. The first problem, as it seems to be the case, has the root in text-based factors .i.e., existence of unknown and unfamiliar words in the text and inadequate understanding of those words. Consequently, in view of the limitations of incidental vocabulary learning and reading comprehension advancement, considerable concerns have arisen over the applications of glosses. Although glossing of words meaning removes the above-mentioned problems to a great extent, evidently, it has not been well appreciated at least in Iranian schools and universities or it has not been appropriate to the individual learners' needs and differences. The second sources of difficulties which contribute to the students' stoppage in achieving reading goals, is the lack of the attention to individual-related variables and differences by teachers. As Saeidi (2006) stated, numerous EFL teachers in their educational systems employ the traditional and common (teacher-fronted) methods in teaching reading and ask all students to follow the method without paying any attention to the fact that the method may not be proper for all students. Put it simply, when learning to read, diverse groups of L2 learners are likely to encounter fundamentally different problems stemming from their multiple characteristics, including different ages, disparate L1 backgrounds, different types of intelligences, varying L2 proficiency, and so on. In relation to Birjandi and Noroozi (2008) there is strong evidence that the traditional modes of learning are often ineffective. Reading lesson today looks like and sounds much the same as it did in the 50's. On the other hand, our target population is very different from the classrooms of the 50's.

Glossing Technique

In the progress of reading comprehension in an L2, one of the fundamental components which trigger comprehension of a text is the ability to decode or understand individual vocabulary items in a text (Chun & Plass, 1996). Encountering unfamiliar words can be a major roadblock in reading comprehension, principally if they happen to be keywords in a particular text. Researchers over and above educators have shown a wide-ranging interest for investigating techniques and instructions that facilitate and enhance vocabulary learning and reading comprehension in a foreign language. The more feasible technique that recently has come under closer inspection in the area of L2 or FL acquisition is *glossing*. Consistent with Yanguas (2009) glosses refer to any kind of explanatory comments added to a text to clarify its meaning to the reader. Glosses either done in L1, L2 or L3, are usually placed at the margin, bottom or among the lines of the text and can be verbal, textual, visual or auditory (Roby, 1999; Stewart & Cross, 1991). According to Bowles (2004) glosses act as substitutes for the dictionary and do not interrupt the reading process as much, given that the definition is easily available in the text. Ko (2005) declares that the two most important reasons to use glosses are to assist reading comprehension and aid vocabulary learning. Besides, he claims four other advantages in using glosses. Firstly, glosses can get across new words so accurately that prevent incorrect guessing. Secondly, they can minimize interruption while reading is in progress. Thirdly, glosses can make a meaningful relation between prior knowledge and new information in text. And as a final point, they would allow for greater autonomy on the part of reader.

Multiple-Choice (MC) Glosses vs. Meaning-Given (MG) Glosses

More than a few types of glosses when reading for comprehension have been addressed in the literature. Lin and Huang (2008) made a distinction between *Multiple-Choice (MC) glosses* and *Meaning-Given (MG) glosses*. MC glosses known as meaning-inferred glosses involve three or four alternatives of each target word and several gloss options which some degree of effort and attention should be invested on the part of learners in order to infer the correct options and thereby a deeper level of processing may occur. MG glosses, however; involve single translation of a single target word in the form of textual, pictorial and both textual and pictorial and they provide a-just-to-the-point meaning (through translation, explanation, or pictures) for unknown

words in a reading comprehension text and, therefore, remove the possibility of misunderstanding on the part of students (Lin & Huang, 2008; Nishino, 2007). Supportive information as glosses help to clarify the textual material and allow learners to build connections between the verbal (text) and nonverbal (images) information. This is based on the Dual Coding Theory (DCT) of Paivio (1971) which proposes that memory consists of two separate but interrelated codes for processing; one verbal and the other visual. The interconnection between two systems facilitates the interpretation of our environment. Accordingly information is much easier to retain and retrieve when it is dual coded by both visual and verbal information (Clark & Paivio, 1991).

Multiple Intelligence Theory

As well as text-based variable as existence of unknown words in a reading text, individual variables also play a potential role in developing L2/FL reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. The notion of individual variables is what most (EFL/ ESL) teachers are familiar with. Learners are different and learn differently. They bring many individual characteristics and distinct abilities to the learning process that result in many different pathways to learning and way of knowing which stand on their own two feet and act in a contrast even with a greater power. One of those innate abilities which lead to the major individual differences is *intelligence* (Saeidi, 2006). Gardner (1987, 1995 & 1999) defines intelligence as the ability to solve problems or to create fashion products that are valued within one or more cultural settings. He claims that unlike traditional and conventional view of intelligence as a single capacity, each individual possesses eight types of intelligences: *verbal-linguistic* (the ability to perceive and generate spoken and written language), *the musical-rhythmic* (the ability to perceive and appreciate rhythm, pitch and melody), *the visual-spatial* (the ability to perceive, modify, transform, and create visual and/or spatial images), *the logical-mathematical* (the ability to use numbers effectively and to understand underlying principles of a casual system), *the bodily-kinesthetic* (the ability to use all or part of one's body to express oneself to handle physical objects dexterously), *the interpersonal* (the ability to understand other people, to work cooperatively and to communicate effectively), *the intrapersonal* (the ability to understand internal aspects of self and to practice self-discipline), and *the naturalist intelligence* (the ability to discriminate among numerous species of flora and fauna and enjoy the natural environment). For sure, according to Gardner (1999) all human beings possess all different intelligences in varying degrees and each individual manifests varying levels of these different intelligences and thus each person has a unique cognitive profile; that is, a) all human possess all eight intelligences in varying amounts, b) each individual can develop each intelligence to an adequate level of competency, c) different intelligences are located in different areas of brain and can work independently and d) There are many ways to be intelligent within each category.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

Going through the above-noted points, the purpose of this study was three-fold. The first target was, to deal with the text-based variables, as existence of unknown words in a reading passage as a major building block in developing reading comprehension and to suggest more appropriate and efficient techniques to overcome this problem. To accomplish this goal, the study tested the effectiveness of certain types of glosses (textual versus pictorial) on reading comprehension performance of students. Second, the study cast the light on investigating the role of individual-related factors in developing reading skill. Say differently, the study tried to investigate whether particular types of intelligences (linguistic versus visual/spatial) would exercise any impact on EFL learners reading comprehension success and if yes, which one would be more conducive. And the last aim, concerns the effect of the interaction between particular types of glosses and intelligences (MI-based glossing technique) on reading comprehension ability of EFL learners. Consequently to attain the aims of the study, three research questions were set up:

1. RQ1) do types of glosses—pictorial versus textual—have a significant effect on L2 learners' reading comprehension performance? If so, which one is more effective?
2. RQ2) do types of intelligences—visual/spatial versus linguistic—have a significant effect on L2 learners' reading comprehension performance? If so, which one is more effective?
3. RQ3) does interaction between intelligence types and gloss types (MI-based glossing technique) have a significant effect on L2 learners' reading comprehension ability?

Previous Studies

Glosses as an Aid for Overall Comprehension of the Text

During the past twenty years, a considerable number of studies have investigated the effectiveness of marginal glosses under different premises on vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension (.e.g., Al-Seghayer, 2001; Bell & LeBlanc, 2000; Bowles, 2004; Chang, 2002; Cheng & Good, 2009; Chun, Mayer, & Leutner, 1998; Chun & Plass, 1996; Davis, 1989; Jacobs, 1994; Jacobs, Dufon & Hong, 1994; Ko, 2005; Kost, Foss, & Lenzini, 1999; Hulstijn, 1992; Lomicka, 1998; Rott, 2005; Rott & Williams, 2003; Watanabe, 1997). Glosses have been used to promote comprehension of the text and incidental vocabulary learning. In general, when comparing marginal glosses of any type, glosses have been shown to be of help to the student in the comprehension of a written text (Davis, 1989; Jacobs, 1994; Lomicka, 1998; Rott & Williams, 2003).

Davis (1989) investigated whether marginal glosses improved comprehension of a literary text read in a foreign language by intermediate-level college students. Results showed that both presenting the students with a vocabulary guide before reading the text and providing glosses when reading the text made the students recall significantly more than those with no help. Jacobs (1994) indicated that glossing resulted in a positive effect on L2 reading comprehension. The results showed that the glossed group performed significantly better than the other group. In a similar study, to examine the effects of glosses on reading and vocabulary learning, Lomicka (1998) investigated the effects of glosses on reading comprehension and tried to analyze the think aloud protocols of twelve native English speakers during a reading task in French to find out whether glossing aids comprehension. The raw data indicated an increase in the number of casual inferences generated for students who had access to full glossing.

Rott and Williams (2003) utilized think-aloud protocols when qualitatively exploring the effect of glosses and periodic second language text reconstruction on lexical acquisition and text comprehension. In general, the results of this study revealed a difference in reading strategies and vocabulary test scores for both groups. In particular, those students who had access to glosses looked for concrete meanings, strong form-meaning mapping and aimed at overall comprehension of the text.

L1 vs. L2 Glosses

Several types of studies have been conducted to investigate the effects of the glosses in accordance to their language (.e.g. Bell & LeBlanc, 2000; Chang, 2002; Cheng & Good, 2009; Ko, 2005). Bell and LeBlanc (2000) investigated students' preferences of first language (L1) glosses and second language (L2) glosses when they read L2 texts, and showed their level of reading comprehension in each case. The results of this study indicated that the participants greatly showed their preferences of English glosses over Spanish glosses. In other words, the students more frequently consulted vocabulary glosses that were provided in their L1 than those provided in their L2. Chang (2002) had 92 twelfth-graders read a short story under four conditions: reading with L1 marginal glosses, reading with L2 marginal, reading with electronic dictionaries, and reading with no gloss. The participants reading with L1 marginal glosses could acquire eighteen percent of the target words and retain two percent; those with L2 marginal gloss

could acquire sixteen percent of the target words and retain one percent, those with electronic dictionary could acquire fifteen percent and retain four percent and those without any assistance acquire three percent and retain less than one percent (0.6%) of the target words. The study conducted by Ko (2005), using both qualitative and quantitative measures, investigated how different types of gloss conditions (L1 or L2) affect Korean college students' reading comprehension. The results of the quantitative analyses indicated that only the second language (L2) gloss condition significantly affected students' reading comprehension. However, the think-aloud protocols revealed that both types of glossing made their reading comprehension smoother and faster than was possible for those who read without glosses. The study by Cheng and Good (2009) examines the effects of three kinds of glosses—first-language (L1) Chinese glosses plus second-language (L2) English example sentences, L2 marginal glosses, and L1 marginal glosses in comparison with a no-gloss condition in reading an English passage, to explore which type of glosses can facilitate reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. The study found that L1 glosses helped subjects learn new words and review learned words. Learners' retention declined between the immediate and the first delayed recall tests.

Textual vs. Pictorial Glosses

To investigate the effectiveness of glosses regarding their form various studies have been conducted (e.g., Chun, Mayer, & Leutner, 1998; Chun & Plass 1996; Kost, Foss, & Lenzini, 1999). In a widely cited study, Chun and Plass (1996) investigated, then again, incidental vocabulary learning when the goal was reading comprehension. The result indicated the incidental vocabulary acquisition rates of 25% in production tasks and 77% in recognition tasks were attested. Moreover, significantly higher scores in reading comprehension test were found for words annotated with text and picture than those glossed with text only or text + video. Chun, Mayer, and Leutner (1998) investigated the effects of different types of glosses (textual and pictorial) according to the students' preferred mode on text comprehension and learning of new words. Participants performed better on the posttests when both pictorial and textual information were selected, moderate when only one mode was selected and worse when neither was selected. In addition, participants comprehended the text better when they could choose the gloss in their preferred mode. Kost, Foss, and Lenzini (1999) measured how these two types of glosses influenced incidental vocabulary growth in a non-multimedia environment. Results showed that those participants who had access to both textual and pictorial glosses outperformed those under the other two conditions in the recognition of target words on both short term memory and retention tests. The authors disputed that these results were due to the different degrees of cognitive effort needed to process: the mapping of pictures onto the mental model provides a stronger bond than the mapping of words due to the different representations of their information.

Meaning-Given (Single) vs. Multiple-Choice Glosses

So as to test the effectiveness of meaning-given vs. multiple-choice glosses on reading comprehension, Watanabe (1997) confirmed a study. He compared four formats for presenting an English article to L2 learners: (1) appositives (inserting a restatement in English of each difficult word immediately after the word), (2) single marginal glosses (providing such a restatement in the form of marginal gloss), (3) multiple-choice marginal glosses (in which two alternative restatements are presented for each difficult word and either both are correct or one is correct and the other nearly correct), and (4) text only. The study found that both single and multiple-choice gloss groups performed significantly better on the vocabulary posttests than the appositive and text-only groups. What's more, the single gloss group yielded higher mean scores than the multiple-choice gloss group, though the difference was not statistically significant

Computerized vs. Paper-Based (Still) Glosses

According to Roby (1999) regarding the location of glosses, they are classified into two different parts: *paper-based* and *computerized glosses*. In paper-based glosses, textual and pictorial glosses

are usually placed in the margin, at the bottom or on the top of a page. However, in computerized glosses in addition to the margin, bottom or top of a page, they can be placed among the lines of the text. Two major studies (e.g. Al-Seghayer, 2001; Bowles, 2004) measured the impacts of computerized and paper-based glosses on reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition ability of learners. Al-Seghayer (2001) investigated whether multimedia computerized glosses with dynamic video or still picture, was effective in aiding vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension or paper-based glosses with still picture. Results of the analyses carried out indicated that learners presented with text+ video glosses had scores that were significantly better on vocabulary and reading comprehension test than two other text+ picture conditions. Bowles (2004), in her study to investigate whether computerized glosses vs. paper-based glosses had an effect on vocabulary acquisition and text comprehension, also employed think-aloud protocols. Her results indicate that in experimental groups, multimedia and paper-based glosses had an advantage over the control in amount of noticed words, text comprehension, and acquisition of target vocabulary. These results, therefore, support the use of glosses, either multimedia or paper-based.

Multiple Intelligence Theory (MIT) as a Solution Strategy to Improve Reading Comprehension

In application of Multiple Intelligences Theory (MIT) to SLA, various studies have been conducted, too (e.g., Burman, 2005; Gaines & Lehmann, 2002; Pamela, 2003). Gaines and Lehmann (2002) described an MI-based project aimed at improving learners' reading comprehension ability. The use of MI strategies was found to improve the students' reading comprehension ability and it enhanced their academic performance as well. In another comparable study, Pamela (2003) described an action research project improving students' academic reading achievement by means of multiple intelligence strategies. Analysis of data revealed that some students were not motivated to meet or exceed expectations in reading comprehension. Post-intervention data indicated an increase on reading skill tests, improved motivation to read, increased on-task behavior, and improved cooperative learning skills used with multiple intelligences strategies. Burman (2005) tried to investigate the impact of multiple intelligences strategies on reading skills of 30 first grade students. According to post intervention data among suggested solutions multiple intelligences strategies was more helpful which lead to the substantial gain in mastery of reading vocabulary words among students.

The Present Study

In total, the literature in this strand of research gives an idea about the fact that the attendance of various types of glosses and MIT appears to aid vocabulary acquisition and comprehension of an L2 reading text. Nevertheless, different research design should lead us to interpret these results with caution. Within the extensive literature on the effectiveness of different gloss types, little research has comparatively focused on the relationship between the effects of gloss types, namely pictorial versus textual and intelligence types, namely linguistic versus visual-spatial on reading comprehension ability of EFL learners. To fill this gap, the present study utilized a different research design. Unlike previous studies, this study was an attempt to take into account learners' intelligences, that is to say linguistic versus visual-spatial in designing reading activities involved textual and pictorial glosses. The present study, first, explored the efficiency of the gloss types i.e., pictorial versus textual (L1 meaning-given) on subjects' reading comprehension ability. Afterward, a challenge was made to test whether particular types of intelligences i.e., linguistic versus visual/spatial influence students' reading performance or not. Towards the end, the existence of possible interaction among two types of glosses and intelligences and the likely effect such interaction can have on subjects' reading comprehension achievement was taken into consideration.

Participants

The participants of this study were 96 Iranian pre-university students. Participants consisted of Azeri female students studying in Faddak and Al-Zahra Pre-university Centres in Sarab. In order to ascertain the homogeneity of the subjects in terms of language proficiency and initial differences between them a standardized proficiency test, Oxford Placement Test (OPT), was given to the subjects and students were known as intermediate. The original pool of participants consisted of 205 students but after administering the proficiency test, multiple intelligence test, and vocabulary production test, some of them were excluded from the study. Altogether, a total of 109 participants were eliminated from the study. The average age of the subjects was 20.5 years, with an age range of 18 to 23. The majority of the subjects (88%) were between the ages of 18 and 19 and about 12% were between the ages of 20 and 23. About 90% of the participants had received English instruction for at least 5-6 years in institutes. Subsequently, participants were almost homogenous in terms of language proficiency, age and English language instruction.

Instrumentation

Proficiency Test (Oxford Placement Test)

A standardized and adopted version of proficiency test called Oxford Placement Test (OPT) devised by Edwards (2009) has been administered to assess students' knowledge of the key language. The test contains 50 multiple-choice questions which assess students' knowledge of key grammar and vocabulary from elementary to intermediate levels, a reading text with 10 graded comprehension questions and an optional writing task that assesses students' ability to produce the language (Appendix A). In current study the focus of attention was on intermediate level students. Those students who scored above 47 points were known as intermediate and were selected for the study.

Multiple Intelligence Test (Questionnaire)

A standardized classroom multiple intelligence test adopted from the book *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom* (Armstrong, 2000) was administered in order to collect data about students' intelligence profile and to select the students with developed linguistic or visual/spatial intelligences. The questionnaire consists of eight types of categories which involved different questions about students' abilities concerning the eight types of intelligences as linguistics, visual-spatial, intrapersonal, interpersonal, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, logical-mathematical, and naturalist intelligences. Each category, regarding a single intelligence, consisted of 10 questions and total numbers of questions were 80. The English version of multiple intelligence tests (Appendix C) had been translated into Persian (Appendix B) so that students would not have any problem in understanding. Students who gained high scores in visual-spatial intelligence (ability to graphically represent visual or spatial ideas) or linguistic intelligence (ability to use words effectively both orally and in written form) were selected (the visual-spatial and linguistic intelligence were intended intelligences). The questionnaire responses were evaluated by grading the statements in the scale presented in Table 2. The total score of the test was 400 points, the highest score of each category was 50 points and the lowest one 10 points. Accordingly, students who scored 47-50 points in either visual/spatial or linguistic intelligences were selected to participate in the study (the cut point was 47). The reliability of the Persian version of the questionnaire (after administering to 5 students with the same background as those in the main study) was calculated through Cronbach alpha formula proposed by Cronbach (1951) and it was 0.79. The validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by some English university professors.

Table 2
Interpreting Score for Multiple Intelligence Test

Opinion	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
Point	1	2	3	4	5

Vocabulary Production Test (Identifying Unknown Words Appropriate for Glossing)

To decide which and how many words should be glossed in the reading text, a pilot study consisting of one vocabulary production test was conducted (Appendix D). The test incorporated a list of words (n=24) in English selected from identical reading text which experimental groups were going to read during the study. A total of 5 students from either of the intelligent groups were asked to write the Persian (L1) equivalents of those words to check whether they had previous familiarity with those words or not. They had approximately 30 minutes to fill the blanks. There were three possible options regarding word familiarity and unfamiliarity: 1) A word was correctly translated into Persian (familiar), 2) A word was mistranslated (unfamiliar), 3) A word left un-translated (unfamiliar).

Reading text

The reading material was an authentic editorial, "*The Cellist of Sarajevo*", which was adopted from the advanced level of The North Star series (Miller & Cohen, 1998). It is a moving story about a cellist in Sarajevo who played his cello on the street while bombs and bullets flew during the war in 1992.

Gloss Conditions

In current study, the reading text was glossed in two different forms: one involving textual (L1 meaning-given) glosses, as its name suggests, along with single Persian translation of English target words in the right margin of the page (Appendix E) and other with pictorial glosses involving pictures of target words in the right margin of the page (Appendix F). In both textual and pictorial glosses an attempt was made to provide the meaning of unknown words appropriate to their application in the text at hand. In present study, based on the result of the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level readability formula it turned out to be apparent that the reading passages involved 537 words in total. Out of 537 words, 21 words were identified as unknown and selected for glossing. In each of the two passages, there were twenty-one glossed words. In current study for the reason that majority of students were unfamiliar with computer programs, the paper was selected as an appropriate medium for gloss presentation. Participants were exposed to textually-glossed and pictorially-glossed passages under two different conditions. The former involved printed paper-based glosses alone and the latter involved printed paper-based glosses along with pictures. Following the guiding principle by Hulstijn (1993) and Laufer and Hill (2000), to catch students' attention to target words and to their meaning and to increase their consciousness, all glossed words in both versions of the text were typed in bold. The reason why Persian (L1) glosses were administered is that glossing in mother tongue is easy to understand and convenient to remember for most of the subjects. Another possible reason might be that Persian (L1) definitions are shorter than equivalent English definitions. Accordingly, subjects may have a lower degree of anxiety while reading the gloss (Xu, 2010).

Reading Comprehension Test

To test the comprehension, right away after reading the passages, students were asked to answer a multiple-choice reading comprehension test consisting of 20 questions in English (Appendix G). They were expected to choose a correct answer among the four choices. Questions were matched

to all parts of the passage so that the test could check for overall understanding of the story. Some of questions were specifically focused around the glossed words; the remaining questions were of a global nature. Taking into consideration the scoring system of the reading comprehension test, each correct answer was 1 point earning a total of 20 points. Reliability of the test (after piloting to 5 students who participated in the vocabulary production test) was estimated as 0.79 by means of Cronbach alpha formula. The validity of the test was approved by some English university professors.

Data Collection Procedures

This study composed of a pilot and a main study. In order to accomplish the purposes of the study and to collect the requisite data several stages were followed.

Stage one: following informing students about the study, it was considered a requirement to ensure about their approximate homogeneity. Hence, Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was administered to determine proficiency level of the 205 volunteer subjects. Consequently, the 139 homogenous subjects were selected to take part in stage two (multiple intelligence test).

Stage two: One of the fundamental features of the eight intelligences is their teachability (Armstrong, Kennedy & Coggins, 2002). In current study in order to develop and appeal to students' linguistic and visual-spatial intelligences, conducting fitting activities relevant to each intelligence was obligatory. But before doing so, one week after the proficiency test, a total of 139 homogenous students were exposed to multiple intelligence questionnaire with the purpose of tapping on their impressions and assessing their intelligence profile. The end result of the questionnaire ensured enough that there had been sufficient instructions and activities for students regarding developing their linguistic and visual-spatial intelligences by teachers. Accordingly, there was no need to instructional activities to teach and expand their intelligences. Contrary to our expectations, on the basis of the results of standardized multiple intelligence test, over the half of the students (n=101 or 72.6%) were identified as high-linguistic and high-visual/spatial intelligence groups and logical-mathematical intelligence was the third intelligence which was mostly developed among intelligence types. As a result, these intelligences seemed to have been strengthened whereas other types appeared to have been unnoticed. Incidentally, based on the results of the multiple intelligence test, out of 139 students participated in multiple intelligence test, 73% of subjects (n=101) with developed linguistic and visual/spatial intelligences were selected and 27% of students (n=38) with other types of well-developed intelligences were excluded.

Stage three (pilot study): one week after, a pilot study with 5 volunteer students (from either of the intelligence groups) were conducted. The purpose of the pilot study was to ask students to comment on appropriateness and suitability of words that were going to be selected for glossing. About 24 words i.e., keywords which deemed critical and significant to understanding the text based on researcher's specialized experience in teaching reading to pre-university students were selected from the reading text. Then one researcher-made vocabulary production test was carried out and presented to 5 students (from either of intelligence groups). About twenty-one words frequently were left unanswered or answered erroneously in production test. Anchored in the result of the pilot vocabulary production test twenty-one words in the text were glossed.

Stage four: As a whole, glossing techniques are less investigated in Iranian educational system. In view of that, it was considered that students may not have any preceding acquaintance with such a technique and they may be confused. Subsequently, participants were provided with an extensive introduction to the type of informational glosses on hand enabling them to understand how each type of glosses works and aids comprehension.

Stage five: After informing students about what they were going to do, the reading comprehension passage with two different glossing conditions (textual versus pictorial) and 20 related multiple-choice questions were presented to the final number of experimental subjects ($n=96$). Concerning students' intelligence preferences and nature of reading passages, students were matched to four experimental groups. The first group with high visual/spatial ability read the passage involving textual glosses and group two with high visual/spatial ability read the passage containing pictorial glosses. For group three, with developed linguistic intelligence, the textually-glossed reading passage was considered the most excellent and group four received the pictorially-glossed reading passage.

Data analysis

Later than the required data were gathered, on the reading comprehension test scores, a two-way between group analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed using a 2 (gloss types) \times 2 (intelligence types) factorial design. The independent variables were gloss types, namely textual versus pictorial, and intelligence types, as visual-spatial versus linguistic. Reading comprehension was the dependent variable. Two-way ANOVA was applied to measure the effects of gloss types, intelligence types, and their interaction on students' performance on reading comprehension test by applying Scheffe adjustment. Effect size measures were reported as eta squared (η^2) and computed as partial η^2 . The alpha level was set as 0.05.

The Preliminary Measure (Proficiency Measure)

With the purpose of testing out the homogeneity of subjects in terms of proficiency level, one-way ANOVA was used and proficiency test scores of four groups were analyzed. Table 3 demonstrates the descriptive statistics for proficiency test scores of four participating groups.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for Proficiency Test Scores

Group		N	M	SD
Visual- spatial	PG	24	54.2500	7.5426
	TG	24	54.3750	7.2581
Linguistic	PG	24	54.4583	7.4131
	TG	24	54.2083	7.5813
Total		96	54.3229	7.3320

Note. PG= pictorial gloss, TG =textual gloss, $P \leq 0.05$

As it is shown in Table 4 there was no statistically significant difference between performance of four participating groups on proficiency test scores ($F = .006$, $P = .999$). Further, mean scores of four participating groups are almost close to each other (Table 3) and, thus, groups can be considered homogenous in terms of language proficiency. Figure 1 is an evidence for performance of four experimental groups on proficiency test.

Table 4
Result of One-way ANOVA on Proficiency Test Scores

	Sum of Square	df	Mean square	F	Sig (p)
Between Groups	.948	3	.316	.006	.999
Within Groups	5106.042	92	55.500		
Total	5106.990	95			

Note. $P \leq 0.05$

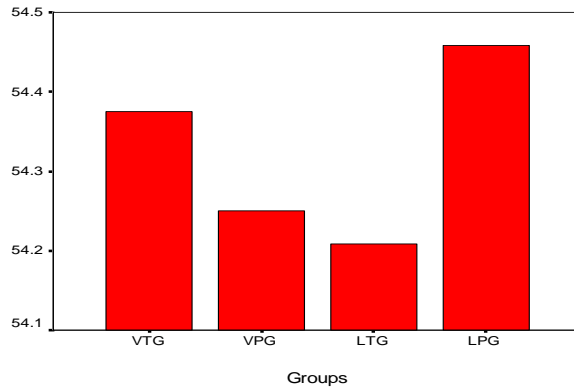


Figure 1. Performance of four experimental groups on proficiency test

te. VTG= High visual/spatial intelligence + textual gloss, VPG= High visual/spatial intelligence + pictorial ss, LTG= High linguistic intelligence + textual gloss, LPG= High linguistic intelligence + pictorial gloss.

The Reading Comprehension Measure

To test the comprehension, students' scores on reading comprehension test were analyzed. Descriptive statistics for the effects of gloss types and intelligence types on reading comprehension test scores are separately presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics for Effects of Gloss Types and Intelligence Types on Reading Comprehension Test Scores

	Source	Mean	SD	Std.Error
Gloss types	Pictorial	16.5833	0.8208	.100
	Textual	16.7500	1.3448	.110
Intelligence types	Visual/ spatial	16.2083	.8742	.110
	Linguistic	17.1250	1.1416	.110

A two-way ANOVA was conducted to test whether the two between-subject factors of the study, namely *glossing* and *intelligence* or *their interaction* affected the subjects' reading comprehension performance. The results are presented in Table 6. With regard to the main effect of the first independent variables, *gloss types*, results of two-way ANOVA (Table 6) indicates that the difference in gloss types is not statistically significant ($F=1.139$, $P=.289$). As it is evident in Table 4.4, the mean scores of both textual ($M=16.7500$, $SD=1.3448$) and pictorial ($M=16.5833$, $SD=.8208$) glosses are almost close to each other. This means that both types of glosses, namely textual and pictorial are conducive for developing subjects reading comprehension performance and there are no differences among students' performance on reading comprehension test across the different types of glosses. In otherwise, texts with two different types of glosses, that is to say textual and pictorial, lead to the equal amount of comprehension on the part of the subjects.

Table 6
Results of Two-way ANOVA on Reading Comprehension Test Scores

Source	Sum of Square Type III	df	Mean square	F	Sig (P)	Partial η^2
Gloss types	.667	1	.667	1.139	.289	.12
Intelligence types	20.167	1	20.167	34.464	.000***	.273
Intelligence types Gloss types	42.667	1	42.667	72.916	.000***	.442
Error	53.833	92	.585			
Total	26784.000	96				

Note. (*)= the mean difference is statistically significant at $P \leq 0.05$ level

As it is shown in Table 6, the effect of the second independent variable, *intelligence types*, exceeds the critical value and it is considerable. The main effect for the intelligence types is statistically significant ($F=34.464$, $P=.000***$) with a large effect size ($\eta^2=.273$), following guiding rule proposed by Cohen (1988) (0.01=small, 0.06=moderate, 0.14=large effect). For this reason, we can claim that there are differences in reading comprehension test scores of four groups across the different intelligences and certain types of intelligences affect students' performance differently. As it is clear in Table 4, both marginal means show a difference. That is to say, linguistic intelligence ($M=17.1250$, $SD=1.1416$) appears to be more effective than visual-spatial intelligence ($M=16.2083$, $SD=.8742$) in terms of developing students' reading comprehension ability.

Pertaining to the third research question, *investigating the effect of interaction between gloss types and intelligence types*, Table 5 indicates that the interaction is statistically significant ($F=72.916$, $P=.000***$) with a large effect size ($\eta^2=.442$). In order to offer a more precise indication of this interaction, descriptive statistics for the interaction effect of the gloss types and intelligence types on reading comprehension test scores were calculated (Table 7).

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics for Interaction Effect of Gloss Types and Intelligence Types on Reading Comprehension Test Scores

Group	N	M	SD.
Visual-spatial PG	24	16.7917	.6580
TG	24	15.6250	.6469
Linguistic PG	24	16.3750	.9237
TG	24	17.8750	.7974
Total	96	16.6667	1.1113

Note. PG=Pictorial gloss, TG=Textual gloss, $P \leq 0.05$

A closer look at the mean scores in Table 7 reveals that, students in high linguistic intelligence groups got high scores receiving textual gloss and improved to a great extent (LTG: $M=17.8750$, $SD=.7974$). In spite of this, utilizing pictorial gloss, they got low scores and really lost out (LPG: $M=16.3750$, $SD=.9237$). Meanwhile, students in high-visual/spatial intelligence groups got high scores receiving pictorial gloss and made a substantial progress (VPG: $M=16.7917$, $SD=.6580$). In contrast, their mean scores receiving textual gloss was lower than their scores in pictorial gloss and they failed to improve their comprehension (VTG: $M=15.6250$, $SD=.6469$). As it seems to be the case, the mean score of LTG ($M=17.8750$, $SD=.7974$) was higher than the other three groups' and VTG ($M=15.6250$, $SD=.6469$) gained the lowest scores among four groups and their score

was lower than that of other three groups. The mean scores of VPG ($M=16.7917$, $SD=.6580$) and LPG ($M=16.3750$, $SD=.9237$) fell somewhere between the LTG's and the VTG's mean scores. All told, the comparison of all mean scores $LTG (M=17.8750, SD=.7974) > LPG (M=16.3750, SD=.9237)$ and $VPG (M=16.7917, SD=.6580) > VTG (M=15.6250, SD=.6469)$ confirms the significant effect of interaction between particular types of glosses and certain intelligences on reading comprehension performance of the subjects.

Table 5 involves the mean scores of gloss types (PG: $M=16.5833$, TG: $M=16.7500$) and intelligence types (linguistic: $M=17.1250$, visual/spatial: $M=16.2083$) before interaction. Table 7 reveals the mean scores (VPG: $M=16.7917$, VTG: $M=15.6250$, LPG: $M=16.3750$, and LTG: $M=17.8750$) gained after interaction. Comparing the components of these two tables makes it evident that existence of interaction affects students' performances to great extent. However, there exists exceptions among mean scores of Table 7 and that is of VTG and LPG. Comparing mean scores of VTG and LPG with that of LTG and VPG make it clear that existence of interaction led to the decrease in mean scores of these groups (VTG and $LPG < LTG$ and VPG). The reason is attributable to the fact that students with developed visual/spatial intelligence (ability to receive the meaning out of images) have difficulty reading textually-glossed passages and students with well-developed linguistic intelligences (ability to get meaning out of written words) found it difficult to read the pictorially-glossed passages. As a whole, the above-stated discussion confirms the fact that the interaction does not always mean an increase in students' performance. In other words, the interaction will be meaningful and efficient when a disciplined and well-organized balance is created between activity types and students inherent abilities.

Figure 2 makes obvious the performances of four experimental groups on reading comprehension measure gained through the interaction between gloss types and intelligence types

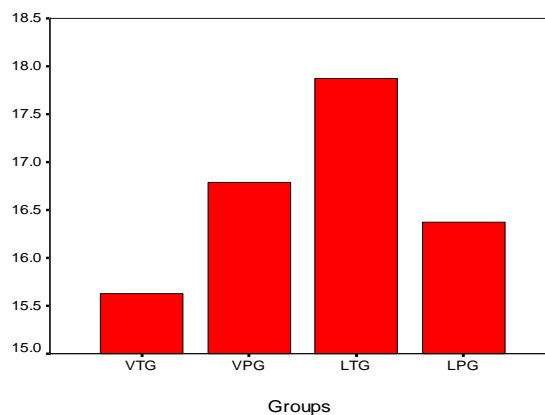


Figure 2. Performance of four experimental groups on reading comprehension test

Note. VTG= High visual/spatial intelligence + textual gloss, VPG= High visual/spatial intelligence + pictorial gloss, LTG= High linguistic intelligence + textual gloss, LPG= High linguistic intelligence + pictorial gloss.

Figure 3 puts on show the strong interaction between gloss types and intelligence types and their affect on reading comprehension. All in all, from the interaction in Figure 3 it was concluded that for the students with developed linguistic intelligence the appropriate technique for improving English reading comprehension seems to be textual gloss and for the students with developed visual-spatial intelligence the pictorial gloss works well. Put another way, the existence of appropriate interaction between particular gloss types and certain intelligences leads to the higher degree of comprehension on the part of the subjects. Of course, interaction means that there is a possibility that one factor may be more beneficial to one group than the other. When learners are

reading gloss-enhanced materials based on their intelligences, it is intelligence types, not gloss types that determine how much they comprehend the reading text.

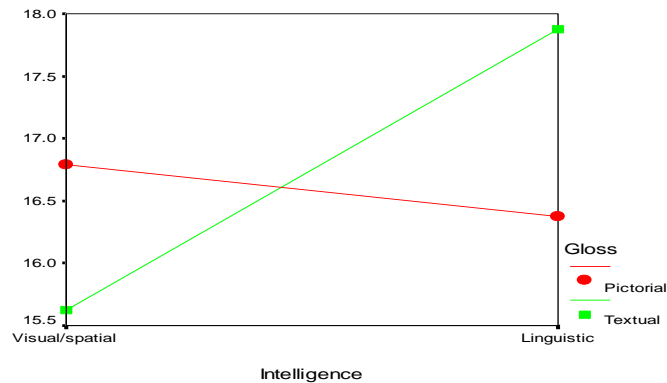


Figure 3. Interaction effect of gloss types and intelligence types on reading comprehension performance of four experimental groups

Very briefly, the ANOVA results obtained from the tables and figures reflected that the main effect flowing from intelligence types and the interaction between gloss types and intelligence types was statistically significant. Nevertheless, the story appeared to be different for the main effect of the gloss types.

Discussion and Result

The present study is motivated by the need to shed some light on one of the main issues in TEFL, namely developing reading skill by removing obstacles which most teachers and students encounter in EFL classrooms. One of those obstructions has the root in text-based variables as existence of unknown and unusual words in a reading text. The second problem refers to the lack of the attention to the individual learners' wants, needs and inherent abilities in designing classroom reading activities. Pertaining to these issues, the study was set up to explore the effect of two types of particular glosses i.e., textual versus pictorial and two types of certain intelligences i.e., linguistic versus visual-spatial as leading factors to overcome the problems and make the major advancement in reading comprehension achievement of the EFL learners. Supplementary, a challenge was made to test the force of the interaction between gloss types and intelligence types (MI-based glossing technique) on reading comprehension performances of EFL students. To accomplish these objectives, the study was guided by three research questions and related hypotheses. The results yielded in this study will be discussed according to the hypotheses. *Research questions 1* attended the effect of gloss types—textual vs. pictorial—on EFL learners' comprehension ability. Based on this question *hypothesis 1* stated that types of glosses would affect students' reading comprehension ability and readers utilizing pictorial gloss were expected to outperform those using textual gloss on reading comprehension test. Nevertheless, the consequences presented in the preceding chapter failed to support the hypothesis 1 and was evidence for the fact that gloss types have no noteworthy consequence on their performance and there is no statistically significant difference between performances of four groups across different glosses on reading comprehension test. Say differently, both pictorial and textual (L1 meaning-given) glosses were conducive for reading comprehension improvement. *Research question 2* asked over whether intelligence types- linguistic versus visual/spatial- affect students' reading comprehension ability. Regarding this question *hypothesis 2* proclaimed that types of intelligences would affect students' performance and linguistic intelligence can lead to higher degree of comprehension on the part of readers than visual-spatial one. The end results presented in the preceding chapter supported this hypothesis and showed that particular types of intelligences have a significant and different effect on students' performance and linguistic

intelligence was more effectual than visual-spatial one in terms of developing reading comprehension ability of EFL learners. To tell the truth, the outcome indicated that linguistic intelligence was the leading type of intelligence and visual-spatial intelligence was the least common type of intelligence employed by the students who participated in this study. By analyzing the exact effect of intelligence types on reading comprehension, it is reasonable to argue that, the result is in line with findings of Block and Pressley (2002) and Maftoon (2006), which state that reading comprehension ability is more associated with linguistic intelligence than visual-spatial one because reading comprehension comes to mind when learners first access the meanings and nuances of the written words they encounter during reading. The act of reading involved touching the words as one reads, speaking the words out loud, and putting one's whole physical and mental energy into the work of understanding and comprehending. That is where the linguistic intelligence as the ability to use words effectively both orally or in written form becomes conducive. *Research question 3* was an endeavor to look into the effect of interaction between gloss types and intelligences (MI-based glossing technique) on reading comprehension ability of EFL learners. Consequently *hypothesis 3* predicted that the interaction between gloss types and intelligences would affect students' performance. Regarding reading comprehension scores, the answer is positive. The end result showed that students in high-visual/spatial intelligence groups with the capacity to graphically represent visual or spatial ideas performed better on a passage with pictorial gloss and got rather poor results receiving textually-glossed passages. Additionally, students in high-linguistic intelligence groups with the ability to use words effectively both orally and in written form gained rather high scores in reading comprehension test involving textual glosses. On the contrary, they gained low scores on pictorially-glossed passage. This matter supports the fact that each activity demands specific intelligence and integrating the intelligence type with specific activity is a prerequisite for learning (Gardner, 1987, 1995, 1999).

Implications of the Study

The present study implied a three-fold role for TEFL and several pedagogical and educational implications and issues can come out from this study. The result of this study will be of importance for EFL teachers, students, textbook designers, and material developers from different perspectives. First of all with regard to the effectiveness of glosses, the findings showed that different types of glosses play identical role in developing and enhancing reading comprehension ability of EFL learners. Subsequently, so as to increase the engagement power of the text, to build up learners' confidence in reading, increase comprehensibility of the reading passage, and help students to handle unknown words from context with the intention of filling vocabulary-related reading comprehension gaps, material developers, teachers, syllabus designers and practitioners should devote more time to incorporate glosses as text-enhancement techniques when designing and transferring teaching materials for EFL students.

After an extensive discussion on MIT, explaining its role in developing reading skill, it is possible to conclude that it also has some very important implications for EFL teachers, students, and curriculum designers. A teacher may have some preferred teaching style and regard it as the best, but if he wants to innovate, he should use different teaching styles. Doing so, teachers can meet diverse students' needs inside the classroom. These teaching styles and strategies should suit students' diverse abilities and attitudes. That is what MIT does. It provides teachers with interesting styles that can be used with different students in different lessons. Along with Guignon (1998, as cited in Saeidi, 2006) the MIT is changing the ways some teachers teach. The psychological and educational perspective arises from the assumption that a learner is an active contributor in learning process, but s/he needs support and facilitation to find his/her capacity and power. Armstrong (2000) pointed out that MIT facilitate learning if a teacher is having difficulty teaching a student in the more traditional linguistic or logical ways of instruction.

Further, the findings of this study, as presented in the previous chapter, revealed the positive tendency toward the function of linguistic intelligence in developing reading skill. By the way, teachers should focus upon students' linguistic intelligence and do their best to identify, awaken and develop this intelligence by employing multiple intelligence checklist, questionnaire and appropriate classroom activities as reading and writing stories, taking notes, listening to lectures, poems and jokes, chatting, storytelling, attending books, brainstorming, using vocabulary and lecturing, discussing, and persuasive speaking.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research

Although this study has suggested the effectiveness of glossing technique, MIT and MI-based glossing techniques on reading comprehension ability of EFL learners, numerous research questions related to this field remain as yet unanswered. In the view of the current study, the following area may be explored further.

1. In this study there was a lack of measurement for the time spent on reading comprehension task by each group. It seemed that students receiving pictorially-glossed passages needed extra time on reading than students who received textually-glossed passages. The reason is that some pictures were vague for some students and they needed more time processing the meaning of the message in the pictures. Naturally, in current study, in order to avoid any bias, all four groups were adjusted to the time restrictions. The suggestion for coming studies is to measure the time spent by subjects on reading comprehension and to investigate how much this factor affects students' performance plus result of the study.
2. Considering the fact that this study was limited to only one individual-variable (i.e., intelligence) it is considered the best that future studies investigate the cause of more individual-related variables such as background knowledge and expertise, language threshold, meta-cognitive knowledge, meta-linguistic awareness, motivation, aptitude, gender, age, anxiety, and so forth on reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition.
3. As it was stated earlier, glosses bring about the long-term retention and easier retrieval of target words. The study measures the impacts of glosses just on reading comprehension and there was no opportunity to measure their effects on vocabulary acquisition. Whereas vocabulary learning is a prerequisite for reading comprehension, they have been shown to have different effects on reading comprehension and long-term retention of vocabulary items in different ways (Yoshii, 2006). Consequently, it is suggested that other studies make use of appropriate vocabulary tests to measure the immediate and long-term effects of glosses on vocabulary acquisition and retention.
4. The study just takes the quantitative aspects of the subjects into consideration. It is suggested that some qualitative aspects to be explored. For instance, subjects' introspection concerning vocabulary learning process could be assessed through think-aloud protocols or their preferences in learning style can be researched in the course of their evaluation of gloss and activity types.
5. In current study intelligence is typically researched through the lens of psychology, and by application of a simple questionnaire. It is recommended that future research agenda for MIT and intelligence encompass a multidisciplinary approach i.e., use the information processing techniques and computer simulations for gaining new insight into human intellectual capacities.
6. As said by Armstrong (2003), all eight intelligences have a precise part in developing reading skills. In this study just the effects of two types of intelligences (linguistic vs. visual-spatial) on reading comprehension ability of EFL learners were studied. Therefore, there is a hope that the incoming studies will take the effects of the other intelligences into consideration, namely musical-rhythmic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic,

interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic intelligences on reading comprehension ability of students.

7. The present study was conducted with intermediate level students. Hence, similar studies could be conducted with lower and upper level students with the aim of having a larger picture of the phenomenon under study. Correspondingly, because most intelligence-related studies are related to young learners, the relationship between different aspects of multiple intelligences and language proficiency of adult learners should be studied.

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Appendix A

Proficiency Test (Oxford Placement Test)

Name:

Class:

Time: 65

Grammar and Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with the correct answers.

1. My sister _____ very tired today.
A. be B. am C. is D. are
2. His _____ is a famous actress.
A. aunt B. uncle C. grandfather D. son
3. I'd like to be a _____ and work in a hospital.
A. lawyer B. nurse C. writer D. pilot
4. We _____ like rap music.
A. doesn't B. isn't C. aren't D. don't
5. There _____ a lot of water on the floor. What happened?
A. are B. is C. be D. am
6. He _____ TV at the moment.
A. watches B. is watching C. watched D. has watching
7. Helen is very _____. She doesn't go out a lot.
A. bored B. confident C. angry D. shy
8. Did you _____ to the beach yesterday?
A. went B. were C. go D. goed
9. Have you got _____ orange juice? I'm thirsty.
A. some B. a C. any D. the
10. Let's go into _____ garden. It's sunny outside.
A. a B. any C. - D. the
11. He's _____ for the next train.
A. looking B. waiting C. listening D. paying
12. Mark _____ his car last week.
A. cleaned B. did clean C. has cleaned D. is cleaning
13. I bought some lovely red _____ today.
A. cabbages B. cucumbers C. bananas D. apples
14. Which bus _____ for when I saw you this morning?
A. did you wait B. had you waited C. were you waiting D. have you waited
15. Where _____ you like to go tonight?
A. do B. would C. are D. can
16. That's the _____ film I've ever seen!
A. worse B. worst C. baddest D. most bad
17. My dad _____ his car yet.
A. hasn't sold B. didn't sell C. doesn't sell D. wasn't sold
18. I've been a doctor _____ fifteen years.
A. since B. for C. until D. by
19. Look at the sky. It _____ rain.
A. will B. can C. is going to D. does
20. If I _____ this homework, the teacher will be angry!
A. am not finishing B. won't finish C. don't finish D. didn't finished
21. This book is even _____ than the last one!
A. most boring B. boringer C. more boring D. far boring
22. I'll meet you _____ I finish work.
A. if B. when C. as D. so
23. We're getting married _____ March.
A. in B. on C. at D. by
24. If you _____ steak for a long time, it goes hard.
A. cook B. are cooking C. have cooked D. cooked
25. I _____ you outside the cinema, OK?
A. 'll see B. am going to see C. am seeing D. see

26. I _____ not be home this evening. Phone me on my mobile.
 A. can B. could C. may D. should
27. The criminal _____ outside the hotel last night.
 A. was caught B. has been caught C. is caught D. caught
28. He asked me if I _____ a lift home.
 A. wanted B. want C. was wanting D. had wanted
29. If I _____ older, I'd be able to vote in elections.
 A. had B. am C. were D. have
30. You _____ go to the supermarket this afternoon. I've already been.
 A. mustn't B. can't C. needn't D. won't
31. Kathy drives _____ than her sister.
 A. more carefully B. more careful C. carefully D. most carefully
32. The _____ near our village is beautiful.
 A. country B. woods C. view D. countryside
33. I'm _____ I can't help you with that.
 A. apologise B. afraid C. regret D. sad
34. It was really _____ this morning. I couldn't see anything on the roads.
 A. cloudy B. sunny C. icy D. foggy
35. Can you look _____ my dog while I'm away?
 A. for B. at C. to D. after
36. If I'd started the work earlier I _____ it by now.
 A. would finish B. had finished C. will finish D. would have finished
37. This time next year I _____ in Madrid.
 A. am working B. will work C. will be working D. work
38. I wish he _____ in front of our gate. It's very annoying.
 A. won't park B. wouldn't park C. doesn't park D. can't park
39. He said he'd seen her the _____ night.
 A. last B. before C. previous D. earlier
40. I _____ agreed to go out. I haven't got any money!
 A. mustn't have B. shouldn't have C. couldn't have D. wouldn't have
41. It was good _____ about her recovery, wasn't it?
 A. information B. words C. news D. reports
42. I _____ the report by 5.00 p.m. You can have it then.
 A. have finished B. will have finished C. finish D. am finishing
43. Because of the snow the teachers _____ all the students to go home early.
 A. said B. made C. told D. demanded
44. Thanks for the meal! It was _____.
 A. delighted B. delicious C. disgusting D. distasteful
45. Look! Our head teacher _____ on TV right now!
 A. is being interviewed B. is been interviewed C. is interviewing D. is interviewed
46. It's _____ to drive a car over 115 km/h in the UK.
 A. unlegal B. illegal C. dislegal D. legless
47. There's a lot of rubbish in the garden I need to get _____ of.
 A. lost B. rid C. cleared D. taken
48. I'm afraid it's time we _____.
 A. leave B. must leave C. are leaving D. left
49. He wondered what _____.
 A. is the time? B. the time was C. was the time D. is the time?
50. They _____ our salaries by 5%.
 A. rose B. made up C. raised D. lifted

Reading

Saucy dragons

Levi Roots, a reggae singer from Jamaica, has a big smile on his face these days. In case you missed it, Levi recently appeared on the famous reality show for people with business ideas, *Dragon's Den*. The participants have to persuade the team of business experts that their ideas are excellent and hope that two or more of the team will decide to invest money in their business idea.

Levi did just that

The singer, who has been a successful music artist for several years, also sells something he calls 'Reggae, reggae sauce'. It is made using special secret ingredients from his grandmother and is a hot Jamaican sauce that is eaten with meat. Until now it has only been possible to buy the sauce from Levi's website or once a year at the famous Notting Hill carnival. But now, thanks to the TV programme, that is all going to change!

Levi presented his business idea to the team and started with a catchy reggae song about the sauce to make them sit up and listen. He certainly got their attention! He then described his plans for the sauce. This part of his presentation didn't go so well. He made mistakes with his figures, saying that he already had an order for the sauce of 2 and a half million when in fact he meant 2 and a half thousand! But, the team was still interested and amazingly, two of the team offered to give £50,000 to the plan in exchange for 40% of the company. Mr Roots was ecstatic!

Levi is even happier today. It seems that two of the biggest supermarket chains in the UK are interested in having the sauce on their shelves. In addition to this, Levi is recording the 'Reggae, reggae sauce' song and we will soon be able to buy or download this. 'It's all about putting music into food,' says Levi with a big, big smile on his face! And music and food will probably make him a very rich man indeed!

1. Are the sentences true or false?

- 1: At the moment Levi isn't very happy. ____
- 2: Levi sells something we can eat. ____
- 3: His song is a big success. ____
- 4: He sang his song on TV. ____
- 5: Some supermarkets want to sell his product. ____

2. Choose the best answers.

1. *Dragon's Den* is a show about
 - A: cooking.
 - B: new business ideas.
 - C: famous people.
2. To make the sauce
 - A: you have to go to Notting Hill.
 - B: you have to ask a member of Levi's family.
 - C: you need a good recipe book.
3. When Levi presented his idea
 - A: he finished with a song.
 - B: two and a half million people were watching.
 - C: he talked about the wrong figures.
4. Some people on the team
 - A: own supermarkets.
 - B: didn't like the taste.
 - C: bought part of Levi's company.
5. Today Levi
 - A: is a millionaire.
 - B: has two things he can profit from.
 - C: prefers music to food.

Mark 10

Writing

Imagine you have just returned from a two-week holiday. Write an e-mail to your friend telling him/her about the holiday. Include information about the journey, where you stayed, what you did and the people you met.

Mark 10

Total 70

Intelligence Test

Appendix B:

Persian Version of Armstrong's Multiple Intelligence Test

Checklist for assessing students' multiple intelligences (8 types of intelligences) determined by Gardner.

پرسش نامه جهت تعیین میزان هوش دانش آموزان در 8 حیطه متفاوت تعیین شده توسط گاردنر

نام و نام خانوادگی دانش آموز: مدت زمان پاسخگویی: 45 دقیقه

شماره	نشان دهید	به شدت موافقم	موافقم	نظری ندارم	مخالفم	به شدت مخالفم
۱	لطفا پاسخ مورد نظر خود را با علامت (✓) نشان دهید					
۱	بهتر از حد متوسط نسبت به همسالانم قادر به نوشتن هستم.					
۲	می توانم داستانهایی بلند دنباله دار یا جک و داستان بگویم.					
۳	حافظه خوب در مورد نامها مکانها تاریخ یا چیزهای بی اهمیت دارم.					
۴	از بازی با کلمات لذت می برم.					
۵	از خواندن کتابها لذت می برم.					
۶	کلمات را به درستی هجی میکنم.					
۷	قافیه های بی معنی جناسها و اغراق گویی ها را درک می کنم.					
۸	از گوش کردن به کلمات گفتاری لذت می برم (داستانها تفسیر رادیو کتابهای گویا).					
۹	گنجینه لغات خوبی نسبت به هم سالان دارم.					
۱۰	با دیگران از طریق کلامی به طور زیاد ارتباط برقرار می کنم.					
۱۱	سوالات زیادی درباره اینکه چیزها چگونه کار می کنند دارم.					
۱۲	از کار کردن و بازی با اعداد لذت می برم.					
۱۳	بازی های کامپیوتری و ریاضی قابل توجهی پیدا می کنم (یا حتی بدون هیچ جستجو در کامپیوتر از دیگر بازی های علمی یا ریاضی لذت می برم).					
۱۴	از کلاس ریاضی لذت می برم.					
۱۵	از بازی شطرنج چکرز یا دیگر بازیهای استراتژیک لذت می برم.					
۱۶	از کار کردن روی معماهای منطقی یا محرکهای مغز لذت می برم.					
۱۷	از جایگزین کردن چیزها در طبقه بندی ها و سلسله مراتب یا دیگر الگوهای منطقی لذت می برم.					
۱۸	دوست دارم تجاربی در کلاس علمی یا در بازیهای آزاد داشته باشم.					
۱۹	در مورد موضوعات علمی علاقه نشان می دهم.					
۲۰	عملکرد خوبی روی برآورد های نوع پیازه ای در تفکر منطقی دارم.					
۲۱	تصاویر بصری واضحی را گزارش می دهم.					
۲۲	می توانم نقشه ها برنامه ها و نمودارها را خیلی راحت تر از متن بخوانم.					
۲۳	رویا های زیادی دارم.					

				از انجام کارهای هنری لذت می برم.	۲۴
				در طراحی کردن قوی هستم.	۲۵
				دوست دارم فیلم ها اسلایدها و دیگر نمایش های بصری را بررسی کنم.	۲۶
				از حل کردن پازل ها ماژها یا فعالیت های بصری مشابه لذت می برم.	۲۷
				می توانم ساختار های سه وجهی جالبی بسازم (برای مثال ساختار های لگو).	۲۸
				در هنگام خواندن چیز های زیادی را از تصاویر دریافت می کنم تا کلمات.	۲۹
				روی کتابها و ورقه های کار و دیگر موارد فریب کاری می کنم.	۳۰
				در یک یا چند رشته ورزشی برتری دارم.	۳۱
				دچار حرکتها تکان های ناگهانی تیک ها یا بی قراری در حین نشستن در یک نقطه برای مدت طولانی هستم.	۳۲
				به طور هوشیارانه قادر به تقلید حرکات و اطوار شخصی دیگر افراد هستم.	۳۳
				دوست دارم چیز هایی را از هم جدا کرده و سپس دوباره به هم وصل کنم.	۳۴
				دوست دارم چیز هایی را که در اطراف می بینم بلافاصله دستکاری کنم.	۳۵
				از دویدن پریدن کشتی گرفتن یا دیگر فعالیتهای مشابه لذت می برم.	۳۶
				در زمینه صنعت مهارت نشان می دهم (برای مثال نجاری خیاطی مکانیکی) ویا هماهنگی های ظریف دیگری به طرق دیگر نشان می دهم.	۳۷
				دارای روش نمایشی برای بیان خودم هستم.	۳۸
				حس های حرکتی مختلفی را در حین فکر کردن و کار کردن گزارش می دهم.	۳۹
				از کار کردن با خاک رس یا دیگر تجارب لمسی لذت می برم (برای مثال نقاشی با انگشتان).	۴۰
				وقتی موزیک قطع می شود و یا به نوعی دچار اختلال می شود می توانم بقیه اهنگ را بگویم.	۴۱
				می توانم ملودی اهنگ ها را به یاد بیاورم.	۴۲
				صدای خوبی برای اواز خواندن دارم.	۴۳
				می توانم یک الت موسیقی را بنوازم یا در یک گروه موسیقی یا گروه های دیگر اواز بخوانم.	۴۴
				دارای روش ریتمیک در صحبت و حرکت کردن هستم.	۴۵
				بطور ناخود آگاه چیزی را با خود زمزمه می کنم.	۴۶
				در حین کار به طور ریتمیک روی میز و یا صندلی ضربه می زنم.	۴۷
				نسبت به صداهای اطرافم حساس هستم (به عنوان مثال صدای باران روی سقف).	۴۸
				وقتی که یک قطعه موسیقی پخش می شود بطور مطلوبی به آن پاسخ می دهم.	۴۹
				همان طوریکه خارج از کلاس یاد گرفته ام اواز می خوانم.	۵۰
				از جمع بودن با گروه هم سالان لذت می برم.	۵۱
				به نظر می رسد ذاتا رهبر باشم.	۵۲
				به دوستانی که مشکل دارند راه حل ارائه می دهم.	۵۳
				به نظر فرد باهوش در حد معمولی می رسم.	۵۴

				عضو کلوب ها کمیته ها سازمان ها یا گروه های همسال غیر رسمی هستم.	۵۵
				از تدریس غیر رسمی برای کودکان لذت می برم.	۵۶
				دوست دارم با دیگر کودکان بازی کنم.	۵۷
				دو یا بیش از دو دوست صمیمی دارم.	۵۸
				دارای حس خوب همدردی یا نگرانی نسبت به دیگران هستم.	۵۹
				دیگران در جستجوی همراهی با من هستم.	۶۰
				حس مستقل یا اراده قوی از خود نشان می دهم.	۶۱
				دارای حس واقع بینانه از توانایی ها و ضعف هایم هستم.	۶۲
				وقتی جهت بازی یا مطالعه تنها گذاشته می شوم به نحو احسن عمل می کنم.	۶۳
				در روش زندگی و مطالعه ام نسبت به ضربه افراد مختلف نظامی وار برخورد می کنم.	۶۴
				دارای یک علاقه و سرگرمی هستم که زیاد درباره آن حرف نمی زنم.	۶۵
				دارای حس خوب خود محوری هستم.	۶۶
				کار کردن فردی را به کار کردن با دیگران ترجیح می دهم.	۶۷
				اینکه چه احساسی دارم را به درستی بیان میکنم.	۶۸
				قادرم در زندگی از ضعف ها و توانایی هایم درس بگیرم.	۶۹
				دارای عزت نفسی خوبی هستم.	۷۰
				درباره حیوانات خانگی مورد علاقه بیشتر صحبت می کنم و یا در طول تقسیمات کلاس مواضع طبیعی را ترجیح می دهم.	۷۱
				بطور طبیعی گردش علمی رفتن به باغ وحش و یا رفتن به موزه تاریخ طبیعی را دوست دارم.	۷۲
				نسبت به اطلاعات طبیعی حساسیت نشان می دهم (برای مثال در هنگام پیاده روی در بیرون کلاس به کوه ها و ابر ها توجه می کنم یا اگر در یک محیط روستایی هستم توانایی خود در حساس بودن را نسبت به اطلاعات فرهنگی رایج از جمله نوع اتومبیل یا کفش کتانی نشان می دهم).	۷۳
				بازی با آب را دوست دارم و تمایل به کاشت گیاه در کلاس هستم.	۷۴
				دوست دارم قفس موش صحرایی و اکواریوم را در اطراف اویزان کنم یا گل خانه در کلاس داشته باشم.	۷۵
				وقتی در مورد اکولوژی طبیعت گیاهان یا حیوانات مطالعه می کنم هیجان زده می شوم.	۷۶
				در مورد حقوق حیوانات و یا حفظ سیاره زمین در کلاس سخنرانی می کنم.	۷۷
				از انجام پروژه های طبیعی از جمله تماشای پرندگان پروانه ها مجموعه حشرات و مطالعه درختان یا حیوانات بالا رونده لذت می برم.	۷۸
				به کلاس درس حشرات گل ها برگ ها یا دیگر چیز های طبیعی را می برم تا بین هم کلاسی ها یا معلم تقسیم کنم.	۷۹
				در مورد عناوین کلاسی همراه با سیستم های زنده به خوبی عمل می کنم (برای مثال عنوان های بیولوژیکی در علم موضوعات محیطی در مطالعات اجتماعی).	۸۰

Appendix C:

English Version of Armstrong's Multiple Intelligence Test

Checklist for assessing students' multiple intelligences (8 types of intelligences) determined by Gardner.

Directions: rank each statement 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5. Write 1 if you strongly disagree, write 2 if you disagree, write 3 if you have no idea, write 4 if you agree and write 5 if you strongly agree.

Linguistic Intelligence

- 1) writes better than average for age.
-2) spins tall tales or tells jokes and stories.
-3) has a good memory for names, places, dates, or trivia.
-4) enjoys word games.
-5) enjoys reading books.
-6) spells words accurately.
-7) appreciate nonsense rhymes, puns, tongue twisters.
-8) enjoys listening to spoken words (stories, commentary on the radio, talking books).
-9) has a good vocabulary for age.
-10) communicates to others in a highly verbal way.
-TOTAL

Logical-Mathematical Intelligence

-1) asks a lot of questions about how things work.
- 2) enjoys working or playing with numbers.
- 3) enjoys math class.
- 4) finds math and computer classes interesting
(or if not exposure to computers, enjoys other math or science games).
-5) enjoys playing chess, checkers, or other strategy games.
-6) enjoys working on logic puzzles or brainteasers.
-7) enjoys putting things in categories, hierarchies, or other logical patterns.
-8) likes to do experiments in science class or in free play.
-9) shows interest in science-related subjects.
-10) does well on Piagetian-type assessments of logical thinking.
-TOTAL

Spatial Intelligence

-1) reports clear visual images.
-2) read maps, charts, and diagrams more easily than text.
-3) day dreams a lot.
-4) enjoys art activities.
-5) good at drawings
-6) likes to view movies, slides, or other visual presentations.
-7) enjoys doing puzzles, mazes, or similar visual activities.
-8) builds interesting three-dimensional constructions (e.g., LEGO buildings).
-9) gets more out of pictures than words while reading.
-10) doodles on workbooks, worksheets, or other materials.
-TOTAL

Bodily-kinesthetic Intelligence

-1) excels in one or more sports.
-2) moves, twitches, taps, or fidgets while seated for a long time in one spot.
-3) cleverly mimics other people's gestures or mannerisms.
-4) loves to take things apart and put them back together again.
-5) puts his/her hands all over something he/she's just seen.
-6) enjoys running, jumping, wrestling, or similar activities.
-7) shows skill in a craft (e.g., woodworking, sewing, and mechanics) or good fine motor coordination in other ways.
-8) has a dramatic way of expressing herself/himself.
-9) reports different physical sensations while thinking or working.
-10) enjoys working with clay or other tactile experiences (e.g., finger painting).
-TOTAL

Musical Intelligence

-1) tells you when music sounds off-key or distributing in some other way.
-2) remembers melodies of songs.
-3) has a good singing voice.
-4) plays a musical instrument or sings in a choir or other group.
-5) has a rhythmic way of speaking and/or moving.
-6) unconsciously hums to himself/herself.
-7) taps rhythmically on the table or desk as he/she works.
-8) sensitive to environmental noises (e.g., rain on the roof).
-9) reports favorably when a piece of music is put on.
-10) sings songs that he/she has learned outside of the classroom.
-TOTAL

Interpersonal Intelligence

-1) enjoys socializing with peers.
-2) seems to be a natural leader.
-3) give advice to friends who have problems.
-4) seems to be street-smart.
-5) belongs to clubs, committees, organizations, or informal peer groups.
-6) enjoys informally teaching other kids.
-7) likes to play games with other kids.
-8) has two or more close friends.
-9) has a good sense of empathy or concern for others.
-10) others seek out his/her company.
-TOTAL

Intrapersonal Intelligence

-1) displays a sense of independence or a strong will.
-2) has a realistic sense of his/her abilities and weakness.
-3) does well when left alone to play or study.
-4) marches to the beat of a different drummer in his/her style of living and learning.
-5) has an interest or hobby that he/she doesn't talk too much.
-6) has a good sense of self-direction.
-7) prefers working alone to working with others.
-8) accurately expresses how he/she is feeling.
-9) is able to learn from his/her failures and successes.
-10) has good self-esteem.
-TOTAL

Naturalist Intelligence

-1) talks a lot about favorite pets, or preferred spots in nature, during class sharing.
-2) likes field trips in nature, to the zoo, or to a natural history museum.
-3) shows sensitivity to natural formations (e.g., while walking outside with the class, will notice mountains, clouds; or if in an urban environment, may show this ability in sensitivity to popular culture "formations" such as sneakers or automobile style).
-4) likes to water and tend to the plants in the classroom.
-5) likes to hang around the gerbil cage, the aquarium, or the terrarium.
-6) gets excited when studying about ecology, nature, plants, or animals.
-7) speaks out in class for the rights of animals, or the preservation of planet earth.
-8) enjoys doing nature projects, such as bird watching, butterfly or insect collections, tree study.
-9) brings to school bugs, flowers, leaves, or other natural things to share with classmates or teachers.
-10) does well in topics at school that involve living system
(e.g., biological topics in science, environmental issues in social studies).
-TOTAL

Appendix D:
Vocabulary Production Test

Vocabulary Production Test

Student' name: _____ Time: 30 minutes

Direction: In the blank next to each English word, write the Persian equivalent.

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----|
| Cello..... | 12. Tattered | 23. |
| Abandoned..... | | |
| Music stand | 13. Screaming furor..... | 24. |
| Exploration..... | | |
| Mortar-shell..... | 14. Concert attire..... | |
| Terrified..... | 15. Massacre..... | |
| Cellar..... | 16. Composition..... | |
| Shelling..... | 17. War-shattered..... | |
| Flung arm..... | 18. Crater..... | |
| Soaked with tears..... | 19. Beckoning..... | |
| Creased with pain..... | 20. Carnage..... | |
| Shopworn piano..... | 21. Conductor's podium..... | |
| Cellist..... | 22. Concentration..... | |

Appendix E:

Reading Passage with Textual Glosses

"The Cellist of Sarajevo"

As a pianist, I was invited to perform with cellist Eugene Friesen at the International Cello Festival in Manchester, England. Every two years a group of the world's greatest cellists and others devoted to that instrument. The opening-night performance at the Royal Northern College of Music consisted of works for cello. There in the concert hall was a chair. No piano, no music stand, and no conductor's podium. The atmosphere was full of concentration. The world-famous cellist Yo-Yo Ma was one of the performers that April night in 1994, and there was a moving story behind the musical composition he would play. On May 27, 1992, in Sarajevo, one of the few bakeries was making bread to the war-shattered people. At 4 p.m. a long line stretched into the street. Suddenly, a mortar-shell fell directly into the middle of the line, killing 22 people. Not far away lived a thirty-five-year-old musician named Vedran Smailovic. Before the war he had been a cellist with the Sarajevo Opera. But when he saw the carnage from the massacre outside his window, he tried to do the thing: make music. For each of the next 22 days Smailovic put on his formal concert attire, took up his cello and walked out of his apartment into the midst of the battle. Placing a plastic chair beside the crater that the shell had made, he played in memory of the dead Albinonis. He played to the abandoned streets and burning buildings, and to the terrified people who hid in the cellars while the bombs dropped. With exploration around him, he made his attempt for those lost to war. Though the shelling went on, he was never hurt. After newspapers wrote the story of this man, an English composer, David Wilde, decided to make music, too. He wrote a composition for cello, "The Cellist of Sarajevo," into which he poured his feelings of love with Vedran Smailovic. It was "The Cellist of Sarajevo" that Yo-Yo Ma was to play that evening. Ma came out on stage. The music began and creating a calm universe. Slowly it became screaming furor and finally, back to silence. Ma looked out across the audience and stretched out his hand, beckoning someone to come to the stage: Vedran Smailovic, the cellist of Sarajevo! Smailovic rose from his seat and Ma left the stage to meet him. They flung their arms around each other. Everyone in the hall was clapping and shouting. And in the center of it stood these two men, hugging and crying: Yo-Yo Ma, rich in appearance and performance; and Vedran Smailovic, dressed in a tattered leather motorcycle suit. His wild, long hair and huge mustache framed a face that looked old beyond his years, soaked with tears and creased with pain. Back in Maine a week later, I sat one evening playing the shopworn piano for the residents of a local nursing home. I could not contrast this concert with what I had witnessed at the festival. It was then I realized that music is a gift. Whether we create it or simply listen, it is a gift that can calm us, often when we need it most – and expect it least.



Cellist: نوازنده ویلون سل

Cello: ویلون سل

Music stand: پایه مخصوص جهت قراردادن نت موسیقی

Conductor's podium: جایگاه مخصوص رهبر ارکستر

Composition: قطعه اهنگ

War-shattered: آسیب دیده جنگی

Mortar-shell: خمپاره

Carnage: صحنه کشتار و خونریزی

Massacre: قتل عام کردن

Concert attire: لباس رسمی موزیکدانان

Crater: دهانه یا حفره حاصله در اثر بمباران

Terrified: وحشت زده

Cellar: زیرزمین, پناهگاه

Shelling: بمباران

Screaming furor: عشق مفرط همراه با فریاد

Beckoning: صدا زدن کسی با اشاره دست

Flung arm: حلقه زدن و انداختن دست

Tattered: مندرس, کهنه, پوسیده

Soaked with tears: خیس و نمناک شدن چهره در اثر گریه

Creased with pain: افتاده و شکسته در اثر درد و ناراحتی

Shopworn piano: پیانو کهنه و رنگ رفته



Shopworn piano

Appendix F: Reading Passage with Pictorial Glosses **“The Cellist of Sarajevo”**

As a pianist, I was invited to perform with cellist Eugene Friesen at the International Cello Festival in Manchester, England. Every two years a group of the world's greatest cellists and others devoted to that instrument. The opening-night performance at the Royal Northern College of Music consisted of works for cello. There in the concert hall was a chair. No piano, no music stand, and no conductor's podium. The atmosphere was full of concentration. The world-famous cellist Yo-Yo Ma was one of the performers that April night in 1994, and there was a moving story behind the musical composition he would play. On May 27, 1992, in Sarajevo, one of the few bakeries was making bread to the war-shattered people. At 4 p.m. a long line stretched into the street. Suddenly, a mortar-shell fell directly into the middle of the line, killing 22 people.

Not far away lived a thirty-five-year-old musician named Vedran Smailovic. Before the war he had been a cellist with the Sarajevo Opera. But when he saw the carnage from the massacre outside his window, he resolved to do the thing: make music. For each of the next 22 days Smailovic put on his formal concert attire, took up his cello and walked out of his apartment into the midst of the battle. Placing a plastic chair beside the crater that the shell had made, he played in memory of the dead Albinonis. He played to the abandoned streets and burning buildings, and to the terrified people who hid in the cellars while the bombs dropped. With exploration around him, he made his attempt for those lost to war. Though the shelling went on, he was never hurt. After newspapers wrote the story of this man, an English composer, David Wilde, decided to make music, too.

He wrote a composition for cello, "The Cellist of Sarajevo," into which he poured his feelings of love with Vedran Smailovic. It was "The Cellist of Sarajevo" that Yo-Yo Ma was to play that evening. Ma came out on stage. The music began and creating a calm universe. Slowly it became screaming furor and finally, back to silence. Finally, Ma looked out across the audience and stretched out his hand, beckoning someone to come to the stage: Vedran Smailovic, the cellist of Sarajevo! Smailovic rose from his seat and Ma left the stage to meet him. They flung their arms around each other. Everyone in the hall was clapping and shouting. And in the center of it stood these two men, hugging and crying: Yo-Yo Ma, rich in appearance and performance; and Vedran Smailovic, dressed in a tattered leather motorcycle suit. His wild, long hair and huge mustache framed a face that looked old beyond his years, soaked with tears and creased with pain.

Back in Maine a week later, I sat one evening playing the shopworn piano for the residents of a local nursing home. I could not contrast this concert with what I had witnessed at the festival. It was then I realized that music is a gift. Whether we create it or simply listen, it is a gift that can calm us, often when we need it most – and expect it least.



Cello



Music stand



Conductor's podium



Composition



War- shattered



Mortar-shell



Carnage



Massacre



Concert attire



Crater



Cellar



Shelling



Terrified



Screaming Furor



Beckoning



Flung arms



Tattered



Soaked with tears



Creased with pain

Appendix G: Reading Comprehension Test

Choose the correct answers.

1. Why was the author invited to the festival?
 - a. To play the violin
 - b. To help Yo-Yo Ma
 - c. To help organize the festival
 - d. To perform with cellist Eugene Friesen
2. Who went to the concert?
 - a. A group of the world's greatest cellists
 - b. World famous musicians and music fans
 - c. People who are devoted to popular music
 - d. World famous cellists and people devoted to this modest instrument
3. What is true about the opening-night performance?
 - a. Only the cello was played.
 - b. The conductor was excellent.
 - c. There was everything except a piano.
 - d. All kinds of musical instruments were played.
4. What was the atmosphere like at the festival on that night?
 - a. The audience was a little gloomy.
 - b. The audience's expectation was high.
 - c. The audience was calm and peaceful.
 - d. The audience was noisy and unfocused.
5. Why was the music Yo-Yo Ma played at the festival special?
 - a. Because it was calm and beautiful.
 - b. Because it was composed by Yo-Yo Ma.
 - c. Because it was based on his life experience
 - d. Because it was connected with a heart touching story
6. What is the best description of the street of Sarajevo in May 1992?
 - a. People killed each other to get food.
 - b. Bombs were dropping among people standing in lines.
 - c. Starving people attacked most of the bakeries on the street.
 - d. People could hear the sound of bombing but they were safe walking on the street.
7. What did Vedram Smailovic do for a living before the war?
 - a. He was a leader of the local orchestra.
 - b. He was a cellist with the Sarajevo Opera.
 - c. He played cello with the famous local music band.
 - d. He was a music professor at the University of Sarajevo.
8. What did Vedran Smailovic decide to do when he saw the carnage?
 - a. He decided to make music.
 - b. He decided to call Yo-Yo Ma.
 - c. He decided to give up his music.
 - d. He decided to perform at a concert.
9. How did Vedran Smailovic dress when he walked out of his apartment with his cello?
 - a. He put on worn-out clothes.
 - b. He put on a fancy wedding cloth.
 - c. He put on a heavy gray coat and black pants.
 - d. He put on a formal dark suit worn by musicians.
10. Where did the terrified people hide while the bombs dropped and bullets flew?
 - a. In the concert hall
 - b. In a neighbor's attic
 - c. In rooms under houses
 - d. In the round hole made by an explosion

11. What did Vedran Smailovic do on the street for 22 days in May 1992?
 - a. He played the cello alone.
 - b. He played the cello with Yo-Yo Ma.
 - c. He played the cello with other musicians.
 - d. He helped poor people by giving away bread and playing the cello.
12. After newspapers published the story of Vedran Smailovic, what did David Wilde, an English composer, decide to do?
 - a. He decided to meet him.
 - b. He decided to write to him.
 - c. He decided to invite him to his concert.
 - d. He decided to compose a piece of music.
13. What was the title of the music that Yo-Yo Ma played on that evening at the concert?
 - a. The Hero of Sarajevo.
 - b. The Anguished Cellist.
 - c. The Cellist of Sarajevo.
 - d. The Greatest Cellist in Sarajevo.
14. How was Yo-Yo Ma's music at the festival?
 - a. It was calm and peaceful.
 - b. It was noisy and loud all the way.
 - c. It gradually intensified and then returned to silence.
 - d. It was cheerful in the beginning and very sad in the end.
15. Right after Yo-Yo Ma finished playing the music, what did he do?
 - a. He knelt down on the stage.
 - b. He remained bent over his cello.
 - c. He slowly walked away from the stage.
 - d. He smiled at the audience, waving his hands.
16. After he finished playing the music, what did Yo-Yo Ma do looking out across the audience?
 - a. He called someone's name.
 - b. He signaled someone to come to the stage.
 - c. He shouted at someone to come to the stage.
 - d. He shook his cello and called someone's name.
17. What did the two men, Yo-Yo Ma and Vedran Smailovic, do after finishing the music?
 - a. They shook hands.
 - b. They hugged each other.
 - c. They bowed to each other.
 - d. They kissed each other's cheeks.
18. How was Vedran Smailovic's appearance when he met Yo-Yo Ma?
 - a. He wore concert attire.
 - b. He was badly wounded.
 - c. He looked neat and elegant.
 - d. His clothes were dirty and torn.
19. What was the reaction of the audience looking at Vedran Smailovic meeting Yo-Yo Ma?
 - a. They were calm and peaceful.
 - b. They were moved and overwhelmed.
 - c. They were not interested in their meeting.
 - d. They were very sad to see the two men's behavior.
20. What did the author come to realize about music in the end?
 - a. It makes people feel calm.
 - b. It is a gift which can separate individuals
 - c. It is a gift which can help lonely old people.
 - d. It is a gift which can inspire great musicians

Editor's Note: There are many arguments for simplification or elaboration of information. Does simplification remove unwanted detail or "noise" that competes with key concepts to be learned and thus enhances learning? Or does elaboration provide additional context and detail to reinforce essential learning? That is explored in this study for English as a Foreign Language for students in Iran.

Effects of Input Modification: Simplification and Elaboration on Reading Comprehension of EFL Learners

Mir Akbar Mousavi

Iran

Abstract

The present study investigated the effects of two different types of input modification, simplification and elaboration, on reading comprehension of EFL learners. Linguistic simplification of written texts can increase the comprehensibility of these texts for non-native speakers but, at the same time, reduces their utility for language learning in other ways, for example, through the removal of linguistic items that learners do not know but need to learn (Yano, Long, and Ross, 1994). This study was, therefore, conducted to investigate and test whether elaborative modification observed in oral foreigner talk discourse – where redundancy and explicitness compensate for unknown linguistic items – can offer a potential alternative approach to written text modification. To accomplish this purpose, five reading passages in one of the three forms: (a) unmodified, (b) simplified, and (c) elaborated were randomly presented to 96 undergraduate students majoring in TEFL whose homogeneity was determined through a valid test of general English. To do this research, the scope of the study was limited to the students of pre-intermediate level. Results of an ANOVA and a Post-hoc test indicated that the subjects did nearly the same in simplified and elaborated reading passages but there was a statistically significant difference between reading comprehension scores of these passages and unmodified ones.

Introduction

To read efficiently in any language is always regarded as the main manifestation of literacy. The better one can read in a language the more learned he or she is expected to be. All over the world a reading knowledge of a foreign language is often important in academic environments, professions, and personal development. Today, so much professional, technical and scientific literature is published in English and this shows the significance and importance of reading in English. In fact, it is frequently the case that the ability to read in English is required of students by their subjects departments, often assessed by a test of reading comprehension. A reading ability is often all that is needed by learners of English as a foreign language (EFL), as well as other foreign languages. Naturally, facilitating the reading process for second or foreign language readers is a high priority for language researchers, teachers, and, of course, language learners. The questions of how to make the reading process easier and more effective have created a wide variety of theories, approaches, and texts. Many approaches claim to facilitate the second or foreign language reading process. Some view authentic, or unmodified, texts as the best medium for L2 readers; others use methods of modifying texts at the lexical, syntactic, or discourse levels. Still others create entirely new texts that are carefully composed using a limited lexical and syntactic range of features. But despite this specific need for the foreign language, it is the common experience of EFL teachers that most students fail to learn to read efficiently and adequately in the target language. Students reading in a foreign language seem to read with less understanding than one might expect them to, and read considerably slowly. The earlier researchers and investigators – who were engaged with the problem of how language is processed and comprehended – looked for statistical correlations between the objectively observable

features of texts and reading levels of readers, rather than building psychological models of language comprehension. This led to the development of readability formulas which represented a technical and conceptual advance at the time they were originated which used new techniques for measuring word frequency and reading ability and for computing statistical correlations. Furthermore, providing students with texts that are accessible and well matched to reader abilities has always been a challenge for educators. A solution to this problem has been the creation and use of readability formulas which is the key for text modification. To modify a text two broad approaches as implication (applying to the more basic units of vocabulary and syntax in a text to make text more accessible to a reader) or elaboration (adding some type of linguistic information to aid comprehension) are followed.

Text Modification

Linguistic modification is a common occurrence in second language communication, as demonstrated in almost any case of a native English speaker interacting with a beginning English learner. Slow rate of speaking, emphasis of key words, use of common vocabulary, and repetition are all modifications to aid comprehension. These adaptations are all ways that an English learner's negotiation of language can be facilitated, and they are performed almost instinctively by native speakers. Spoken language can be negotiated between the speaker and receiver as the language is generated, and the speaker can adapt the message according to their perception of the receiver's understanding and proficiency (Hatch, 1983). However, for readers in a second language, the written input cannot be negotiated in the same way that oral input can be. In short, for negotiation to occur, the material must be adapted before it is received by the language learner (Hatch, 1983). This idea of adaptation or modification often conflicts with the notion of "authentic" input. However, because interaction between writer and reader is largely one-sided, with negotiation of the message depending on the reader's ability to correctly interpret and process the writer's message, pre-reading modifications are crucial in aiding comprehension. Researchers have examined modifications at different levels, i.e., phonology, lexis, syntax, and discourse. Two common methods that are involved in process of text modification are simplification and elaboration.

Simplification

Simplification can be defined as controlling the text targeted at L2 learners by removing unfamiliar linguistic items (e. g. unknown grammatical constructions and lexis) in order to enhance comprehension. It has been widely applied in many commercially published L2 reading materials in the belief that the use of controlled vocabularies and short, simple sentences will facilitate L2 reading comprehension (Yano et al., 1994). Texts can be linguistically simplified by substituting frequently occurring vocabulary for infrequently occurring non-technical vocabulary, shortening sentence length, and restructuring sentences to reduce their complexity. The goal of linguistic simplification is to improve readability (i.e., the average length of words and sentences). When simplifying a text for ELLs (English language learners), the purpose of adaptation is to eliminate overly complex language that might prevent a student from understanding the main ideas of the text (Ragan, 2006). The emergence of readability formulas, is considered as a great accomplishment in the process of text *simplification* which can be defined, according to Widdowson (1979), as a kind of intralingual translation whereby a piece of discourse is reduced to a version written in the supposed interlanguage of the learner. Simplification has been, and still is, very extensively used to prepare materials for language learners. The rationale behind simplification has been the belief that word difficulty and sentence length/complexity are the main factors contributing to text difficulty. Although simplification is generally considered a good technique for a text modification for improving comprehension, it has been censured by many scholars. Davies and Widdowson (1974), for example, illustrate that simplification detracts from the authenticity of the language.

Elaboration

An alternative to *simplification* which at times detracts from the authenticity of the text and results in unnatural sentences seems to be *elaboration*, which is not only appealing in principle but also feasible in practice. Elaboration can be defined as any enhancement of information which clarifies or specifies the relationship between information to-be-learned and related information, i.e., a learner's prior knowledge and experience or contiguously presented information (Hamilton, 1997). A text can be modified for easier comprehension not by removing complex structures, as simplification does, but by adding redundant information to the text through the use of repetition, paraphrases, or appositionals (Long 1996, as cited in Urano, 2000). Text elaboration enriches NS text by providing meanings of unknown words in the form of paraphrases and by making thematic or anaphoric relationships in a text more transparent. Regarding input, one of the most interesting hypotheses is Krashen's input hypothesis, his hypothesis that the necessary and sufficient condition for second language acquisition are met when learners are exposed to language they can understand, which contains linguistic structure just beyond each learner's present language mastery (Lightbown, 1985). One has to agree with Krashen that, for optimal learning, the comprehensible input should be slightly higher than the competence level of the learner. So, reading must be adjusted, following it students can understand the message. One way of assigning the difficulty level of reading is measuring the grammatical structures, vocabulary and sentence complexity of the comprehension materials. The teacher might modify and simplify it and exclude the material that contains vocabulary or grammar which the students cannot grasp.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

All told this study seeks to find out whether either simplification or elaboration of texts promotes reading comprehension, and whether there is significant difference between the level of comprehension achieved by readers of simplified and elaborated texts. In other words, the purpose of the present study is to investigate whether modifying the text will facilitate reading comprehension among EFL learners at lower or pre-intermediate level of proficiency. To achieve the purpose of the study the three research questions were addressed: 1. Is there any significant difference between the reading comprehension scores of students who receive the unmodified versions and the students who receive the simplified versions of the passages? 2. Is there any significant difference between the reading comprehension scores of students who receive the unmodified versions and the students who receive the elaborated versions of the passages? 3. Is there any significant difference between the reading comprehension scores of students who receive the simplified versions and the students who receive the elaborated versions of the passages?

The Previous Studies

There are some previously done research studies concerning the impacts of input modification on nonnative speaker comprehension. But these research studies have different and inconsistent results and this inconsistency in results indicates the need for further research studies on input modification and comprehension. Johnson (1981) examined the effects on reading comprehension of language complexity and cultural background of a text. The results showed that the level of syntactic and semantic complexity of an English language text had a lesser effect than did the cultural origin of the text on the reading comprehension of foreign language learners. Linguistic simplification usually improves literal comprehension, although simple sentences alone may not help and can even hinder comprehension (Blau, 1982; Chaudron, 1983). Blau (1982) examined the effects of a single type of modification. She created three different versions of a text: Version 1 with short, simple sentences; Version 2 with complex sentences with clues to underlying relationships; and Version 3 made up of complex sentences without clues to underlying relationships. Scores on 24 multiple-choice comprehension questions by two groups, i.e., ESL

university students and ESL 8th graders, showed no significant difference. Blau argued that use of simple sentences, one of the main criteria for common readability formulas, does not necessarily aid comprehension.

Brown (1985, as cited in Urano, 2000) tested the reading comprehension of 30 ESL students of Taiwan with three different versions of a text as independent variable: the NS baseline version at the 10th grade level of difficulty; the modified input version (i.e., simplified version) with modification in sentence structure and vocabulary; and the modified interactional structure version (i.e., elaborated version), which retained the native speaker level of difficulty, but elaborated information through redundancy and repetition. The results of 20 multiple-choice questions after reading the text showed that the scores of both simplified and elaborated conditions were significantly higher than that of NS baseline or original condition. Although the elaborated group obtained a higher score than the simplified group, the difference was not statistically significant. Pica, Doughty, and Young (1986), found that simplification is not consistently superior to elaborative modification. Chaudron and Richards (1986), in a study investigated the effect of modification on comprehension. They indicated that listening comprehension is consistently improved when elaborative modifications are present. Tsang (1987) carried out a study with 401 ESL students in Hong Kong. She examined the differences in comprehension among the baseline, simplified, and elaborated texts with Cantonese-speaking students at five different grade levels (Grades 9 through 13). The results for the lowest two grades (i.e., Grades 9 and 10) displayed significantly higher scores for the simplified and elaborated groups compared with the baseline group.

Parker and Chaudron (1987) defined elaboration in a slightly different way from others. They categorized modification into three types: two types of modifications of input (simplification & elaboration), and modification of interaction. They operationally defined elaboration as "the addition of redundancy, and the explicit realization of underlying thematic relations" (p. 110). Two different types of passages were created from a passage for their study. An elaborated version retained all the redundancy and thematic structure, and was modified with some additional changes of the same type. The other text, the non-elaborated version, had all redundancies eliminated, and all the thematic structure reduced to canonical word order form. Forty-three college students answered a reading comprehension cloze test after reading one of two different types of passages. No statistically significant difference was found between the scores of the unmodified version and the elaborated version.

Davis (1989, as cited in Yanguas, 2009) investigated whether marginal glosses, (glossing as one form of simplification), improved comprehension of a literary text read in a foreign language by intermediate-level college students of French. Results showed that both presenting the students with a vocabulary guide before reading the text and providing glosses when reading the text helped students recall significantly more of the reading passage than those with no help. In one experiment, Cervantes and Gainer (1992) investigated the effects of syntactic simplification on listening comprehension. In another experiment the relative effects of syntactic simplification and repetition on listening comprehension were investigated. Results of a 2 x 2 ANOVA indicated that groups hearing the syntactically simplified version scored significantly higher on the recall cloze test than the groups hearing the more complex version. In the second experiment the results of 2 x 2 x 2 ANOVA indicated that comprehension scores for the groups hearing the syntactically simplified version were higher than the scores for the groups hearing the complex version with no repetition. Also, results indicated that scores for the groups hearing the complex version with repetition were higher than the scores for the groups hearing the complex version without repetition.

Yano et al. (1994) advocated the use of elaboration as an alternative to simplification. They argued against the use of simplification since it deprives the L2 learner of an opportunity to learn

new linguistic items. Thirteen reading passages with three different forms (i.e., NS baseline, simplified, and elaborated) were prepared for their experiment with 483 Japanese college students. Simplified texts were created by keeping the length of sentences and the number of multi-syllabic words and embedded clauses to a minimum. Elaborated versions were made by parenthetical paraphrase or providing definitions of low-frequency content words in the original. The scores of 30 comprehension questions showed that the simplified version was significantly easier to comprehend than the baseline condition, but no statistically significant difference was found between the elaborated condition and the baseline condition. Yano et al. further analyzed three subcategories of question types, and found that elaboration outperformed both simplified and baseline versions in mean scores of what they termed "inference" items. In one study, Ellis (1995) examined the effects of modified (premodified and interactionally modified) input on vocabulary acquisition. The results showed that the mean scores for interactionally modified input were higher than those for premodified input group in tests. Thus, interactionally modified input was more effective in vocabulary acquisition.

Chung (1995, as cited in Urano, 2000) hypothesized that both simplification and elaboration would facilitate L2 reading comprehension. She was also interested in the effects of different subtypes of elaboration, i.e., lexical elaboration and structural elaboration. Chung prepared five different versions of a reading passage: unmodified baseline, simplified, lexically elaborated, structurally elaborated, and lexically and structurally elaborated. In the simplified version, Chung rewrote compound sentences as several simple declarative sentences which expressed a single main idea per sentence, used the active voice where possible, and substituted low-frequency words with high-frequency ones. Lexical elaboration was achieved by adding redundancy, e.g., definition or synonym to the language items anticipated to be unknown to the participants. Similarly, structural elaboration was achieved by adding redundancy to the text in order to clarify message content and organization through signaling of intersentential relationship, retention of full NPs, supplying omitted elements, using anaphoric rather than cataphoric reference, and paraphrasing for summary statements which make already existing logical relations explicit without adding new information. The lexically and structurally elaborate text was generated by combining lexical and structural elaboration. The results of the 20-item multiple-choice comprehension test showed a significant difference between the baseline condition and the simplified condition. On the other hand, no significant differences were found between the elaborated conditions and the baseline condition. Watanabe (1997, as cited in Yanguas, 2009) explored the effects of text modifications (appositives and single and multiple-choice marginal glosses) and task on incidental L2 vocabulary learning when reading. Results confirmed that students who had access to either glossing format outperformed those participants who had not had access to glosses, in three unexpected vocabulary posttests. In addition, no significant results were found for the scores of those participants who could choose the type of gloss and those who were provided with the translation.

Lee (2002, as cited in Lesser, 2004) manipulated two input characteristics (frequency of Spanish future tense verbs and presence of temporal adverbs) and learners' task orientation (form, meaning, or neutral) to examine their effects on L2 beginning Spanish readers' "specific" comprehension of future verbs (via L1 recall of future actions and a multiple-choice test) and processing of Spanish future tense morphology (via word-recognition and form-production tasks). The results revealed that frequency of future forms affected comprehension of future actions (target recall and multiple choice) as well as recognition of future verbs. The presence of temporal adverbs and the directing of learners' attention to meaning affected the percentage of future verbs recalled (comprehended), but these variables had no effect on any of the input processing measures. Wong (2003, as cited in Lesser, 2004) examined the effects of linguistic simplification and textual enhancement on L2 French learners' comprehension of texts (via analysis of idea units from L1 written recall) and their acquisition of past participle agreement in

relative clauses (via an error-correction task). Although linguistic simplification facilitated learners' comprehension of the texts, no significant findings were obtained on the error-correction task. Similar findings were obtained for enhancement. Learners recalled (comprehended) more information from the enhanced elements of the text, but textual enhancement did not affect learners' performance on the error-correction task.

Participants

The subjects of this study were 96 adult male and female students (56 female and 40 male students; aged 19-26), chosen from among a population of 137 students. They were English language students who were studying English in Ardebil Azad University. All of the participants were at pre-intermediate level, based on the standard placement test administered by the researcher (See Appendix A).

Materials

Proficiency Test

A general English test taken from the Longman New Opportunities Placement Tests (Dawson, 2005), whose aim was to extract a sample of homogenous students (Appendix A). The test focuses primarily on grammar, as the clearest indicator of a student's ability in the language. In addition, there is some limited testing of collocation and lexical items. The tests cover material typically learnt from beginner to intermediate level. Each test consists of 80 multiple-choice questions that testers should answer in 30 minutes. In the case of interpretation of results, according to the instructions of the test, the following scoring bands indicate where students should be placed:

Test 1: 0 – 40 points- Beginner

Test 2: 0 – 40 points- Elementary 40 – 80 points- Pre-intermediate 40 – 80 points- Elementary

Test 2: 0 – 40 points- Elementary

Test 3: 0 – 40 points- Pre-intermediate 40 – 80 points- Intermediate 40 – 80 points- Pre-intermediate

In order to determine the level of participants, test 3 was administered and the students who scored between 0 – 40 were selected to form a homogeneous group of 96 members and those who scored higher than 40 were excluded.

Reading Comprehension Test

A test of reading comprehension containing five passages with the related multiple-choice comprehension questions (Appendices, B, C, and D). The passages were articles from the Readers' Digest magazine and thus, authentic. In order to determine the appropriate level of passages, the Fry Graph was used (Appendix E). Following the instructions of Fry Graph, i.e. by determining the average number of syllables and sentences per 100 words, the level of passages was determined to be pre-intermediate (level 7 of Fry Graph). The readability levels of passages were also computed using the Fog Index Readability Formulae. Farhady, Jafarpour, and Birjandi (2004) state that one of the practical formulas developed by Fog, is referred to as the Fog index readability. For the purpose of the study three versions of the test were prepared: the unmodified version (in which the texts are in their original form), the elaborated version, and the simplified one. Simplified texts were created by keeping the length of sentences and the number of multi-syllabic words and embedded clauses to a minimum and by replacing low frequency words by basic, high frequency words. Elaborated versions were made by parenthetical paraphrase or providing definitions of low-frequency content words in the original. Using the Fog Index, the average readability levels of the passages were computed as unmodified = 9.58, simplified = 6.24, and elaborated = 8.65. The validity and reliability of the reading comprehension test were also calculated. The validity of the test was determined to be .68 and the reliability was .30.

Procedures

The 96 subjects, whose homogeneity in terms of language proficiency was determined by the standard test of general English, were randomly divided into three equal and homogenous groups: group one, group two, and group three. Each group consisted of 32 students. In order to find out whether either simplification or elaboration of texts promotes reading comprehension, and whether there is significant difference between the levels of comprehension achieved by readers of unmodified, simplified, and elaborated texts, three forms of reading task, the unmodified, simplified, and elaborated were administered to these groups of subjects. In other words, the three groups of participants were given the unmodified, simplified, and elaborated versions, respectively. The subjects were supposed to choose and mark the best choice to the 4-6 multiple-choice items following each passage on a separate answer sheet. The three groups of unmodified, simplified, and elaborated were required to read and answer the multiple-choice questions in 30 minutes. The results of the study were analyzed by running one-way analysis of variance or One-way ANOVA.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data obtained from the multiple-choice reading comprehension tests (that is, unmodified, simplified, and elaborated versions) one-way analysis of variance (One-Way ANOVA) was run. Descriptive statistics for the reading comprehension scores of three groups are presented in Table 5. The F ratio for the means of the three types of passages proved to be significant at the 0.05 level as illustrated in Table 6.

Table 5
Descriptive statistics for the reading comprehension scores of three groups

	N	M	Std.d	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Unmodified	32	12.2500	2.57782	.45570	11.3206	13.1794	7.00	18.00
Simplified	32	16.5625	2.60195	.45996	15.6244	17.5006	12.00	22.00
Elaborated	32	15.7813	2.67285	.47250	14.8176	16.7449	10.00	22.00
Total	96	14.8646	3.20401	.32701	14.2154	15.5138	7.00	22.00

Table 6
One-way ANOVA for reading comprehension scores of the three groups

	Sum of Squares	Df	M	F	Sig.
Between Groups	337.896	2	168.948	24.653	.000***
Within Groups	637.344	93	6.853		
Total	975.240	95			

A Post-hoc comparison was run to exactly pin down where the differences exactly lie, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7
Post-Hoc tests (Multiple comparisons) of the three groups

(I) Text(J) Text	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Unmodified Simplified	-4.31250*	.65446	.000	-5.6121	-3.0129
Elaborated	-3.53125*	.65446	.000	-4.8309	-2.2316
Simplified Unmodified	4.31250*	.65446	.000	3.0129	5.6121
Elaborated	.78125	.65446	.236	-.5184	2.0809
Elaborated Unmodified	3.53125*	.65446	.000	2.2316	4.8309
Simplified	-.78125	.65446	.236	-2.0809	.5184

*The mean difference is significant at 0.05 level.

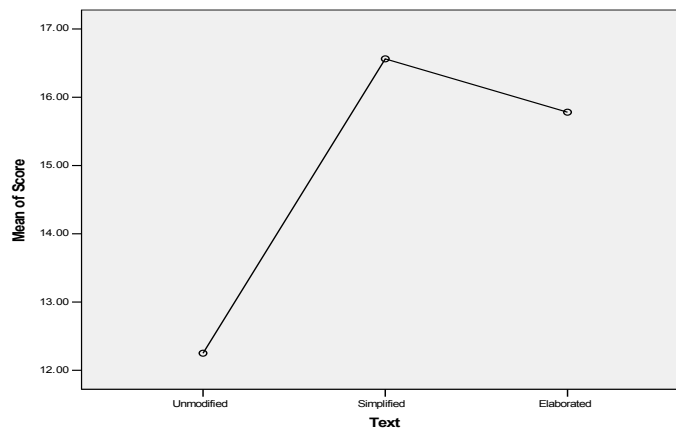


Figure 1: Means plot

As is shown in Tables above (results of one-way ANOVA), readers of the simplified texts (with a mean of 16.56) scored significantly higher than readers of the unmodified, native speaker baseline texts (with a mean of 12.25). Readers of elaborated texts (with a mean of 15.78), also, scored significantly higher than readers of unmodified texts. There was no significant difference, in terms of reading comprehension, between readers of simplified and elaborated texts.

Discussion and Result

The current study was carried out to investigate and test the hypothesis whether the elaborative modification observed in oral foreigner talk discourse, offers a potential approach to written text modification or not. In other words, it intended to investigate whether elaborative modification enhances reading comprehension, as the conventional simplification is believed to do. The questions underlying justification of the study included (a) whether there is a significant difference between the reading comprehension scores of students who receive the unmodified versions and the students who receive the simplified versions of the passages, (b) whether there is a significant difference between reading comprehension scores of students who receive the unmodified versions and students who receive the elaborated versions of the passages, and (c) whether there is a significant difference between reading comprehension scores of students who receive the simplified versions and students who receive the elaborated versions of the passages.

For the purpose of the study, three null hypotheses were posed as the effect of text type on foreign language reading comprehension. Hypothesis 1 stated that there is no significant difference between the reading comprehension scores of students who receive the unmodified versions and the students who receive the simplified versions of the passages. Hypothesis 2 stated that there is no significant difference between the reading comprehension scores of students who receive the unmodified versions and the students who receive the elaborated versions of the passages. Hypothesis 3 stated that there is no significant difference between the reading comprehension scores of students who receive the simplified versions and the students who receive the elaborated versions of the passages. Hypothesis 1 was rejected: students who read the linguistically simplified texts scored significantly higher than students who read the unmodified, native speaker baseline texts. Hypothesis 2 was also rejected: students who read the elaborated texts scored significantly higher than students who read the unmodified texts. Hypothesis 3 was, however, supported: there was no significant difference between the reading comprehension scores of students who read the simplified versions of passages and students who read the elaborated versions of passages.

The findings of this study confirmed the findings obtained by some previously done research studies. Blau (1982) and Chaudron (1983) corroborated the fact that linguistic simplification improves literal comprehension but simple sentences alone do not necessarily help and may even hinder comprehension. Findings of the present study are also in line with those of Pica, Doughty, and Young (1986) who confirmed the fact that simplification is not consistently superior to elaborative modification. Yano, Long, and Ross (1994), also, indicated how conversational adjustments elaborate the input, while maintaining much of the original complexity in both lexis and syntax, but compensating by clarifying the message content and structure by adding redundant information. They advocated the use of elaboration as an alternative to simplification and argued against the use of simplification since it deprives the L2 learner of an opportunity to learn new linguistic items. The only difference is that in their study no statistically significant difference was found between the elaborated condition and the baseline one. The same results were also obtained in Chung' study (Chung 1995, as cited in Urano 2000).

Pedagogical Implications

Two techniques of input modification, i.e. simplification and elaboration were both shown to improve comprehension. Simplification was somehow more effective than elaboration when scores of readers of simplified and elaborated were compared, but this difference was not statistically significant. The technique of elaboration, including parenthetical expansion of key terms and concepts in the original text, appears to provide the readers with a second look at those terms and concepts and consequently increases the chance that comprehension can be stimulated in the reading process. Unmodified texts probably fail to promote comprehension because concepts are obscured by structural and lexical detail. On the other hand, simplified texts do not necessarily always enhance comprehension because they strip away the richness in detail and connections that may help readers to perceive implicational links to infer information.

In summary, readers of the five simplified texts performed almost the same as readers of the five elaborated texts (the difference between these two groups was statistically non-significant) when both groups were tested on their comprehension of passage content, despite the fact that the elaborated texts were considerably more complex by conventional readability criteria. These results suggest that elaborative modification of texts serves to provide semantic detail essential for foreign language readers to make inferences about the texts they read. However, technique of simplification has some drawbacks stated and approved by several researchers. For example, Honneyfield (1977) wonders whether it might be better to avoid simplification, and to replace it with other techniques. Yano et al (1994) state that linguistically simplified texts constitute less

realistic models of the language which can negatively affect learner output and language acquisition. While removal of possibly unknown linguistic items from a text may facilitate comprehension, it will simultaneously deny learners access to the items they need to learn. Since the technique of elaboration provides learners with full form of the language and allows them to encounter, more or less, authentic and native-like material, it can also assist them in learning the language more successfully. Elaboration appears to serve two functions in most foreign or second language reading lessons: (a) it improves comprehension and (b) it provides learners with the rich linguistic form they need for further language learning. Elaboration, therefore, seems to constitute a viable alternative to simplification for written discourse, and be worthy of greater attention by researchers and teachers. The results of the present study can be considered by language teachers and reading comprehension materials writers and developers.

Suggestions for Further Research

The present study investigated whether either simplification or elaboration as two techniques of input modification, improves reading comprehension of EFL learners and whether there is a significant difference between reading comprehension scores of readers of unmodified, simplified, and elaborated texts. In particular this study assessed, and correctly confirmed, how elaborative modification enhances reading comprehension. Since simplification reduces the authenticity of text and sometimes results in unnatural sentences, elaboration technique which keeps the authenticity of the text might be an appropriate alternative in this regard. It is, then, quite apposite to try and investigate how this so-called elaboration facilitates the learning process and how much it helps language learners, as well as teachers, to overcome this task of language acquisition through a certain course of study. In addition, all subjects of this study belonged to one level of proficiency, i.e. pre-intermediate. It is, however, likely that students with different levels of mastery of the target language react differently to different types of text modification. Therefore, further studies are required to investigate how elaboration promotes reading comprehension among learners with different proficiency levels (for example, beginner, elementary, or advanced). Another point that can be considered in further research studies is that of "age" as an intervening variable. Simplification might be suitable for younger and weak learners – due to their weak background knowledge; whereas elaboration may better cater for reading comprehension for adults – due to their background knowledge. In this study the test time set for unmodified, simplified and elaborated passages was equal for all three groups, and these groups were required to read and answer the questions in thirty minutes. Other research studies could be carried out in this regard with different timings. One of the important factors influencing the reading comprehension is the cultural background of the subjects, a factor which was not considered in present study. Learners with different cultures and cultural backgrounds might have different performances on reading tests. Thus, this factor could be explored in further studies. Finally, as reported, the present research did not set out to control "sex" variable. The relationship between sex and text type modification and its influence on reading comprehension could be investigated. It is, then, worthwhile to probe either simplification or elaboration better suits male or female learners.

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Appendix: A

Choose the best option and mark A, B, C or D as in the example 0.

- 0 A horse has got legs.
A for B fore C fort D four
- 1 I50 years old in 2030.
A is B am C will be D am being
- 2 There aren't students in the class today.
A much B some C many D none
- 3 Excuse me? Can I buy ~~some~~ green apples please?
A a few B less C a bit D a little
- 4 Sorry, we have green apples.
A no B none C any D nothing
- 5 Sorry, I here on Thursday. I have to go to the dentist.
A is B 'm C 'll be D won't be
- 6 . my brothers live in the U.S.A.
A Neither B Both C Any D None
- 7 When it rains we inside.
A go B went C are going D goes
- 8 What you do if there is a blackout?
A shall B will C are D have
- 9 If you throw a stone into the water, it ...
A sinks B sank C sunk D is sinking
- 10 Who you talk to when you have a problem?
A did B do C does D will do
- 11 I to your flat if you don't want me to come.
A 'll come B 'm coming C won't come D don't come
- 12 If she recharge her battery, she won't be able to use her phone.
A doesn't B isn't C hasn't D wasn't
- 13 If I didn't like cooking, I be a chef.
A won't B haven't C didn't D. wouldn't
- 14 Would you go into space if you the chance?
A have B had C has D will have
- 15 If I lost my handbag, I the police.
A phone B 'm phone C 'll phone D 'd phone
- 16 Who the washing-up in your house?
A makes B does C has D gets
- 17 How are you? I haven't seen you a long time?
A since B after C before D for
- 18 I haven't eaten any meat I became a vegetarian.
A since B after C until D before
- 19 I her since she went to Germany.
A haven't seen B didn't see C wasn't seen D won't see
- 20 He in this house until he died in 1998.
A lives B has lived C lived D living
- 21 We French by Mr Dubois, the French teacher.
A teach B were taught C learnt D taught
- 22 The race by Paul Lucas in 92.8 seconds.
A was won B has won C is won D had won
- 23 How have you had this boat?
A much B far C long D time
- 24 What time did you go to bed when you were ten years old?
A must B should C have to D ought to
- 25 I'll come and see you after I my essay.
A finished B will finish C have finished D did finishes
- 26 Don't start making the pasta until I you.
A will phone B 'm phoning C phoned D phone
- 27 Paul McCartney comes from Liverpool, he?
A isn't B doesn't C hasn't D didn't
- 28 This is the painting was stolen in 2004.
A what B who C where D which
- 29 The teacher told me worry about my exam results.
A not to B not C don't D don't to
- 30 The teacher told me ...
A to relax B relaxing C relax D relaxed
- 31 . anything about astronomy?
A Do you know B Are you know C Have you know D Do you knowing
- 32 Napoleon Bonaparte in Corsica.
A was born B is born C born D to be born
- 33 I Portuguese because I lived in Brazil for ten years.
A understand B 'm understanding C to understand D 'll understand
- 34 She can't run in the race because she her leg.
A broke B has broken C breaks D is breaking
- 35 They arrived after the party ...
A finished B had finished C was finished D finish
- 36 John a brown jacket when I saw him.
A wore B was wearing C has worn D wears
- 37 William Shakespeare in this house when he was a child.
A had lived B used to live C would live D lives
- 38 The film was awful and we were very ...
A bored B boring C bore D boredom
- 39 Are you three boys in the back of the car?
A comfort B comfortable C comforted D comforting
- 40 Have you finished your assignment?
A complete B completed C full D completely
- 41 I couldn't take any pictures because I.... my

- A 'd left B 'm leaving C to leave D 've left
 42 When I got home I saw that my brother all the chocolates! The box was empty!
 A had eaten B has eaten C ate D eats
 43 In the evenings, we used to sit around the piano and our mother our favourite songs.
 A played B would play C plays D will play
 44 I.... David Copperfield for two weeks but I haven't
 A 've read B 've been reading C read
 45 You look very tired. you been working too hard?
 A Did B Was C Have D Are
 46 "I'd like to introduce My name is Dahlia Ross."
 A myself B yourself C me D ourselves
 47 They love very much and they are going to get married.
 A others B themselves C ourselves D each other
 48 She hurt when she was gardening.
 A herself B itself C himself D myself
 49 I of ghosts
 A frighten B am frightened C am frightening D fighten
 50 All the children presents by Father Christmas.
 A give B were giving C gave D were given
 51 The thief by a security camera.
 A was watching B was be watched
 52 She went to the salon ...
 A to make her hair cut B to be her hair C to do her hair cut D to get her hair cut
 53 The grass in front of his house for two months!
 A hasn't cut B hasn't been cut C did't cut D not cut
 54 We.... to Italy. we.... to Italy for our holidays next June. I've already booked a hotel in Florence.
 A'll go B' re going C go D went
 55 In fifty years from now, the earth...much water.
 A is B be C will be D is being
 56 Iguacu is the largest waterfall in South America.
 A the B — C a D an
 57 he is...officer in the army.
 A the B — C a D an
 58 United Kingdom consists of four countries; Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and England.
 A The B — C a D An
 59 Is your hair or straight?
 A curls B curled C curly D curling
 60 She's very young to be Prime Minister. She's only in her thirties.
 A later B late C lately D latest
 61 Look at that girl in her Ferrari. She be very rich!
 A should B can C must D may
 62 Don't forget to take an umbrella. It ...rain.
 A must B can C ought D may
 63 That ... Brad Pitt — not in this small town!
 A. must' t be B might't be C can't be D shouldn't be
 64 George hates everything. He must be very ...
 A cheerful B comfortable C miserable D positive
 65 It was a warm day when they returned, so they... switch on the heating
 A had to B were't able to C can't D did't have to
 66 She.... ride a bicycle until she was twelve years old.
 A can't B couldn't C hadn't D isn't
 67 If I hadn't got married when I was eighteen, I.... to university to study agriculture.
 A'd go B'd have gone C'll go D was going
 68 She.... a great ballet dancer if she hadn't grown so tall
 A will have been B will be C had to be D would have been
 69 She wouldn't have become a millionaire business
 A hadn't worked B had worked C didn't work D worked
 70 She told me that she her car when she was driving to work.
 A was crashing B had been crashing C had to crash D had to crash
 71 Mrs Fielding said she...help me with signing.
 A would B need C ought D is able
 72 The doctor asked me what I when I broke my leg.
 A doing B had been doing C have been doing D 'm going to do
 73 At the job interview, they asked me where I for the last two years.
 A work B 'll work C had been working D 'm working
 74 How long in Austria? - Almost two years, now.
 A are you living B have you been living C will you be living D did you live
 75 They wanted to know how tall I so they measured me.
 A have B have been C had D was
 76 Don't stop you have finished t
 A first B since C until D to
 77 ... she is only 13, she is an expert violinist and has played with orchestras on TV!
 A Because B Although C Despite D Even
 78 I wish I understand Spanish!
 A could B can't C able D can
 79 I feel so sleepy! I such a big lunch!
 A mustn't have eaten B shouldn't have eaten C wouldn't have eaten D couldn't have eaten
 80 I'd make you some coffee but I forgot ...
 A to buy B bought C buying D buy

Passage A: Unmodified Version

Read this passage carefully and answer the following questions. Mark your answers on your answer sheet. Do NOT mark this test paper.

A Home Alone

To project a "lived-in" to deter theft, whether you are on vacation or just gone for the day:

- Use at least two interior timers- for one floor lamp and one table lamp- programmed to alternate and give the illusion of someone at home.
- Leave a news or talk radio station playing on a kitchen radio.
- Be sure your mailbox is big enough to hide your day's mail. Nothing tells a crook you're not home more quickly than the sight of mail that has not been picked up.
- Do have an answering machine so your phone doesn't ring unanswered- but never leave a message that indicates you are not in. Instead, say, "I am not available right now".
- If you can give it proper care, get a dog or place a big, scuffed-up dog dish on your front porch.
- Put up a security-system sign that is visible from the road. It's a proven deterrent.

1. How can a big mailbox prevent theft?
a) It's strong and nobody can steal anything. b) It holds all the letters if not picked up
c) It shows the thief that you are at home. d) It helps you a lot with your letters.
2. According to the instructions, the big dog dish.....
a) can frighten the probable thieves b) can feed the dog well enough
c) indicates there is somebody home d) is a better way to prevent theft
3. The above instructions can help you prevent theft by.....
a) adding to the security-system of your house b) fooling the thieves
c) informing the police soon d) indicating to the thieves that you are home
4. The above instructions are most probably given by.....
a) the security council b) other citizens
c) the parliament d) the police

Passage B: Unmodified Version

Read this passage carefully and answer the following questions. Mark your answers on your answer sheet. Do NOT mark this test paper.

Begging Shame

When California police arrested 16-year-old Michael Vanvorce in 1969 they said he was "in danger of a dissolute life".

Their prediction apparently proved true. Last August Broward County, Florida, police nailed Vanvorce with what they say was his 30th arrest in 28 years. This time, authorities charged Vanvorce and his girlfriend with contributing to the delinquency of a child, for sending their three children into the streets to beg. Authorities say that while their children – two of whom were barefoot- approached strangers for handouts, Vanvorce drank in a neighbourhood bar. He pleaded not guilty to the charge.

Since his first arrest in 1969, police say, Vanvorce has been charged with heroin possession, robbery, sexual perversion, kidnapping, assault with a deadly weapon, burglary, exhibiting a deadly weapon, drunken driving, false imprisonment, battery and grand theft. In 1996 he was arrested for forged prescriptions, petty theft and possession of drug paraphernalia. He served a 20-day jail sentence for the petty theft charge, and faces outstanding warrants for failure to appear in court on the other two charges.

5. Vanvorce was first arrested.....
a) when he was 28 b) 40 years ago
c) for 28 years d) 30 years ago
6. Police had predicted that.....
a) he was dangerous b) he must try to avoid corruption
c) he was at the edge of corruption d) he might be a successful person
7. He was last arrested.....
a) in 1996 b) 28 years ago
c) in August d) in 1969

The British conspirators stuffed its pockets theatre ticket stubs, an "overdrawn" notice from his bank, letters from his fiancée, a cranky letter from his father about fuel rationing. And, of course, the secret invasion plans. Then, after selecting the ideal spot in terms the winds and tides, they launched Major Martin in water.

Their success became evident a few months later when the Allied forces invaded Sicily and found that the enemy had concentrated its forces elsewhere.

16. The Allies' intention was to invade.....
 - a) Sicily
 - b) Sardinia
 - c) Greek Peloponnesus
 - d) Sardinia and Greek Peloponnesus
17. The British expected.....
 - a) the dead body to fool the enemy
 - b) to look for a perfect dead body
 - c) the Germans to defend Sicily
 - d) the Germans to be deceived by the false information
18. Major William Martin.....
 - a) was the name of a British officer
 - b) belonged to the British army
 - c) had died in an airplane crash
 - d) had died of a disease
19. Major Martin's pockets were filled with different things so that.....
 - a) it would provide the enemy with enough false information
 - b) it would look real
 - c) he would look as if he had been in an air crash
 - d) he would look to be an important person
20. We know that the idea worked because.....
 - a) the British attacked Sicily a few months later
 - b) Major Martin was a clever officer
 - c) the Germans had concentrated their forces elsewhere
 - d) Germans were not clever enough not to be fooled

Passage E: Unmodified Version

Read this passage carefully and answer the following questions. Mark your answers on your answer sheet. Do NOT mark this test paper.

Even You Can Understand Football

When William the Conqueror invaded England in the 11th century, a game involving kicking a ball also came along from Normandy. The players began using inflated animal bladders as balls because they were easy on the toes, and could be guided accurately over long distances. By the time the English monarchs banned the game, starting as early as the 12th century (it kept soldiers from archery practice), it was called *futballe*.

Around 1823 one form of the game became known as *rugby*, when a Rugby School pupil caught the ball and ran with it instead of just kicking it. Another version—played under rules of the Football Association of England—evolved around 1863 when "Association football" was shortened to "assoc" and then turned into "*soccer*". In their present forms, both versions involve foot-to-ball contact, soccer much more than rugby. In 1869 American college teams melded rugby and soccer into a third game officially called football.

21. American football.....
 - a) did not originate from *futballe*, actually
 - b) has the same origin as soccer
 - c) was originally different from rugby
 - d) actually started in England
22. English kings banned the game because.....
 - a) it was called *futballe*
 - b) soldiers played it
 - c) it kept players from their duties
 - d) the game was a foreign one and they didn't like it
23. Rugby was invented.....
 - a) in American schools
 - b) by army soldiers
 - c) by a student
 - d) by Football Association
24. Soccer was first played in.....
 - a) 1869
 - b) 1863
 - c) France
 - d) America
25. It is understood from the text that rugby was invented.....
 - a) quite by chance
 - b) by pupils in English schools
 - c) in America
 - d) by the Football Association

Passage A: Simplified Version

Read this passage carefully and answer the following questions. Mark your answers on your answer sheet. Do NOT mark this test paper.

A Home Alone

To prevent your house from theft while you are on vacation or just out for one day:

- Use at least two interior timers: one for a floor lamp and one for a table lamp. Program them to turn on and off. This gives the illusion that somebody is at home.
- Leave your kitchen radio on.
- Be sure your mailbox is big enough to hide your day's mail. The sight of mail that has not been picked up, shows that you aren't home.
- Have an answering machine so your phone doesn't ring unanswered. But never leave a message that shows you are not in. Instead say, "I am not available now".
- If you can, get a dog. Or put a big dog dish on the front porch.
- Put up a security-system sign that can be seen from the road. It certainly prevents robbery.

1. How can a big mailbox prevent theft?
a) It's strong and nobody can steal anything. b) It holds all the letters if not picked up
c) It shows the thief that you are at home. d) It helps you a lot with your letters.
2. According to the instructions, the big dog dish.....
a) can frighten the probable thieves b) can feed the dog well enough
c) indicates there is somebody home d) is a better way to prevent theft
3. The above instructions can help you prevent theft by.....
a) adding to the security-system of your house b) fooling the thieves
c) informing the police soon d) indicating to the thieves that you are home
4. The above instructions are most probably given by.....
a) the security council b) other citizens
c) the parliament d) the police

Passage B: Simplified Version

Read this passage carefully and answer the following questions. Mark your answers on your answer sheet. Do NOT mark this test paper.

That's Shocking

California police arrested 16-year-old Michael Vanvorce in 1969. They said he was in danger of leading a bad life.

That was true. Last August, police arrested Vanvorce in Broward County, Florida. It was his 30th arrest in 28 years. This time, they charged him and his girlfriend with harming children. They had sent their three children into the streets to beg. Two of the children had no shoes on. Police say that while the children were begging, Vanvorce drank in a neighbourhood bar. He claimed that he was not guilty.

Since his first arrest in 1969, Vanvorce has been charged with different crimes: carrying heroin, robbery, kidnapping, attacking with a weapon, drunken driving, violence and theft. In 1996 he was arrested for false prescriptions, theft and carrying different drugs. He was in prison for 20 days for the theft charge. The police have written orders to arrest him for not appearing in court for the other two charges.

5. Vanvorce was first arrested.....
a) when he was 28 b) 40 years ago
c) for 28 years d) 30 years ago
6. Police had predicted that.....
a) he was dangerous b) he must try to avoid corruption
c) he was at the edge of corruption d) he might be a successful person
7. He was last arrested.....
a) in 1996 b) 28 years ago
c) in August d) in 1969
8. Vanvorce.....for contributing to child abuse.
a) was sent to prison b) claimed not to be guilty
c) was found guilty d) was not innocent

9. It is surprising how.....
- a) he has escaped the other two charges so far
 - b) he had sent the children into streets to beg
 - c) he was sent to jail for 20 days
 - d) he carried drugs

Passage C: Simplified Version

Read this passage carefully and answer the following questions. Mark your answers on your answer sheet. Do NOT mark this test paper.

The Age of Discovery

During Roman times, travel to far lands was common and trade was successful. Traders exchanged things with China and India. Many traders had a clear understanding of the geography of North Africa, the Near East, and Western India. But the Roman Empire fell and Muslims captured most of Mediterranean trade roads. This isolated Europe from the rest of the world. For centuries, few Europeans dared to travel. Roads were bad and full of wolves and thieves. And sea-thieves made sea travel dangerous. Most people stayed close to home. They knew and cared little about the rest of the world.

There were some exceptions. During the 10th century, Norsemen from Scandinavia traveled far to the West. They went across the Atlantic to North America, landing probably in the area Labrador, Nova Scotia, and New England. But few Europeans knew of their discoveries. They were soon forgotten. The wars that began in the 11th century brought back European contact with the East. But most of the trade was limited to the Mediterranean Sea. In the 13th century Marco Polo journeyed to China and lived with the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan. He returned and reported the wonders he had seen. His book influenced Europe. But the Ming Kings who came after the Mongols discouraged contact with foreigners. By the beginning of the 15th century, Europe started a dynamic, exciting new age: the Age of Discovery.

10. The reason for trade's success during the Roman Empire is that.....
- a) many people liked to travel
 - b) some merchants traveled to far-off lands
 - c) money was important to them
 - d) the Roman Empire was so large that people could travel to far-off lands
11. After the Roman time, foreign trade did not continue because.....
- a) Muslims did not promote foreign trade
 - b) European were not rich any more
 - c) of the fall of Roman Empire
 - d) of the Europe isolation from the world
12. Trade in the 11th century.....
- a) was confined to the Near East countries
 - b) was not large due to the wars
 - c) started because Europeans liked Muslim
 - d) began by Marco Polo's journey to the East countries
13. Which one is not true about travel to far-off lands after Roman Empire?
- a) Trade routes were poor and dangerous
 - b) Muslims had a negative influence on it
 - c) People did not care much about the rest of the world
 - d) Travel on sea was safer than travel on land
14. Despite the influence of Marco Polo's journey on Europeans, travel to the East did not continue because.....
- a) the Mings discouraged the Easterners to contact the
 - b) Marco Polo had described many West wonders in the East
 - c) the Mings had a different attitude towards strangers
 - d) It took a rather long time to take than the Mongols such a journey
15. It can be understood from the text that.....
- a) Christians used to have a friendly relationship with
 - b) Norsemen are commonly known as the first Muslim countries in the past explorers of America
 - c) Europe was isolated from the world for a long time
 - d) the Age of Discovery actually started from the time when Scandinavians discovered America

Passage D: Simplified Version

Read this passage carefully and answer the following questions. Mark your answers on your answer sheet. Do NOT mark this test paper.

Dead Man's Flout

In 1943 many countries were fighting against Hitler. They wanted Hitler to believe that they were going to attack Sardinia and Greek Peloponnesus. But they actually wanted to attack Sicily. The British thought of a good idea: float a dead man, carrying false letters about the attack, near the coast of Spain. Germans were active there. They would find the body. The false secrets would fool them.

They paid a lot of attention to details. The body had to look as if it had been in an airplane crash and drowned. After a lot of search they found the perfect body. A man who had died of a disease and they called him Major Martin.

They filled the dead body's pockets with theatre tickets, a bank notice, love letters from his girl friend and an angry letter from his father. And, of course, the secret attack plans. Then, they put Major Martin in an ideal spot in water.

They were successful. A few months later they attacked Sicily. They found that the enemy had concentrated its forces elsewhere.

16. The Allies' intention was to invade.....
- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| a) Sicily | b) Sardinia |
| c) Greek Peloponnesus | d) Sardinia and Greek Peloponnesus |
17. The British expected.....
- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| a) the dead body to fool the enemy | b) to look for a perfect dead body |
| c) the Germans to defend Sicily | d) the Germans to be deceived by the false information |
18. Major William Martin.....
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a) was the name of a British officer | b) belonged to the British army |
| c) had died in an airplane crash | d) had died of a disease |
19. Major Martin's pockets were filled with different things so that.....
- | | |
|--|--|
| a) it would provide the enemy with enough false | b) it would look real information |
| c) he would look as if he had been in an air crash | d) he would look to be an important person |
20. We know that the idea worked because.....
- | | |
|---|--|
| a) the British attacked Sicily a few months later | b) Major Martin was a clever officer |
| c) the Germans had concentrated their forces | d) Germans were not clever enough not to elsewhere be fooled |

Passage E: Simplified Version

Read this passage carefully and answer the following questions. Mark your answers on your answer sheet. Do NOT mark this test paper.

Even You Can Understand {American} Football

When William the Conqueror attacked England in the 11th century, a game came into England from Normandy. It contained kicking a ball around. The players used animal bladders because they were easy to play with. They filled it with air. In the 12th century, it was called *futballe*. The English kings stopped the game, because it kept soldiers from shooting practice.

Around 1823 one form of the game became known as *rugby*. A pupil in Rugby School caught the ball and ran instead of just kicking it. Another form emerged around 1863. It was played under rules of Football Association of England. "Association football" was shortened to "assoc" and then turned into "*soccer*". Now, both forms have foot-to-ball contact, soccer more than rugby. In 1869 American college teams mixed rugby and soccer into a third game officially called {American}football.

21. American football.....
- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| a) did not originate from <i>futballe</i> , actually | b) has the same origin as soccer |
| c) was originally different from rugby | d) actually started in England |
22. English kings banned the game because.....
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| a) it was called <i>futballe</i> | b) soldiers played it |
| c) it kept players from their duties | d) the game was a foreign one and they didn't like it |
23. Rugby was invented.....
- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| a) in American schools | b) by army soldiers |
| c) by a student | d) by Football Association |
24. Soccer was first played in.....
- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| a) 1869 | b) 1863 |
| c) France | d) America |
25. It is understood from the text that rugby was invented.....
- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| a) quite by chance | b) by pupils in English schools |
| c) in America | d) by the Football Association |

Passage A: Elaborated Version

Read this passage carefully and answer the following questions. Mark your answers on your answer sheet. Do NOT mark this test paper.

A Home Alone

Whether you are on vacation or just gone out for one day, project or plan a "lived-in" look for your house. This way it looks as if someone is at home and you can prevent theft. To do so you must:

- Use at least two inside timers- for one floor lamp and one table lamp- programmed to alternate and turn on and off to give the thieves the illusion or assumption that somebody is at home.
- Leave a news station or a talk radio station playing on a kitchen radio.

- Be sure your mailbox is big enough to hide your day's mail. Nothing tells a crook or thief that you are not home better than or more quickly than the sight of mail that has not been picked up.
- Do have an answering machine so your phone does not ring unanswered- but never leave a message that indicates or shows you are not home. Instead, say, "I am not available right now".
- Get a dog if you can give it proper and good care. Or you can place a big, scuffed-up, used dog dish on your front porch.
- Put up a security sign that is visible and can be seen clearly from the road. It has been proved to deter and prevent robbery.

1. How can a big mailbox prevent theft?

a) It's strong and nobody can steal anything.	b) It holds all the letters if not picked up
c) It shows the thief that you are at home.	d) It helps you a lot with your letters.
2. According to the instructions, the big dog dish.....

a) can frighten the probable thieves	b) can feed the dog well enough
c) indicates there is somebody home	d) is a better way to prevent theft
3. The above instructions can help you prevent theft by.....

a) adding to the security-system of your house	b) fooling the thieves
c) informing the police soon	d) indicating to the thieves that you are home
4. The above instructions are most probably given by.....

a) the security council	b) other citizens
c) the parliament	d) the police

Passage B: Elaborated Version

Read this passage carefully and answer the following questions. Mark your answers on your answer sheet. Do NOT mark this test paper.

That's Shocking

When police in California arrested Michael Vanvorce in 1969, police said he was "in danger of a dissolute life", a life of wrong doings and corruption of behavior.

The prediction of police apparently and clearly proved to be true. Last august police in Boward County, Florida, arrested Vanvorce once again. It was his 30th arrest in 28 years. This time police authorities charged Vanvorce and his girlfriend with causing and contributing to child abuse by sending their three children into streets to beg. Authorities say that while the children- two of them were barefoot, with no shoes on- approached and got near strangers for handouts of money, Vanvorce himself drank in a neighbourhood bar. He pleaded not guilty to the charge and claimed that he was not guilty.

Since his first arrest in 1969, police say that Vanvorce has been charged with different crimes, such as: carrying heroin, robbery, sexual wrong doings, kidnapping, assault and attacking people with a deadly, dangerous gun, burglary, drunken driving, violence and grand big theft. In 1996 he was arrested for forged, false prescriptions to get drugs from a pharmacy, petty small theft and carrying different drugs. He spent 20 days in jail or prison for the pretty theft and though the police have written warrants and orders to arrest him, it is surprising how he has escaped on the other two charges so far.

5. Vanvorce was first arrested.....

a) when he was 28	b) 40 years ago
c) for 28 years	d) 30 years ago
6. Police had predicted that.....

a) he was dangerous	b) he must try to avoid corruption
c) he was at the edge of corruption	d) he might be a successful person
7. He was last arrested.....

a) in 1996	b) 28 years ago
c) in August	d) in 1969
8. Vanvorce.....for contributing to child abuse.

a) was sent to prison	b) claimed not to be guilty
c) was found guilty	d) was not innocent
9. It is surprising how.....

a) he has escaped the other two charges so far	b) he had sent the children into streets to beg
c) he was sent to jail for 20 days	d) he carried drugs

Passage C: Elaborated Version

Read this passage carefully and answer the following questions. Mark your answers on your answer sheet. Do NOT mark this test paper.

The Age of Discovery

During Roman times, travel to far-off lands was not uncommon and, therefore, trade prospered and was successful. Merchants or traders exchanged goods and things with China and India, and many of the merchants had a fairly and almost clear understanding of the geography of North Africa, the Near East, and Western India. However, the collapse and fall of the Roman Empire, and later, the seizure or capture of most Mediterranean trade routes and roads by Muslims largely isolated Europe from the rest of the world. For centuries, few Europeans dared to travel. Roads were poor and bad and also infested with or full of wolves and bandits (thieves on the road), while sea travel was also endangered by pirates (thieves on the sea). Most people stayed close to home; they knew and cared little about the rest of the world.

There were some exceptions. During the 10th century, Norsemen from Scandinavia voyaged (traveled through sea) far to the West across the Atlantic Ocean to North America; they landed probably in the vicinity or area of Labrador, Nova Scotia, and New England. Few Europeans knew of their discoveries, however, and they were soon forgotten. The Crusades (the wars between Christians and Muslims), beginning in the late 11th century, restored and brought back European contact with the East, although most of the resulting commerce and trade was confined and limited to the Mediterranean Sea. In the 13th century, Marco Polo journeyed to China and lived at the court (where the king and queen live) of the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan. He, then, returned and reported the wonders he had seen in the East. Marco Polo's book influenced Europe, but the Ming rulers and kings who succeeded and came after the Mongols discouraged contact with foreigners. By the beginning of the 15th century Europe stood on the verge or at the beginning of a dynamic, exciting new era or period: the Age of Discovery.

10. The reason for trade's success during the Roman Empire is that.....
 - a) many people liked to travel
 - b) some merchants traveled to far-off lands
 - c) money was important to them
 - d) the Roman Empire was so large that people could travel to far-off lands
11. After the Roman time, foreign trade did not continue because.....
 - a) Muslims did not promote foreign trade
 - b) European were not rich any more
 - c) of the fall of Roman Empire
 - d) of the Europe isolation from the world
12. Trade in the 11th century.....
 - a) was confined to the Near East countries
 - b) was not large due to the wars
 - c) started because Europeans liked Muslim
 - d) began by Marco Polo's journey to the East countries
13. Which one is not true about travel to far-off lands after Roman Empire?
 - a) Trade routes were poor and dangerous
 - b) Muslims had a negative influence on it
 - c) People did not care much about the rest of the world
 - d) Travel on sea was safer than travel on land
14. Despite the influence of Marco Polo's journey on Europeans, travel to the East did not continue because.....
 - a) the Mings discouraged the Easterners to contact the
 - b) Marco Polo had described many West wonders in the East
 - c) the Mings had a different attitude towards strangers than the Mongols
 - d) It took a rather long time to take such a journey
15. It can be understood from the text that.....
 - a) Christians used to have a friendly relationship with
 - b) Norsemen are commonly known as the first Muslim countries in the past explorers of America
 - c) Europe was isolated from the world for a long time
 - d) the Age of Discovery actually started from the time when Scandinavians discovered America

Passage D: Elaborated Version

Read this passage carefully and answer the following questions. Mark your answers on your answer sheet. Do NOT mark this test paper.

Dead Man's Flout

In 1943 the Allies, who were fighting against Adolf Hitler, wanted Hitler to believe that they were going to invade and attack Sardinia and the Greek Peloponnesus, not Sicily as it was actually planned. The British came up with an ingenious clever idea: float a dead man, phoney (false) letters about the plans of invasion and attack, near the coast of Spain where German forces were active. If everything went well, the body would be found by the Germans and the false secret information would fool and deceive the enemy.

Scrupulous careful attention was paid to details to make everything look real. The body had to look as though it had been in airplane crash and, then, it had drowned later. After an exhaustive complete search, the British discovered the perfect corps: the dead body of a man who had died of a pneumonia, a dangerous disease, which had not been buried and been exposed to elements (bad weather, wind, rain). They called him Major William Martin.

The British conspirators who were preparing the corpse (the dead body), stuffed and filled its pockets with theatre ticket stubs and ends, an "overdrawn" notice from his bank (which warned him that he had drawn too much money), love letters from his fiancée (girl

friend), a cranky anger letter from his father about fuel being in short supply. And, of course, the secret invasion and attack plans. Then, after selecting the ideal spot and place where the winds and tides (the rise and fall of water) were the best, they launched and put Major Martin in water.

Their success became evident and clear a few months later when the Allied forces—who were fighting against Hitler—attacked and invaded Sicily and found that the enemy had concentrated its forces elsewhere.

16. The Allies' intention was to invade.....
- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| a) Sicily | b) Sardinia |
| c) Greek Peloponnesus | d) Sardinia and Greek Peloponnesus |
17. The British expected.....
- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| a) the dead body to fool the enemy | b) to look for a perfect dead body |
| c) the Germans to defend Sicily | d) the Germans to be deceived by the false information |
18. Major William Martin.....
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a) was the name of a British officer | b) belonged to the British army |
| c) had died in an airplane crash | d) had died of a disease |
19. Major Martin's pockets were filled with different things so that.....
- | | |
|---|---|
| a) it would provide the enemy with enough false | b) it would look real in an air crash information |
| c) he would look as if he had been | d) he would look to be an important person |
20. We know that the idea worked because.....
- | | |
|---|--|
| a) the British attacked Sicily a few months later | b) Major Martin was a clever officer |
| c) the Germans had concentrated their forces | d) Germans were not clever enough not to be fooled elsewhere |

Passage E: Elaborated Version

Read this passage carefully and answer the following questions. Mark your answers on your answer sheet. Do NOT mark this test paper.

Even You Can Understand {American} Football

When William the Conqueror, the French commander, attacked and invaded England in the 11th century, a game involving and containing kicking a ball around also came along from Normandy, an area in France. The players began using animal bladders—part of the body that keeps urine—which were inflated, filled with air. Animal bladders were used because they were easy to be kicked on toes and could also be guided accurately and correctly over long distances. By the time the English monarchs —kings and queens—banned and stopped the game, as early as the 12th century (because it prevented and kept soldiers from the more important archery, or shooting practice), the game was called *futballe*.

Around 1823 one form of the game became known as *rugby*, when a pupil (student) in Rugby School—an old school in England—caught the ball and ran instead of just kicking it. Another version or form, which was played under rules of the Football Association of England, evolved and emerged around 1863 when the word "Association Football" was shortened to "assoc" and turned into "*soccer*". In their present forms, both versions (types) still involve foot-to-ball contact, of course soccer much more than rugby. In 1869 American college teams melded or mixed rugby and soccer into a third game called {American} football.

21. American football.....
- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| a) did not originate from <i>futballe</i> , actually | b) has the same origin as soccer |
| c) was originally different from rugby | d) actually started in England |
22. English kings banned the game because.....
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| a) it was called <i>futballe</i> | b) soldiers played it |
| c) it kept players from their duties | d) the game was a foreign one and they didn't like it |
23. Rugby was invented.....
- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| a) in American schools | b) by army soldiers |
| c) by a student | d) by Football Association |
24. Soccer was first played in.....
- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| a) 1869 | b) 1863 |
| c) France | d) America |
25. It is understood from the text that rugby was invented.....
- | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| a) quite by chance | b) by pupils in English schools | c) in America | d) by the Football Association |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|

Editor's Note: Conversation plays a key role in language learning. This study measures language functions and speech acts to determine the efficacy of the "Top Notch" learning materials.

A Textbook Evaluation of Speech Acts and Language Functions In "Top-Notch" Series

**Seyyed Mohammad Ali Soozandehfar
Iran**

Abstract

This study analyzes the conversation sections of Top Notch Fundamental textbooks from the pragmatic dimension of language functions and speech acts. For this purpose, 14 conversations from the entire 14 units of the books were selected randomly and the two pragmatic models of Halliday's (1978) language functions and Searle's (1976) speech acts were applied. The results indicated that the conversations in these newly-arrived textbooks are not pragmatically efficacious and functional. Finally, some implications for teachers, material developers, and textbook designers were proposed.

Keywords: Top Notch Fundamentals, textbook evaluation, pragmatic.

Introduction

The Position of Top Notch Series in Iran

The present shortcomings of the Iranian educational system in teaching English language is derived mainly from unfamiliarity of some English language teachers with new educational viewpoints, and other problems such as the unfamiliarity of the curriculum with applying new materials, relying on old sources or textbooks that are published without permission of the original publisher, lack of enough teacher training courses, and the intercultural problems observed in textbooks, especially in lower ages, have led many institutions in Iran, such as Gazelle Publications, the publisher of Top Notch series in Iran, to choose the Top Notch series, a product of 2006, as a source of ELT with the claim of applying the latest English teaching methodologies, having an official permission from the original publisher, National Pearson Longman, and finally reducing the intercultural problems.

According to Robinson (1991), people learn languages when they have opportunities to understand and work with the language in a context that they comprehend and find interesting. In Iran when new materials are available, people become so attracted towards them that they believe they are the best for learning or teaching. This is exactly in line with the results of Chadran's (2001) study showing that teachers preferred available commercially produced materials in the market over the prescribed textbooks developed by the Ministry, that they do not engage themselves in producing materials of their own, and that they consider textbooks outdated and dull. As a result, nowadays, Top Notch series have become the most-frequently-used series in almost all of the institutes and also for most of the tutoring for English language teaching and learning without any preceding evaluation or assessment. In present day Iran, there are a lot of English language institutes in which students of different ages register with the hope that Top Notch series can better improve their English language proficiency, just because they are the newest series in this country. Therefore, in a country like Iran, where most learners tend to learn English through Top Notch, and when this tendency increases day after day, consequently the institutes are led to adapt themselves to the new trend, so that they base their syllabi on this new interest, i.e. the Top Notch series. As a result, this study, at the pragmatic level, tries to make this

process clear to see whether these new series are really competent or not. To do so, the researcher has applied the following two important models which best show this pragmatic dimension through the analysis of the conversations in Top Notch Fundamentals, which is the aim of the present study.

Objective of the Study

The current study concerns with the analysis of the two fundamental levels of Top Notch series conversations from a pragmatic perspective to see how pragmatically rich these textbooks are. As a result, this study performs this pragmatic analysis based on two pragmatic models including Halliday's (1978) Functional Model and Searle's (1976) Speech Act Taxonomy in order to find the different types of language functions and speech acts as well as their frequency, so that the overall pragmatic evaluation of Top Notch Fundamentals can be concluded. Therefore, the following research questions, in particular, will be answered through the present study:

1. What are the types of language functions in the conversation texts?
2. How frequently each language function is used?
3. What are the types of speech acts in the conversation texts?
4. How frequently each speech act is used?
5. Are the conversations of these two Top Notch Fundamentals pragmatically competent and efficient with regard to existence and distribution of speech acts and language functions?

Literature Review

Foreign Research on Textbook Evaluation

Chadran (2001) ran a study about English textbooks used in Malaysian schools. English teachers of over thirty schools in Malaysia participated in informal interviews with the researcher about their feelings, perceptions, values, attitudes and beliefs about the textbooks prescribed to them by the Malaysian Ministry of Education. Results showed that, in general, teachers preferred commercially produced materials available in the market over the prescribed textbooks developed by the Ministry, that they do not engage themselves in producing materials of their own, that they consider textbooks outdated and dull, and that textbooks were not suitably graded in terms of difficulty.

Morgan (2003) evaluated IELTS preparation materials and showed that there is a need for more materials that are beyond test-taking practice and aim at developing the language competencies that the candidates need for their work or study destinations. In the books, strong motivation of IELTS candidates was seen as taken for granted and therefore, there is not any attempt to make the books emotive as visually attractive books do; and this was found to be the problem with the books.

In the realm of pragmatics another study has been done by Otlowski (2003) on the portrayal of gender and the representation of the various ethnic groups in the Expressway A series. The textbook is analyzed for (1) gender bias – the depiction of women in stereotypical roles, and (2) ethnic group portrayal – the visibility and depiction of ethnic groups in the text. The conversations and illustrations in each chapter are examined with regard to the above criteria. The results showed that Expressway A, while better than many earlier EFL texts, still depicts women in roles that no longer accurately represent their role in society. The text also gives a very sanitized view of the ethnic make-up of the societies and, in one case, shows a large degree of cultural insensitivity.

Some comparison studies in the area of textbook evaluation have also been conducted one of the most recent one allocated to Vellenga (2004) who makes a comparison between EFL and ESL

textbooks. She believes that textbooks rarely provide enough information for learners to successfully acquire pragmatic competence. She evaluates eight English as a Second Language (ESL) namely, Focus on Grammar, Grammar Links 3, Intermediate Grammar: From form to meaning and use, Understanding and Using English Grammar, and English as Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks namely Headway, Interchange 2, Passage 1, Voyages, All) to determine the amount of general pragmatic information, as well as metalanguage style, speech acts and metapragmatic directives. The findings of Vellenga's (2004) study shows that the textbooks include a paucity of meta-linguistic and explicit meta-pragmatic information, and the comparison of EFL and ESL textbooks reveals that although the amount of pragmatic information is small across all texts, a larger percentage of pages of EFL texts are comprised to pragmatic information; however, the quality of pragmatic information is better in terms of number of speech acts presented and amount of meta-pragmatic cues in ESL texts. Also she finds that teachers' manuals rarely supplement adequately. Teacher surveys show that teachers seldom bring in outside materials related to pragmatics and thus, learning pragmatics from textbooks is highly unlikely.

The LATEX research group (2005) conducted another research on teacher evaluation of a textbook using think-aloud protocols. The members of the group focusing on expertise in language teaching decided to look at one important aspect of teaching: materials evaluation. Their instrument was the LATEX Materials Evaluation Research Questionnaire including some questions about the teaching experience and textbook evaluation experience. As it is clear, all these activities centered on the evaluation of textbooks or materials designed for general purposes not for specific ones applied for ESP courses.

In the field of business communication, Bremner (2008) focused on intertextuality in the textbooks used in the field and found that intertextuality was acknowledged only implicitly, if at all. Furthermore, few tasks provided students with the types of intertextual support which would help them in understanding the ways in which this aspect of the writing process help shape the texts they write. They believe that more intertextuality provides more realistic contexts.

In Turkey, Hamiloğlu and Karlıova (2009) examined and evaluated five selected English language course books from the viewpoint of vocabulary selection and teaching techniques they employ. The course books chosen by the researchers were all for adults and young adults to learn and teach English as a foreign language. As an examination and evaluation method, content-analysis was preferred in this study. As a result of this evaluation, it was seen that all selected course books integrated lexis into their syllabuses, giving emphasis to word knowledge by means of separate headings and additional sub-headings, such as Vocabulary, Word Building, Word Formation, Easily Confused Words, Keyword Transformation, Near-synonyms and Synonyms.

Finally, the most recent study in textbook evaluation has been performed by Khalid Mahmood (2010) which aimed at the exploration of textbook evaluation process through analysis of the approved textbooks by the ministry of Education in Pakistan. Eight textbooks in the subjects of science and mathematics, developed in the public and private sector, were analyzed. The results showed that there is a need to make the criteria objective with respect to content coverage in relation to curriculum content scope, concept building, cognition level of assessments given in the end of chapter exercises, format and design, and binding for its durability.

Regarding the foreign studies on textbook evaluation, no study can be found on Top Notch series, particularly on Fundamentals, and especially with regard to the pragmatic dimension applying Halliday's (1978) and Searle's (1976) models.

Iranian Research on Textbook Evaluation

A valuable study has been conducted by Tavakoli (1995) and it concerns with the language functions in the dialogues inserted in the English textbooks of Iranian senior high schools. The data are analyzed based on Searle's (1976) model of speech acts as criteria for evaluating the

dialogues to see whether the different kinds of speech acts are correctly used. The criteria are considered as macro functions. She also has determined how frequently each function is used, and which ones are introduced to the students in the four English textbooks. To shed light on the interaction of grammar and pragmatics (the principle of language use, especially those of syntax and sociopragmatics), the micro-functions (different kinds of language functions) as well as the grammatical functions of each utterance are analyzed based on Quirk et al (1985) model. She has revealed that out of five different kinds of language functions, only three of them i.e. representative with high frequency, directive, and expressive were used in the texts. While commissive and declaration have been ignored.

Ansary and Babaie (2002) scrutinized a corpus of 10 EFL/ESL textbook reviews plus 10 EFL/ESL textbook evaluation checklists conveniently sampled while presenting a summary of common-core characteristics of standard EFL/ESL textbooks in their investigation, too. They tried to look for some theory-neutral, universal, and broad consensus-reached characteristics of EFL/ESL textbooks, and draw up some guidelines for the generation as well as systematic evaluation of EFL/ESL textbooks. They offered two samples presented by Allen Tucker's (1975) system for evaluating beginning EFL/ESL textbooks and, Penny Ur's (1996) criteria for EFL/ESL course book assessment as their checklist. They concluded that however perfect a textbook is, it is just a simple tool in the hands of teachers and what is more important than a textbook is what we, as teachers, can do with it.

In the realm of task-based and pragmatics Iraj (2007) conducts a research and makes a careful analysis on New Interchange series based on the principles of communicative and task-based approach to investigate to what extent the principles of CLT and TBLT approaches have been regarded. In this regard, she employs Ellis's model (2003). Ellis (2003) classifies tasks into five categories: 1) jigsaw task 2) problem-solving task 3) information task 4) decision-making task 5) opinion-exchange task. Iraj (2007) criticizes New Interchange because the series do not follow the principles of communicative and task-based approaches as the author claimed. It has no frequency of meta-pragmatic information. The distributional pattern of communicative activities were random and without pattern. The series has introduced variety of forms for each function. Unlike communicative activities the distributional pattern of functions not only randomly and without purpose, but also they are rule-governed and purposely patterned. Most of the functions are presented in a cyclic way in the four series, and finally the types of tasks were rule-governed, it means only limited sorts of tasks were included in each unit.

In the area of pragmatics one study has been conducted by Darali (2007). She made a careful analysis on Spectrum series with the application of six models proposed by Searle's (1976) model of commissives (e.g. promising), declaratives (e.g. sentencing), Halliday's model of instrumental functions (e.g. requests), regulatory function (e.g. do as I say), interactional functions (e.g. thanking), personal functions (e.g. surprise), heuristic functions (e.g. asking for information to develop our knowledge), imaginative functions (e.g. jokes), informative functions (e.g. give new information), attention getting functions (e.g. attract attentions, addressing) are adopted to set the baseline for analysis in this study. One more category adopted from Leech's (1983) taxonomy of Rogatives is querying. The above models were applied to classify language functions presented in the dialogues into macro-functions. For micro-functions she used the model presented by Matreyek (1990). To determine whether the textbooks provide the learners with appropriate contextual information, she also used the model proposed by Holms (1990). Darali (2007) analyzed Spectrum textbooks for the type of meta-pragmatic information that helps language learners to develop their pragmatic knowledge. In this regard she used Leech's (1983) and his colleague Thomas's (1983) subdivision of pragmatics, pragmalinguistics, and sociopragmatics. The results of the analysis of macro-functions presented in the texts showed that out of eleven different kinds of language functions proposed by Searle (1976), Halliday (1978), and Leech

(1983), declarative with the frequency of 2, and heuristic function with a frequency of 7 only encompass 0.03 % and 0.23 % of all types of macro-functions, and personal function has the highest frequency of use (724 = 23.41 %). She reported that the series have provided a variety of language functions, but some important language functions that are used in everyday conversation more frequently, e.g. promising, vowing, and threatening, not only were in the form of unintended function, but also they were not as frequent as others.

Razmjoo (2007) used the Hymes' (1972) scheme to investigate the extent to which the Iranian high school and private institute textbooks represent the CLT principles. To this end, the textbooks of the Iranian high schools and private institutes were analyzed descriptively and inferentially. The analysis of the data indicated that while high school textbooks are not conducive to CLT implementation, private institute textbooks represent the CLT principles to a great extent.

Riazi and Aryasholouh (2007) also studied the four high school and pre-university English textbooks focusing on the consciousness-raising aspect of vocabulary exercises. They found that of all exercises in the four books, only one percent of them could be categorized as consciousness-raising. They also found that the exercises mainly concentrated on individual words (approximately 26%) with no emphasis on fixed expressions, lexical collocations (approximately 15%) and grammatical collocations (approximately 2%). They concluded that students are mainly dealing with meanings of individual words and not with how words are used with other words or in what combinations.

Zare Moayed (2007) carried out an evaluation on a series of ELT materials namely, Interchange third edition. For this purpose, Littlejohn's (1998) detailed framework was employed in this attempt. Results indicated that the Interchange series are not completely in line with the objectives intended for it. They do not use learners or even the teachers as a source for its content. Supra sentential level as well is ignored for both the expected output and input of the learners. More importantly, these are not the learners who initiate the tasks. Interchange series, on the other hand, focus mainly on pair works and meaning. They also encourage students to use the language and more importantly they more often require them to express themselves than to be a listener.

Hajizadeh (2008) investigated instructors' views on the present and ideal condition of Iran Language Institute (ILI) pre and high intermediate books published by organization. The results of the analysis revealed that the mean differences for the necessity or the ideal situation regarding the general information, the theoretical consideration, organizational features and practical consideration, content of the textbooks, skills, vocabulary, activities and structure of these textbooks were all much more than the mean for the present condition according to the instructors' viewpoints. Furthermore, there were significant differences between the ideal situation and the present condition of the responses. This difference shows that the books do not meet the expectations of the instructors.

Gordani (2010) explored different types of learning objectives inherent in Iranian guidance school English textbooks from the viewpoint of Bloom's taxonomy. The primary data in this study were the English textbooks taught in Iranian guidance schools at the present time. The study used Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives (1956) in analyzing the material found in Iranian guidance school English textbooks. A coding scheme was developed to make it possible for the researcher to use Bloom's taxonomy in codifying the data. The data was then analyzed to detect trends in the cognitive demands inherent in the above-mentioned material. The results from the codification of a total of 351 tasks and exercises showed that all of the items were concentrated in the first three levels of Bloom's taxonomy which are referred to as the lower levels of cognitive skills. In addition, a significant difference was found between the textbooks in their inclusion of different levels of cognitive skills. The results of this study can act as a guide to educational

decision-makers, syllabus designers, and textbook developers who wish to modify their practice and materials in such a way as to achieve higher levels of learning objectives.

Riazi and Mosallanejad (2010) investigated the types of learning objectives represented in Iranian senior high school and pre-university English textbooks using Bloom's taxonomy of learning objectives. Three high-school textbooks and the sole pre-university textbook were included in the analysis. To codify the learning objectives, a coding scheme was developed based on Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of learning objectives. The exercises and tasks of the textbooks were codified and the frequencies and percentages of occurrence of different learning objectives were calculated. The results of the study indicate that in all grades lower-order cognitive skills were more prevalent than higher-order ones. Furthermore, the difference between the senior high school and the pre-university textbooks in terms of the levels of the taxonomy were significant insofar as the pre-university textbook used some degrees of higher-order learning objectives. The results of this study have implications both for teaching and materials development.

As far as the review of literature in textbook evaluation in Iran is concerned, only a few studies have recently been conducted on the textbook evaluation. Besides, no study has been done on "Top-notch" series, which has recently come into the realm of L2 instruction.

Method

Materials

The sole source of materials in the present study is the two of *Top Notch Fundamentals* textbooks. Generally, *Top Notch* series consist of 12 textbooks on the whole, written by Joan Saslow and Allen Ascher, and published in the United States of America by Pearson Longman Inc, in 2006. The focus of the present study is on the beginner levels of *Top Notch* series consisting of the two textbooks of *Top Notch Fundamentals A* and *B*, and containing 14 units on the whole, and each unit includes 3 conversations related to the particular topic of that unit.

Data Collection Procedure

According to Guerin (2004, p. 6),

To have an appropriate sample size in Conversation Analysis, we need to analyze samples of 'natural' conversations based on the topics, or recall of such conversations if necessary, and find out how the topics are being used in those conversations: are they jokes; are they serious discussions of issues in which the speakers try to persuade each other; are they to entertain the group listening; are they gossiping devices? To do this, we must find ways to obtain far more social context (or topic) for any conversation or text than has been done before. In an extreme case this should be ethnographic in nature, since we need to analyze the social relationships just as much as the words themselves. That is, linguistic or conversational analysis must work as one (sometimes small) part of other social analyses and not by itself.

Based on this explanation about the sampling of conversation analysis, the criterion for sampling must be based on different topical contexts or themes. Therefore, since these two textbooks include 42 conversations in 14 topics, the present study has randomly selected 14 conversations from the two fundamental books, i.e. one conversation from each unit, which includes a specific topic or "social context." Each conversation in these books consists of a number of sentences ranging from 4 to 15 sentences, and each sentence contains 7 words on the average.

Another reason to choose this number of conversation sampling is that, in qualitative research, it is actually advised to use 10% of the whole population. Therefore, to be on the safe side, this study has covered 35% of the whole conversations in these fundamental textbooks. So, any issue related to sampling can be resolved (Committee Members of Shiraz University, 2010).

Data Analysis Procedure

As the study is mainly qualitative, no special statistical analyses have been needed. Therefore, the entire analysis of the present study has been carried out by careful inspection of the conversations included in the two books of Top Notch Fundamentals on the basis of Searle's (1976) speech acts and Halliday's (1978) language functions models. The purpose of this observation was to find out the types of speech acts and language functions involved in the contents of the conversations. Basically, the only quantitative analysis performed in this study includes some simple statistical analyses like counting the frequencies of the occurrence of each sub-category of Searle's (1976) speech act taxonomy and Halliday's (1978) language function model as well as their percentages presented in different tables and shown on several figures. Moreover, the chi-square test was reported in order to better illustrate the difference in the distribution levels of these language functions and speech acts.

Results

In this section, the frequencies and percentages of the language functions and speech acts of the analyzed sample data in the above sections have been added up in order to illustrate the overall pragmatic perspective of the conversations in both Top Notch Fundamentals A and B. Tables 1 to 4 clearly depict this general view regarding the distribution of these pragmatic factors, i.e. the frequencies and percentages of language functions and speech act, respectively:

Table 1
Overall Frequencies and Percentages of Language Functions

Code	Functions	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Instrumental	8	7.47
2	Regulatory	5	4.67
3	Interactional	17	15.88
4	Personal	12	11.21
5	Heuristic	18	16.82
6	Imaginative	0	0
7	Informative	34	31.77
8	Attention-getting	13	12.14
T	Total	107	100

Based on Table 4.1, the total frequency of language functions in both books A and B equals 107. This includes 8 instrumental, 5 regulatory, 17 interactional, 12 personal, 18 heuristic, no imaginative, 34 informative, and 13 attention-getting functions. Regarding the percentages of language functions, 7.47% refers to instrumental, 4.67% regulatory, 15.88% interactional, 11.21% personal, 16.82% heuristic, 0% imaginative, 31.77% informative, and 12.14% attention-getting functions. Therefore, looking at this table, one can conclude that the overall minimum of all language functions deals with imaginative ones, i.e. 0%, while the overall maximum of all refers to informative functions, i.e. 31.77%. Moreover, Table 3 shows the results of the chi-square test regarding these language functions:

Table 2
Chi-Square Results

	Frequency
Chi-Square	35.028 ^a
Df	6
Asymp. Sig.	.000

- a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5.
The minimum expected cell frequency is 15.3.

According to this table, the difference between the frequencies of these language functions is significant and meaningful. In other words, the language functions in the conversations of Top Notch Fundamentals are not distributed equally and not at the same or close levels of frequency, i.e. Sig. = .000 ($p < .05$).

Furthermore, Table 4, as previously mentioned, presents the overall frequencies and percentages of speech acts used in the sample conversations of both books A and B:

Table 3
Overall Frequencies and Percentages of Speech Acts

Code	Functions	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Representative	31	31
2	Commissive	7	7
3	Directive	27	27
4	Expressive	35	35
5	Declarative	0	0
T	Total	100	100

Table 4 offers interesting results regarding the total frequency of speech acts in this sample data selected randomly from both textbooks, i.e. the total frequency equals 100, which makes each frequency exactly the same as its percentage. In other words, both frequency and percentage of representative speech acts are 31, those of commissive ones equals 7, directive ones 27, expressive ones 35, and those of declarative speech acts are 0. As a result, it can simply be concluded that the overall minimum frequency and percentage belong to declarative speech acts, i.e. 0, and the overall maximum ones refer to expressive speech acts, i.e. 35. Moreover, Table 4.6 shows the result of the chi-square test regarding these speech acts:

Table 4
Chi-Square Results

	Frequency
Chi-Square	18.560 ^a
Df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000

- a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 25.0.

Based on this table, the difference between the frequencies of these speech acts is significant and meaningful. In other words, the speech acts in the conversations of Top Notch Fundamentals are not distributed equally and not at the same or close levels of frequency, i.e. Sig. = .000 ($p < .05$).

Discussion

In this section, the first focus is on answering the research questions along with some detailed interpretations in line with the results of the study. Then, a comparison between the results of the present study and those of other investigations on textbook evaluation has been made.

Research Questions and Interpretations

Research Question 1: What are the types of language functions in the conversations texts?

As it was revealed in the results section, out of the eight language functions in Halliday's (1978) model, one function, i.e. imaginative function, was absent among other functions in both Top Notch Fundamentals A and B. In other words, seven types of Halliday's (1978) language functions, including instrumental, regulatory, interactional, personal, heuristic, informative, and attention-getting functions, were present in the sample conversations of both textbooks (Table 4.1). As a result, the lack of the imaginative function in all of the conversations of these two textbooks may be regarded as a pitfall for those who are trying to improve their speaking skill through these textbooks.

According to Halliday (1978), the imaginative function is one of the crucial and effective functions in the real-life communication which is applied to create a world of one's own or extend one's own environment for humorous esthetic purposes such as telling jokes. This lack of such a communicative function is strongly in opposition to the claim of Top Notch producers, who are for sure in favor of CLT approach and claim that the conversations in Top Notch are communicatively and functionally powerful. The significance of the imaginative function is revealed in the moments of thinking, assuming, remembering, telling jokes, problem-solving, doing puzzles, playing tongue twisters, inventing, painting, doing artistic things, and many other activities one does in everyday life. With regard to what Cutting (2002) states, a good conversation takes all the felicity conditions or the real contexts and roles of participants into account. Therefore, it can be concluded that one of these conditions or contexts in real-life situations deals with those contexts in which the imaginative function is used. Top Notch Fundamentals lack these contexts in their conversation sections.

In fact, the contexts in which the imaginative function is used are very much in the real communications and above all in the very context of learning and teaching the language, for instance in the classroom, in which the teachers and learners usually lack the real felicity conditions, so that they are forced to apply the imaginative function so much in order to make the context of the classroom similar to that of the real-life communication. This significance of the imaginative function is best revealed when one wants to imagine and conceptualize the meanings of other functions and the felicity conditions in which they are used. Therefore, without imaginative function and not being able to create the world of one's own nature of learning, the advance of such learning would be too difficult to make.

However, it must be regarded as a great advantage that these conversations in the two books contain the rest of the Halliday's functions, i.e. instrumental, regulatory, interactional, personal, heuristic, informative, and attention-getting functions. In other words, the existence of these functions can somehow justify a part of the practicality of these conversations, but to what extent these functions are distributed among the conversations of these two books is also a very crucial matter which will be discussed in the following section.

Research Question 2: How frequently each language function is used?

In Pragmatics, to know the frequency of language functions is so crucial that it may change the viewpoints towards textbooks and put them under the limelight of total judgment and overall evaluation. As Corwin (1989) mentions, a unique feature of pragmatics is its thorough analysis of the loci and frequency of communication variables (Hamre, 1984). One of the main focuses of the present study is to know the frequency of these pragmatic variables, i.e. language functions, in the sample conversations of Top Notch Fundamentals. In fact, it is the frequency of these language functions that reveals the main part of the answer to the most important research question of the current study, i.e. Research Question 5, which will be discussed later.

As Table 4.1 illustrates in the result section, there is no imaginative function in the sample conversations of these two fundamental textbooks. Therefore, the frequency and the percentage for this function is zero, which is a significant shortcoming of these books. As it was stated in the previous research question, other types of Halliday's language functions were observed in these conversations with variable frequencies. There were 8 instrumental, 5 regulatory, 17 interactional, 12 personal, 18 heuristic, 34 informative, and 13 attention-getting functions. Regarding the percentages of language functions, 7.47% refers to instrumental, 4.67% regulatory, 15.88% interactional, 11.21% personal, 16.82% heuristic, 31.77% informative, and 12.14% attention-getting functions. Looking at these frequencies and percentages of these language functions, one can recognize the fluctuations among these pragmatic variables in these conversations. According to Halliday (1978), and also based on what Cutting (2002) says, a good conversation consists of all of the language functions with an equal distribution throughout the textbook. In other words, real conversations in real-life situation contain all of the Halliday's (1978) language functions. Although in many cases of real communications and authentic conversations there exist restricted types of language functions and perhaps there would be no need to apply all their types, a good textbook must include conversations containing all types of these language functions distributed equally throughout the conversations of the book so as to make learners pragmatically competent in their speaking performance. For instance, if a learner starts learning English and is exposed to a textbook with a number of conversations in it, is it logical or reasonable for the textbook to have all types of language functions in its conversations or limited types of them? Jakobson (1960), in his explanation about language functions, discusses that

All types of language functions are necessary to communication. This does not necessarily mean that each function is always present. It is assumed that while one or more – or even all – of the functions of language may be absent in short units or contexts, lengthy units can activate all of them. Where more than one function is present, we will establish either: (1) a simple hierarchy of functions, by identifying the dominant function and not ranking the other functions, or (2) a complex hierarchy, by specifying the degree of presence of some or all of the functions (Cited in Hebert, 2007).

With regard to Jakobson's (1960) explanation, without language functions the act of communication would be so difficult to perform. Therefore, to make learners pragmatically competent for communication, teachers need to teach materials that include all types of language functions. So, the most important point that can be inferred from this quotation is the presence of all types of language functions in different cases of communication though they are implicitly applied. In other words, a functional network in the mind activates all types of language functions in the process of communication. As a result, it is better for a textbook, in general, or for the conversations in Top Notch Fundamentals, in particular, to include all types of these language functions so that it better activates this functional network in the mind.

Furthermore, based on Halliday (1978), and as the result of the chi-square test shows in Table 4.7, the degree of distribution is another important point which has been ignored, to some extent, in these conversations, i.e. there is a significant difference in the distribution of the pragmatic

variables in the conversations. Halliday (1978) states that although the frequencies of these language functions are variable and varied in real communication, the presence of all their types cannot be denied. Therefore, this very presence of all types of language functions in real communication persuades the material designers to include all of them at the same level of frequency in different contexts of use. In this respect, the conversations in Top Notch Fundamentals have two important shortcomings regarding the pragmatic variables of language functions: first, regarding the presence of all types of language functions, the conversations lack the imaginative function. Second, regarding the equal distribution of these functions, the language functions have been distributed unequally and at variant levels of frequency.

These shortcomings regarding the language functions in the conversations of these two textbooks will surely lead the learners to encounter with a number of difficulties in terms of their speaking performance in real communication. Therefore, learners tend to focus on some specific or limited types of language functions while learning through these books, so that they will become strong in the use of some types of the language functions, while they are weak in that of the others. So, in this pragmatic vein, Top Notch Fundamentals are considered as weak textbooks, and they need some reconsideration in this regard.

Research Question 3: *What are the types of speech acts in the conversations texts?*

According to Table 4.8, all types of speech acts, except for declarative speech act, exist in the sample conversations of Top Notch Fundamentals. In other words, the representative, commissive, directive, and expressive speech acts were observed in this sample. However, the absence of the declarative speech act in these conversations can be regarded as an important weakness in these two textbooks. As Cutting (2002) explains, declarative speech acts are used frequently in everyday communication. They are words and expressions that change the world by their very utterance, such as “I bet,” “I declare,” “I resign,” “I announce,” “I pronounce,” and many other utterances which are used in different contexts. Therefore, the lack of the declarative speech act will surely mars the learners’ speaking competence in those pragmatic contexts in which this critical speech act is needed to be applied. In his book of “Language and Power,” Fairclough (1989) states:

Speech acts are a central part of pragmatics, which is in turn concerned with the meanings that participants in a discourse give to elements of a text... discourse type dictates the conventions for speech acts, and the conventions reflect the participants’ ideology and social relationships (Cited in Cutting, 2002).

With regard to the above extract it can be concluded that the different types of discourse shape the contexts in which a number of appropriate speech acts must be used so as to form some specific social relationships. In line with Fairclough’s (1989) idea, Searle (1976) also emphasizes that since the learners tend to become communicatively competent in almost all contexts so that they would be able to establish their ideologies and social relationships, the existence of all the felicity conditions in which all types of speech acts can be applied is necessary. As a result, the conversations in Top Notch Fundamentals lack this characteristic which Searle (1976) explains, i.e. to include all types of speech acts. Besides this shortcoming, the distribution level of the present speech acts, i.e. representative, commissive, directive, and expressive speech acts, in these sample conversations is the other side of the coin which will be assessed and discussed in the next research question.

Research Question 4: *How frequently each speech act is used?*

As Table 4.4 shows, both the frequency and the percentage of speech acts are the same. In other words, there are 31% representative, 7% commissive, 27% directive, 35% expressive, and 0% declarative speech acts in the sample conversations of Top Notch Fundamentals. This result indicates that the frequency and the percentage of occurrence of speech acts in these

conversations are totally different and unequal. On the one hand, as mentioned in the previous section, there is no declarative speech act observed in the sample conversations, and on the other hand, the distribution of other present speech acts, i.e. representative, commissive, directive, and expressive speech acts, in these conversations are so variant and unequal. The maximum percentage of speech acts belongs to expressive ones, i.e. 31%, while the minimum percentage refers to declarative ones, i.e. 0%.

Searle (1976) believes that all types of speech acts are frequently used in every day communication, and states that different kinds of situations or contexts lead us to use different types of speech acts in order to maintain the basic relationships in our social lives. As a result, to become pragmatically competent and functional in almost all the contexts of communication, learners need to gain the knowledge of all types of speech acts so as to be able to apply pragmatically appropriate speech acts in different communicative contexts. In this respect, the conversations of Top Notch Fundamentals do not contain all types of Searle's (1976) speech acts, on the one hand, and according to the results of the chi-square test in Table 4.10, the existing speech acts are not equally distributed throughout these conversations, on the other hand.

Research Question 5: *Are the conversations of these two Top Notch Fundamentals pragmatically competent with regard to the existence and the distribution of speech acts and language functions?*

According to the points discussed in the previous research questions with regard to the types and the frequency of language functions and speech acts in the conversations, it is revealed that the conversations in Top Notch Fundamentals have a number of significant shortcomings, such as the lack of imaginative language function, lack of declarative speech act, and above all, the inequality and variation in the distribution of both language functions and speech acts. To be regarded as pragmatically competent, the conversations in these two textbooks must include all types of language functions and speech acts which are all used in the real-life communications. Besides, these language functions and speech acts must be used and distributed among the conversations in such a systematic way that when being read, studied, and practiced, all types of them can be recognized in learners' speaking performance. In other words, not only must all types of these Halliday's (1978) language functions and Searle's (1976) speech acts be present in the conversations of the books, but also they must be distributed equally and at the same frequency or percentage among all of the conversations.

Furthermore, with regard to what Guerin (2004) states in terms of the type of sampling and the criterion for this sample to be analyzed, this equality in the distribution of language functions and speech acts must be on the basis of topical or thematic contexts. These contexts in these textbooks are, actually, in the same line with different units or chapters of the books, each of which deals with a particular and real-life topic or theme. Therefore, these pragmatic variables, i.e. language functions and speech acts, must be distributed equally not only all over the entire conversations of these two books, but also in each one of the units, which focuses on a particular and natural theme in everyday life.

Therefore, according to what has been said up to this point, the beginner-level textbooks of Top Notch series, i.e. Top Notch Fundamentals, have significant problems with regard to the pragmatic dimension. In other words, the results of the present study revealed that the conversations in Top Notch Fundamentals are not pragmatically competent and learners are strongly recommended to be more careful of these two beginner-level textbooks if they choose them to start improving their speaking performance through their conversations. In fact, taking a quick look at the Table 4.1 and 4.2 in the results section, one can easily recognize the above-mentioned pitfalls.

Conclusion

According to the research problem stated in the first chapter, assessing textbooks that appear efficacious on the surface and are used frequently here and there just on the basis of a vague perception of the people about them becomes necessary for those who are making these choices. *Top Notch* series, particularly *Top Notch Fundamentals* which are the focus of the present study, are also in the same vein. In other words, since *Top Notch* series are new or newly-arrived textbooks, they have become so popular in the context of Iran and those who choose to start learning English through *Top Notch Fundamentals* mention just one main reason for their choice, and that is its novelty. Therefore, this study was so curious to know about the pragmatic nature of these series and started its work from analyzing the conversations of their beginner-level textbooks, i.e. *Top Notch Fundamentals*, so as to illustrate how the conversation sections of these two textbooks provide the learners with adequate communicatively and pragmatically competent information. As a result, from the findings of this analysis, the following conclusions can be stated based on the research questions and the goals of the study on the whole:

1. Out of the eight language functions in Halliday's (1978) model, one function, i.e. imaginative function, was absent among other functions in both *Top Notch Fundamentals* A and B. As a result, the lack of the imaginative function in all of the conversations of these two textbooks can be regarded as a pitfall for those who are trying to improve their speaking skill through these textbooks. This lack of such a communicative function is strongly in opposition to the claim of Top Notch producers, who are apparently in favor of CLT approach.
2. Regarding the equal distribution of language functions, the language functions in the conversations of *Top Notch Fundamentals* have been distributed unequally and at variant levels of frequency which will cause learners to focus on some specific or limited types of language functions while learning through these textbooks.
3. The lack of the declarative speech act in the conversations of *Top Notch Fundamentals* will surely mar the learners' speaking competence in those pragmatic contexts in which this critical speech act is needed to be applied. As a result, the conversations in *Top Notch Fundamentals* lack the crucial characteristic which Searle (1976) explains, i.e. to include all types of speech acts, so that the learners do not fully become communicatively competent in almost all contexts and they would not be able to establish their ideologies and social relationships completely.
4. The frequency and the percentage of occurrence of speech acts in the conversations of *Top Notch Fundamentals* are totally different and unequal which, like language functions, will cause learners to focus on some specific or limited types of speech acts while learning through these textbooks.
5. The shortcomings regarding the language functions and speech acts in the conversations of *Top Notch Fundamentals* will surely lead the learners to encounter with a number of difficulties in terms of their speaking performance in real communication. Learners tend to focus on some specific or limited types of language functions and speech acts while learning through these books, so that they will become strong in the use of some types of the language functions and speech acts, while they are weak in some of the others. So, in this pragmatic regard, *Top Notch Fundamentals* are considered as weak textbooks, and they need some reconsideration in this field.
6. To be regarded as pragmatically competent, the conversations in *Top Notch Fundamentals* must include all types of language functions and speech acts which are all used in the real-life communications. These language functions and speech acts must be used and distributed among the conversations in such a systematic way that when being read, studied, and practiced, all types of them can be recognized in learners' speaking performance. In other words, not only must all types of these Halliday's (1978) language

- functions and Searle's (1976) speech acts be present in the conversations of the books, but also they must be distributed equally and at the same frequency or percentage among all of the conversations.
7. According to Guerin (2004), the pragmatic variables, i.e. language functions and speech acts, in *Top Notch Fundamentals* must be distributed equally not only all over the entire conversations of these two books, but also in each one of the units, which focuses on a particular and natural theme or topic in everyday life.
 8. All in all, the results of the present study revealed that the conversations in *Top Notch Fundamentals* are not pragmatically competent and learners are strongly recommended to be more careful of these two beginner-level textbooks if they choose them to start improving their speaking performance through their conversations.
 9. Generally, textbooks are not reliable sources of pragmatic input for classroom language learners and in EFL contexts the only opportunity students have to learn target-like conversational norms comes from naturally occurring samples or comprehensible meta-linguistic descriptions that represent actual ways of speaking. This is confirmed by the results of Gilmore's (2004) research stating that textbook dialogues differ considerably from their authentic equivalents.

Pedagogical Implications of the Study

Based on the results and the conclusions of the study, the following pedagogical implications can be stated with the hope that the present study would be a useful source to solve many problems in the area of language learning and teaching, material production, textbook design, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, and even test construction:

1. First of all, this study can mainly be beneficial for teachers since they will have an idea about the degree of the pragmatic strength in the conversation sections of *Top Notch Fundamentals*, so that they can better compensate for the shortcomings.
2. This study can also provide material developers and textbook writers with the necessary information regarding the pragmatic dimension of the conversation sections of these beginner-level textbooks.
3. Textbook developers can take the pragmatic pitfalls of the conversations of *Top Notch Fundamentals* into consideration as a useful source to modify and revise other developing textbooks.
4. This study recommends the developers and the editors of *Top Notch Fundamentals* to take the reported pragmatic shortcomings under the rigorous scrutiny so as to consider and use all types of language functions and speech acts, and to balance them to the same range or level.
5. In line with Tavakoli's (1995) research, the present study also suggests the explicit teaching of language functions and speech acts as a sort of remedy to these pragmatic pitfalls in textbooks since the semantic-syntactic structure of utterances does not usually reveal their real functions especially in the case of indirect ones.

Suggestions for Further Research

Regarding the present research, a number of areas in which interested researchers can conduct further related studies are presented in this part:

1. Further research in the similar vein is needed to be done on the other textbooks of *Top Notch* series and Summits.
2. *Top Notch* series can be examined from different aspects other than the pragmatic one.
3. The same investigation can be conducted in terms of the other sections of these book rather than the conversation sections.

4. This study can be replicated and conducted on different textbooks other than *Top Notch* series.
5. Further research is also needed regarding classroom observation and detailed teacher interviews so as to determine how Top Notch Fundamentals or other *Top Notch* textbooks are incorporated into the students' learning process.

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Editor's Note: This is a preliminary study to determine how critical thinking pedagogy can support language learning.

Teaching English through Critical Pedagogy: Problems and Attitudes

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Iran

Abstract

Critical pedagogy is an issue that deserves attention from language teachers. This paper presents a qualitative study that investigates attitudes and perceptions of language teachers towards teaching English through applying features of critical pedagogy. The study was conducted in a small scale with 10 language teachers from three popular institutes in Ardebil, Iran. This study used observation and semi-structured interviews. It came up with positive attitudes but for some reason most teachers tend not to apply the features of critical pedagogy.

Keywords: critical pedagogy, teaching English

Introduction

Critical pedagogy began its life in the research, thinking and pedagogic practice of Antonio Gramsci along with the works of key thinkers from the Frankfurt School. However, in reality, it became wholly recognized in the seminal writings of Paulo Freire, the 'Father of Critical Pedagogy', especially with work of Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1972). Ira Shor (cited in Pennycook, 1999) nicely characterizes critical pedagogy as:

Habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impression, dominant myths, official pronouncements, traditional clichés, received wisdom, and mere opinions, to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology and personal circumstances of any action, event, object, process, organization, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media or discourse (p. 129).

It reads as a kind of commitment to social transformation: transformation of what's so far accepted as unquestionable truth. But to achieve such an end, individuals of the society need to become critical and empowered enough to make their voices loud enough in order to be heard. Critical pedagogy criticizes entanglement of individuals in every-day phenomena without ever questioning it.

Individual cognitive development ←————→ Collective social transformation

Along with this line of thought, continuous problematization of common sense is a great help. It also helps if educationalists who are not radical, are critical and analytical. When social transformation comes to focus, education issues need to be dealt with politically. This kind of system brings everything including curriculum, materials, teachers, and learners under its influence. Critical pedagogy, through critical thinking, looks to create a healthy non-alienating classroom-social relationship with no dominant policy occupying the minds of individuals. Critical theorists highly criticize a "one-model-fits-all" look toward education. Critical pedagogy, rejects a "blanket approach". Looking at education through these glasses, we can see that individuals with different identities and voices are all to be appreciated, all to be discussed dialogically and all to be developed to the point of finding a place in the outside society. Critical theorists believe that adult literacy programs should not be confined to teaching specific literacy skills but should contextualize instruction within a framework of social activism and societal transformation. In such a democratic setting, learners use their literacy skills to attain power and analyze their own place in the society critically

Literature Review

For all the above-mentioned to be appropriately fulfilled, individuals need to be intellectually developed and according to Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social construction, an individual's intellectual development results from social interactions within specific cultural contexts. This kind of prerequisite community for development can be created in the classroom which is already a part of society if treated properly. Learners need to be active participants in the process of their own learning. Dewey (cited in Pringle, 2006) theorized that only students who were actively involved in their learning could become informed participants in a democracy. He believed that rote learning contributed to passive acceptance of one's place in society, whereas learning through problem-solving and practical application would lead students to take a more active role in determining their experiences and their positions within society.

In traditional classes, the teacher is the agent of knowledge transfer and students are knowledge consumers. But in the new approach, the teacher is the agent of change and sets the right condition for the exchange of ideas, as a result, they all learn together, once they all teach each other. Freire (2002) believes in a more fluid relationship between teachers and students, so that learning goes both ways; teachers are learners and learners are teachers (cited in Giroux, 2004). Accepting this, classes are not expected to reflect "banking" sensibility. Akbari (2008) rightly defines critical pedagogy as "connecting word to world", but for this connection to be established, the marginalized learners (those felt to be in need of becoming conscious) must learn how to tackle their world problems. Freire and Macedo (cited in Lin, 1999) believe that marginalized learners must learn to "read the world" before they "read the word". In other words, students must come to an understanding of the cultural, political, and social practices that constitute their world and their reality before they can make sense of the written words that describe that reality. The approach is against what's going on traditionally. Barrera (cited in Pennycook, 1999) uses the concept of "culturallectomy" to refer to the processes of exclusion of the culture and non-school lives of the students from what happens in school. The only thing that's appreciated is to maximize academic outcomes but in no way to nurture socially intellectual individuals.

Critical pedagogy attempts to act through post-modern discourse. And as Giroux (2004) claims, it is through these discourses that it tries to problematize the modernity's universal project of citizenship, and its narrow understanding of domination; the kind of domination that aims at "disempowerment". So in addition to bringing about changes in looks, some deconstruction and reconstruction of long-accepted discourses and ideas should be brought about. In other words, a critical kind of pedagogy rejects being overwhelmed by market discourses, identities, practices and voices; that is, in order to be critical, one should consciously reject totalizing certainties. This way, critical pedagogy promises democratization (to borrow the word from Giroux, 2004). As Giroux (2004) states:

Educators need to develop a language of possibility for both raising critical questions about the aim of schooling and the purpose and meaning of what and how educators teach... In doing so pedagogy draws attention to engaging classroom practice as a moral and political consideration animated by a fierce sense of commitment to provide the conditions that enable students to become critical agents capable of linking knowledge to social responsibility, and learning to democratic social change (p. 41).

Critical pedagogy encourages students to respond to text not as consumers but as active and conscious members of society.

What language has to do with all this?

Language is the thing that is quite acceptably ideological in one way or another. Language can be the best tool to empower learners. Learners can have a desirable language experience without

ever having their real identities hurt. Such a language classroom favorably goes beyond linguistic knowledge. Things are handed on to the learners to be negotiated and challenged. Language is pragmatically dealt with in an ideal sociocultural atmosphere. Therefore, language is not just a tool for communication. It's a good approach that makes the learners engage in a fluid relationship between society and texts.

As mentioned previously, many studies have attempted to bring critical pedagogy into language classes. By presenting dependable evidence on its influence in language learning Thinsain (2008), in his semester-long self-study with his students, came to a belief that kind of "compromisation" should be exercised in classes.

Table 1
Thinsain's "Compromisation"

Banking's education assumed teacher-student relationships (Freire, 2002, p. 73):	Thinsain's lens:
The teacher teaches and the students are taught;	We should not go to the opposite extreme. Teachers can teach and learn, but teachers cannot just teach. Balance must be found.
The teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;	Teachers know more about certain things, but not everything. Freire (2002) thought "teachers must be expert and knowledgeable to be responsible critical-democratic educators. (Shor & Pari, 1999, p. 13).
The teacher thinks and the students are thought about;	Who is in charge? Don't students as human beings have the innate ability to think and challenge? (action <-> reaction!)
The teacher talks and the students listen meekly;	This is not true in the real world. No teacher wants to talk too much and the students cannot do so either.
The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;	Students at least need self-disciplines; and teachers can help arrange the agreeable mechanism.
The teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;	Both parties can contribute. Yet, the goals must be firm, and teachers can have an agenda while students can learn to read the words.
The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;	This depends on what kind of actions and the given roles and situations.
The teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;	Teachers as authority of knowledge that is not ill-structured need to set up the program. However, flexibility and space can still be embedded and negotiation can exist.
The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his / her own professional authority, which she or he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;	The freedom of the students can be constrained by many factors, linguistic needs, background experiences, etc. and the teachers usually can help to provide guidance.
The teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects.	Where is the line? How far can the students be in taking control of their learning? The ground may vary in different cultures, fields of study and profession.
Learners are regarded as adaptable, manageable beings.	Do we not want the students to be adaptable and manageable ?

He concludes that in a language class the dominant issue should not be put aside in its totality; rather, the marginalized issues should be worked on as an alternative in order to be given a voice in turn. He sees tension as a result of opposing issues in the class or as a stimulator of learner development in the class. Learners' discomfort works to their own good and triggers their development. He states that total alienation of learners from the mainstream would obviously do disservice to them. Table 1 presents the gist of Thinsain's position:

On a study conducted in Venezuela on critical pedagogy and EFL, as it is stated in Carmen's (2001) paper, Brutt-Griffler & Samimy used EFL learners' reflection through discussion and diary writing in order to empower learners through critical praxis generated from within. They emphasize ongoing process of self-reflection and a "construction of subjectivity". There are many other researchers presenting models of teaching through consciousness-raising activities in the language classroom. Morgan (2002) uses the Quebec Referendum as a generative theme to involve the learners in a meaningful activity in order for them to master the modals; so grammar is taught by employing some hot issues. This way such community-based ESL programs become different from generic ESL programs. Students own their learning and generate the knowledge and extend it from classroom to community and they are said to gain "double consciousness"; themselves as learners and themselves as creators of learning. The point is that the teachers and students all participate in co-constructing the class through a process of negotiation. The current study sets out to shed more light on the issue of critical pedagogy in a language class.

Methodology

Participants

Ten M.A. language teachers were randomly chosen from three popular language institutes in Ardebil, Iran. They were all interested in the topic and quite eager to participate in the study.

Instruments

The study was conducted through observation and a semi-structured interview. Interview questions were aimed at investigating the extent to which language learners feel empowered or disempowered by the language they're getting to know about and to what extant features of critical pedagogy are employed by the teachers objectively. These teachers defined their role as a teacher, then how they defined the teacher-learner relationship. I also asked them questions to get information on their perceptions on critical pedagogy and ELT. The commonly used activities and techniques exercised in the class were explored through interview and observation.

Results

After the data collection, the responses were coded. Some of their responses regarding their role as teachers were as follows:

1. Role as a guide: Introducing other materials; showing the students how the learning process can be facilitated; telling them about the teachers own learning experiences.
2. Role as a perfect model of language: Students mostly try to imitate their teachers in all aspects and rely on their teachers for solutions to their problems so a teacher should serve as a perfect model.
3. Role as a provider of the knowledge: students expect their teacher to provide them with anything they wish to know.
4. Role as an activator of learning process: the teacher acts as a trigger so students can learn.

Most (6 out of 10) teachers defined their role as a guide and provider of the knowledge. Of course, in their daily work, teachers are encouraged to use other people's ready-made ideas. They actually import the ideas instead of creating their own ideas of specific and local significance. In the account of the teacher-student relationship, they mostly described themselves as being in authority for different reasons as to prevent chaos. They didn't seem to appreciate the learners' autonomy in terms of choosing issues and matters to be discussed, activities to be done and making changes to the materials. All the teachers seemed not to associate critical pedagogy with their own teaching but as they were describing the activities they practice in the class, they

invariably seemed to work on activities related to interests of the learners. Because they were locally debated activities, they obviously worked toward the learners' consciousness-raising. Some of those activities are listed below:

1. Setting up discussions on hot, current issues of their own country, Iran, and working on problem-solving activities
2. Writing activities with the topics suited to the area of interest of the learners
3. Diary writing which made kind of reflective writing; the kind which combines experience and knowledge

These activities, if handled correctly, can work toward the building learners critically consciousness as they are all problem-oriented and not uni-dimensional. Although the attitudes of all the teachers toward critical pedagogy were positive, they claimed not to be expert enough to pronounce on such issue. I have presented some of their quotes below:

"I cannot deviate too much from the material at hand. This is not supported by policy of institutes and the syllabus is highly structured and time-limited".

"We try to make them think creatively and generatively but cannot ensure social transformation later on by these individuals".

"Those who are instrumentally motivated don't care about such things and those who are integratively motivated enjoy entanglement with new culture other than their own".

"My students always enjoy discussing relevant issues in the second language because they have something to utter and, at the very beginning, conceptualization does not pose a difficulty for them".

"Tackling with problem-solving issues especially of relevant type makes the learners' mind so generative and creative in their writings and this is quite evident when it is compared with those of irrelevant type"

Discussion and Conclusion

The result of the interview and our observations clearly represented a sample of what's actually going on in almost all institutes in Iran. The language classes are just the practice of whatever the theories, including the dominant ones, impose. The easiest way to get ahead in the classroom is to stick to whatever the syllabus suggests. It's obviously a type of the "one-model-fits-all" approach. As Kachru (cited in Miller, 2002) states, in most of the outer circle the focus of ELT is on applied linguistics i.e. theoretical knowledge about syntax, phonology, and lexicon; and as far as studies reveal, we all agree. I personally agree that language is a very powerful tool and we actually underestimate its power if we only learn it for the sake of being a competent speaker, reader or whatever. Pennycook (1994, 1998) rightly questions the apolitical neutrality of ELT. Language teachers should go beyond words and texts. The learners should own their learning and question the discourse, ideas, words and their implications. Language is a good mind activator. It is an appropriate tool to trigger the mind to start thinking critically. Sometimes what language classes lack is creativity, so to fill this gap, individuals as social entities need to be able to connect the class to their community and as a result the activate their mind to solve problems they encounter, and work for the transformation of some kind. This simply means "going beyond words". Taking three different models of class activities, according what studies, including mine, indicate, language classes mostly follow the "transmission model" and at the best a "generative model".

What about the "transformative model"?

The question in the first place should be directed to policy-makers, material developers, curriculum designers, and then teachers. It's true that some programs may lack the necessary resources to update curricula or materials to better match learners' needs, interests and experiences. Sometimes it is better to look at the programs in terms of the degree to which they reflect critical pedagogy rather than labeling them as critical or non-critical. The four tables in the appendix show the different degrees of critical pedagogy you may refer to for more information. As a concluding point, let's focus on the question: *Is English considered a vehicle of cross-cultural understanding or a symbol of dominance?* The idea of universal transfer of English discursive and pedagogical norms is on its way of total destruction. Cultures are on the way of gaining their true identity and the people of those cultures are voicing those identities; and language is no exception as a tool to achieve the goal. A different language as EFL/ESL is used to voice the identity differently.

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Editor's Note: Language learning, tested by performance of language skills, provides excellent opportunities to determine the value of individual elements in instructional design. This study provides insights into a meaningful combination of theory and practice to enhance language learning.

Support Offered to Distance-Learning Students of the Japanese Language by Online Learning Communities

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USA**

Abstract

The U.S. Department of Education (2009) reported that instruction using technology is more effective than purely traditional face-to-face instruction. Increased time on tasks and learner reflection in online learning environments, through interactions with media, help students to reach higher levels of achievement. This article describes how distance-learning students who are enrolled in a first-year Japanese course are supported via online learning communities in which individualized attention by the instructor and collaboration among peers enhance the students' success. Since learner autonomy is one of the essential elements for student success in individual learning settings, this article discusses the effectiveness of the interrelationships among the following three elements: (a) instructor's scaffolding; (b) collaboration among peers; and (c) learner autonomy through the step-by-step process when students are completing projects whose purpose is to provide opportunities for them to practice basic communicative skills while developing their abilities to analyze, integrate, and internalize the knowledge. Consequently, students showed positive attitudes toward the instructor's and their peer's support in online learning communities and achieved similar levels of abilities in grammar, listening and reading comprehension and exceeded oral abilities as compared to the results of achievement tests in face-to-face class sections.

Keywords: Collaboration, Curriculum, Distance-learning, Foreign Language Learning, Japanese Language, Learner Autonomy, Online Learning Community, Scaffolding, Project-based learning, Zone of Proximal Development

Introduction

Instruction using technology has been widely adopted in foreign language courses. According to a report by the U.S. Department of Education (2009), instruction combining online and face-to-face elements had the largest advantage over traditional face-to-face classes and purely online classes. Furthermore, on average, learners who received all or part of their instruction online performed better than those who took the same course through purely face-to-face instruction. These results could be interpreted to reveal that the increased time on tasks and the increased learner reflection in online learning environments, through interactions with media, help students learn more effectively.

Although technology has significantly impacted educational environments, the distance separating students sometimes hinders the provision of learning experiences in the social and cultural contexts of distance-learning courses. In addition, a lack of interaction seems to be a concern in distance-learning courses. It is believed that social interaction with peers and an instructor in meaningful activities involving the negotiation of meaning is an important and central component to developing students' higher proficiency. It is noted that the types of social interaction involved in distance-learning courses are not the same as those in face-to-face courses. However, other types of interaction (e.g., e-forum entries and online virtual class) in online

learning communities may help students to foster communicative skills. Computer-mediated communication (CMC) was not considered to be a personal communicative device (Baron, 1984; Kiesler, Siegel, & McGuire, 1984) due to the lack of paralinguistic elements; however, there are many studies supporting the idea that CMC has created a socially rich environment (e.g., Michinov, Michinov, & Toczek-Capelle, 2004). On the contrary, some studies reported that the social aspect of a discussion forum on a website is not appropriate for language learning (e.g., Stevenson & Liu, 2010). Therefore, good curriculum planning is necessary to make distance-learning courses effective.

This article focuses on the discussion of how three essential elements enable students to succeed in learning in a first-year Japanese distance-learning course: (a) instructor's scaffolding, (b) collaboration among peers, and (c) learner autonomy. The three elements are interrelated through the step-by-step process of students' completing projects whose purposes are to practice basic communicative skills, to search necessary resources, and to identify and analyze cultural and social differences. Subcategories of scaffolding, collaboration and learner autonomy, as well as examples of instruction activities that develop students' cognitive abilities, are identified. Then, individual students' learning, as promoted by collaboration with peers and facilitated by the instructor and embraced by the instructor's scaffolding, are demonstrated, using detailed examples for each step of the first-term project. Following that, curricula coherence is explained by showing linkages across three quarter projects. Lastly, students' feedback from course survey and students' achievement are reported.

Theoretical Background

Online Learning Community in Distance Learning Class

Learner autonomy is one important factor to achieving success in self-instruction. Particularly in the field of foreign language education, learner autonomy is imperative to allow students to be able to apply their skills and knowledge to real life situations where a target language is used by transcending the barriers between learning and living (e.g., Bruner, 1966; Barners, 1976; Illich, 1979; Rogers, 1983). To further promote learner autonomy, online learning communities in distance learning courses play important roles as networks of social relationships in which engagement and interaction are critical to the learning environment. Online learning communities reduce the potential for learner isolation and provide learners with social dimensions that (a) enhance instructional effectiveness, (b) increase dynamic interaction, (c) encourage learning satisfaction, (d) foster in-depth discussion, and (e) facilitate collaborative learning (Lomicka & Lord, 2007).

Online learning communities where students receive individualized attention from the instructor and where they can collaborate with peers may enhance their learning success by using technology not only as a medium for conversing and collaborating but also as a tool for exploring, representing, and articulating knowledge. Synchronous e-learning, such as webcasting and webconferencing, provides learners with live, depersonalized, concurrent and collaborative learning opportunities in a way similar to that of a classroom setting. On the other hand, asynchronous e-learning (e.g., email discussion forums, podcasting, and interactive multimedia content) enables learners to increase opportunities to practice and allows for more time on task-utilizing media, due to the flexibility of this learning environment. In addition, asynchronous e-learning tools could be useful devices for building group activities and teamwork as to bridge the distance among students and the instructor through interactions and as intermittently collaborative learning.

Scaffolding in Language Education

In the late 1950s, Jerome Bruner introduced the theory of scaffolding by describing young children's language acquisition. According to Bruner (1983), scaffolding represents the helpful interactions between care taker and children that enable children to develop beyond the level where they are able to learn independently. In Japanese language education, Douglas and Kataoka (2008) proposed some examples of scaffolding strategies, which "consist of collaborative (in the Vygotskian definition, which includes collaborative work with teachers) learning experiences, and... need to be designed to make learners gradually integrate the process of learning introduced in the scaffolding activities" (p. 342), and claimed that their conceptual framework of scaffolding was based on Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development (ZPD).

Douglas and Kataoka's (2008) scaffolding strategies in Content Based Instruction include (a) giving contextual support, which helps learners understand meaning in authentic materials; (b) utilizing visual aids (e.g., graphic organizers) to enhance reading comprehension; (c) providing an answer list or partially completed format as to enable students to complete their answers with less burden; and (d) breaking down tasks into manageable units. Furthermore, learning occurs "through [the] assisted use of functions whose structure is inferred and not yet completely integrated as a series of cognitive tools" (Kinginger, 2002, p. 249) and not on the basis of completely established functions. According to Kinginger's (2002) illustration of the interpretations of the ZPD, the ZPD should not be considered to be a dimension in which students are invited to participate with their teacher's directives in producing what is expected of them, but rather, it should be seen as emergent and open-ended trait, which leads the students to a following agenda (and not to the same agenda for the teacher's purposes) through various interactions. This expands the potential for learning especially in project-based learning.

Projects in Distance-Learning First-Year Japanese Course

Besides using a paper textbook, a paper workbook, and synchronous online components such as a virtual class, a project was included in the course schedule of each term¹ when the first-year Japanese course for distance learning students was designed. Although there is a tendency to give small segments of assignments or activities focusing on grammar exercises to students in basic-level language courses, it is possible for students to effectively develop basic communicative skills and increase their awareness of cultural differences through the step-by-step process of a project, even in distance-learning courses if each step of the project is carefully designed so that students can maximize the dimension where they can develop their skills and abilities and move up to the potential level. This section describes how the instructor's scaffolding, collaboration among peers, and learner autonomy are interrelated in the spiral sequence.

Table 1 shows examples of instruction and activities in the categories and subcategories of procedures that the students use to complete each project. At the developmental stage of this distance-learning course, tasks were broken down into manageable steps. To determine the purpose of each project, the author of this article chose a topic that could give each student the freedom to continuously maximize his or her individual skills and abilities in the distance-learning setting, rather than guide all of the students to complete the anticipated answers to questions given by the instructor. The social dimensions of online learning communities increased the dynamic interactions and fostered in-depth discussion among peers through the instructor's facilitation of collaborative learning.

Although the projects were designed for three term curricula, Figure 1 shows one example of how the three categories and the sources of the procedure, as well as the descriptions of instruction or activities are interrelated in the first-term project. The instructions to the projects given to the students for three terms can be found in Appendix A-C, respectively.

Table 1
Instruction and Activities of Scaffolding, Collaboration, and Learner Autonomy

Category of Procedure	Subcategory of Procedure	Examples
Scaffolding	Contextual support	Providing visual aids
	Technological support	Providing information regarding software
	Feedback	Grading products with comments
Collaboration	Presentation	Sharing information and discussion
Learner Autonomy	Skill development	Searching information using computer
	Internalization process	Analyzing the social phenomena
	Integration	Writing a paper using the knowledge obtained through materials and collaboration
	Demonstration	Videotaping with appropriate verbal and non-verbal behavior
	Reflection	Revising products and correcting mistakes

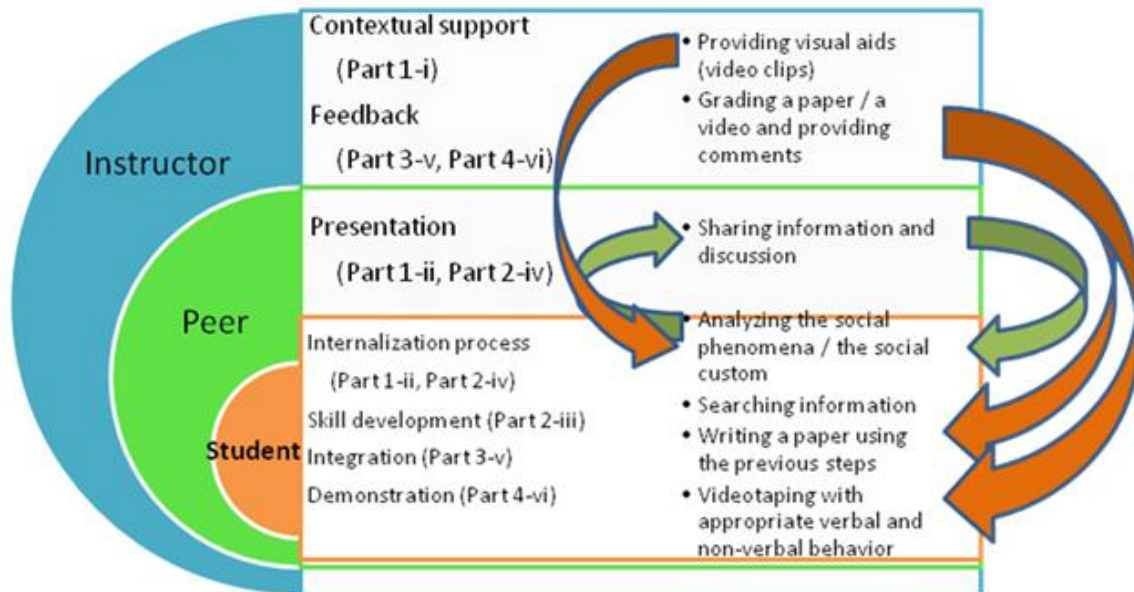


Figure 1. Instruction and Activities in Online Learning Community of Term 1 Project: Japanese Greetings

Term 1 Project: Japanese Greetings

This project gives students opportunities to learn Japanese culture and to practice how to exchange business cards with appropriate body language (Appendix A). Figure 1 depicts the relationships among the instructor's scaffolding, collaboration with peers, and learner autonomy in a step-by-step process toward the completion of this project.

Scaffolding

In Part 1(i), students are provided with visual aids (i.e., video clips) as the instructor's contextual support. After watching these video clips, students analyze the social phenomena about bowing in Japan and write a paragraph in English to describe the differences between

American and Japanese greetings to be posted on the Blackboard Discussion Board² in Part 1(ii). Another type of scaffolding utilized in Part 3(v) and Part 4(vi) is feedback from the instructor given to the students.

Collaboration

To facilitate collaborative learning, students can post their thoughts and discuss their views of the target culture on the Blackboard Discussion Board. This procedure allows students to share information and fosters in-depth discussion. In Part 1(ii) and Part 2(iv), students post a paragraph in English with regard to the differences between American and Japanese greetings and a paragraph in English about the difference between American and Japanese business cards. Afterward, students read their peers' postings and collaboratively learn about one another's ideas and viewpoints.

Learner autonomy

In Part 1(ii) and Part 2(iv), students start to independently internalize the cultural differences between American and Japanese societies, based on materials provided by the instructor and collaboration among peers. Furthermore, students develop their skills, which includes searching for information online in Part 2(iii). Moreover, students integrate the knowledge obtained in the previous steps and write a paper in English regarding the differences between American and Japanese societies in Part 3(v). Last, students demonstrate their skills, which can be applied to real life situations. In Part 4(vi), students practice how to exchange business cards using appropriate verbal greetings and body language. After practicing this with someone who can speak Japanese, they videotape it and submit the video file. In order to videotape this, students are required to interact with a person in the Japanese-speaking community or teach their friends or family members how Japanese people exchange business cards. This step gives students the opportunity to contact the community where the target language is spoken or to reinforce their knowledge through the experience of teaching others.

Term 2 Project: Describing a Family

The second-term project gives students opportunity to learn Japanese culture and practice by introducing their family using the appropriate expressions (Appendix B). The relationships of scaffolding, collaboration, and learner autonomy in the second-term project are similar to those in the first-term project, though the number of steps is fewer. The main structural difference in the procedure is that students are given the opportunity of starting to internalize the information by analyzing it based on online materials with collaboration among their peers before presenting the final product. In the second-term project, students have a one-time chance to write a paragraph in English to discuss what they should be careful of when they introduce their family members in the Japanese society and to share information and conduct a discussion on the online Blackboard Discussion Board. Students have similar opportunities twice in the first-term project.

Term 3 Project: Writing a Comic using Short Forms of Verbs and Adjectives

The third-term project gives students opportunities (a) to practice using the short forms of verbs and adjectives, which were introduced in the previous term, and (b) to integrate their knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and Japanese culture in a more independent setting, as compared with the two previous projects (Appendix C). In this term's project, students do not have the opportunity to collaborate with peers until the completion of the project, though students read their classmates' comics and discuss their projects by exchanging questions and answers as the last step of the project. Although students receive technological support at the beginning and feedback from the instructor twice when they submit dialogues and comics, the sequence of this project aims to prepare students for developing their life-long learning abilities so that they may continue to learn individually after fulfilling the foreign language requirement or graduating from the university.

Students' Feedback from the Course Survey

Students who enrolled in distance-learning sections of the first-year Japanese courses from the 2009 fall term to the 2010 spring term completed a course survey at the end of each term. The survey consisted of several questions regarding the standardized course evaluation made by the language departments and a tailored form course evaluation³. In addition to the six questions from the standardized course evaluation (i.e., instructor's grading fairness, attention to the students' progress, encouraging use of the target language, the most beneficial aspect of the course, suggestions to improve the course, and additional comments), students responded to the following five questions: (a) how frequently they used course resources, (b) how much they feel they have learned from the course materials and class activities, (c) the benefits of the way in which this distance-learning course is taught, (d) effective learning strategies they used and would like to share with their classmates, and (e) the most memorable moment in the course.

Focusing on the feedback with regard to the projects, it was found that students in distance-learning sections individually endeavored to involve people in the Japanese-speaking community in their learning environment. For example, several students made comments like this: "...full use of my roommate (he is here from Japan studying English)" as a response to learning strategies and "Beginning to understand my Japanese friends about halfway through the course!" as a response regarding the most memorable moment in the course. Thus, the students practiced communicating with speakers of Japanese or listening to people speaking Japanese. Furthermore, judging from the responses about the most memorable moment in this course (e.g., "Recording the introduction video was the most memorable moment in this course"), interaction with the speakers of Japanese and with their peers in Blackboard Discussion Board when conducting projects that involved collaboration was enjoyable for the students.

Conclusions

The U.S. Department of Education (2009) reported that hybrid instruction, which combines face-to-face and online components, was more effective than purely traditional face-to-face instruction. Furthermore, purely online instruction offers a slight advantage as compared to traditional classroom instruction. Likewise, the results of the nine-month investigation of the present distance-learning course based on achievement tests demonstrated that (a) students in a distance-learning section achieved similar levels of ability in grammar, listening, and reading comprehension as students in traditional face-to-face sections of the same course and (b) the average scores achieved on oral tests by students in the distance-learning section exceeded those achieved by students in face-to-face sections⁴. Additionally, the course survey results in terms of the online learning community could be interpreted to mean that the instructor's scaffolding and

the students' collaboration with peers play important roles in encouraging learning satisfaction and enhancing instructional effectiveness.

The problems surrounding distance-learning language courses are sometimes identified to include a lack of interaction. As this article described, however, students can develop their skills to search for information online; use computer software and their abilities of internalization, integration and demonstration of their knowledge; and reflect on their products if the instructor's scaffolding and the collaboration among peers are effectively related to learner autonomy and if the online learning community is constructed with sound planning for support to individual students. Thus, learner autonomy would be one of the imperative elements to success in self-directed learning environments, such as distance learning settings.

Students' abilities to develop learning strategies associated with learning autonomy should be a key to enable them to achieve higher levels of abilities in distance learning courses. The ways of fostering autonomous learning abilities or the methods of developing effective learning strategies were not discussed in this article. Therefore, it is necessary to further research the development of effective strategies good learners use and the ways to promote learning autonomy in distance-learning courses.

Notes

¹The university where this distance-learning course was developed offers Japanese language courses for three terms in one year. Each term lasts ten weeks.

²The course management system of the university under study is Blackboard (Provider of products that enable universities and schools to host their classes on the Internet). Discussion Board is one of the built-in communication tools in Blackboard, and it can be used for collaboration among students on shared electronic media or project discussions.

³Tailored form course evaluations are constructed for a specific course curriculum to collect students' concerns about future courses as well as their opinions regarding the course materials, activities, and learning strategies, whereas a traditional course evaluation is a means to produce feedback and is utilized to improve a given instructor's quality of instruction and the structure of the course. It is said that the tailored form course evaluation is a more useful method for receiving feedback from students with whom the instructor does not regularly meet in face-to-face settings.

⁴The average scores of quizzes and oral tests in the distance-learning section from the 2009 fall term to the 2010 spring term were compared with those of the traditional face-to-face sections from the 2008 fall term to the 2009 spring term because the course syllabi of the distance learning sections were redesigned based on those assessments of the traditional face-to-face classes from the 2008 fall term to the 2009 spring term, though the test formats used for the two groups were not exactly the same. That is, a student's knowledge of grammar, listening, and reading comprehension was tested in a pencil-paper written test format in the traditional face-to-face classes, whereas a student's knowledge of these items was examined in an online test format in the distance-learning sections. One distance-learning section was offered each term during the 2009-2010 academic year, whereas there were five face-to-face sections in the 2008 fall term and four face-to-face sections in the 2009 winter and spring terms. The maximum number of students in each section, including the distance-learning sections, was the same (i.e., 25 students).

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APPENDIX A

Term 1 Project: Japanese greetings

This homework provides an opportunity to learn Japanese culture and practice how to exchange business cards using appropriate body language. Please follow the instructions below and submit your assignments on the specified days.

Part 1

- i) Search online videos that show how people greet each other in Japan.
e.g., Erin Lesson 1/あいさつ/Kihon Skit 1
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPIEDbGWH3E>
e.g., Erin Lesson 1/Meishi Kookan
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fv0wn0Kk1r8>
- ii) Write a paragraph in English to describe the differences between American and Japanese greetings and post it on the Blackboard Discussion Board.

Part 2

- iii) Search for the layout of Japanese business cards using online resources.
- iv) Write a paragraph in English about the differences between American and Japanese business cards and post it on the Blackboard Discussion Board.

Part 3

- v) Using ii) and iv), write a one-page essay in English about the differences between American and Japanese societies. Submit it to Blackboard Assignments.

Part 4

- vi) Practice how to exchange business cards using appropriate verbal greetings and body language. After practicing this with someone (if you cannot find a Japanese person to assist you, teach your friend or family member how to do it), videotape your greeting and submit it to Blackboard Assignments.

APPENDIX B

Term 2 Project: Describing a family

This homework provides an opportunity to learn Japanese culture and practice introducing your family using the appropriate expressions. Please follow the instructions below and submit your assignments on the specified days.

Part 1

- i) Search online documents that describe what kinds of forms/expressions you should use when you introduce people in your in-group.
e.g., Wikipedia “Honorific speech in Japanese”
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honorific_speech_in_Japanese#Humble_language
- ii) Write a paragraph in English to discuss what you should be careful of when you introduce your family members to someone outside of your group in Japanese society and post it on the Blackboard Discussion Board.

Part 2

- iii) Using what you learned in Part 1 (you do not have to use the honorific speech—just be humble), write a type-written composition that describes your family members. Submit it to Blackboard Assignments. (Length: a half page).

Part 3

- iv) Record the description of your family members in a sound file. You may read the composition you wrote in Part 2. Submit it to Blackboard Assignments.

Part 4

- v) Practice describing your family members until you do not have to take a look at your draft. Afterward, videotape your introductions and submit them to Blackboard Assignments. If your family is not in town, show family photo(s) and describe the people in them. (Length: 1-2 minutes).

APPENDIX C

Term 3 Project: Writing a comic using the short forms of verbs and adjectives

This homework provides the opportunity a) to practice using short forms of verbs and adjectives, and b) to integrate your knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and Japanese culture. When you write the dialogue, please use the short forms of verbs and adjectives.

Part 1

- i) Go to the website of “Comic Life (<http://comiclif.com>)” and learn about the software.

Part 2

- ii) Submit the dialogue that will be included in your comic to Blackboard Assignments. Please use the Short Forms of verbs and adjectives. The final product will be 2-3 pages including photos/pictures.

Part 3

- iii) Download the software of “Comic Life” on your computer.
- iv) Submit a comic (2-3 pages) including the dialogue that was corrected from Blackboard Assignments.

Part 4

- v) If necessary, make corrections after receiving the instructor’s feedback and post the comic on the Blackboard Discussion Board so that your classmates can read it.

Part 5

- vi) Read your classmates’ comics and post some questions (at least two questions in total) regarding your classmates’ comics on the Blackboard Discussion Board.

Editor's Note: This study provides useful information on ways to empower students to assume responsibility for their own learning. This is a necessary transition for both students and instructors when teaching and learning is conducted in virtual environments.

Analyzing Virtual English Language Learning Environment with a Critical Lens

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Abstract

Although Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has become popular by discourse analysis researchers, it is rather rarely used by English language virtual instructors. The aim of the present paper is to explore some aspects of CDA suggested by Fairclough (1992 and 1995) and Fowler (1996) in the Iranian virtual learning environment. In order to carry out the study, we have observed three virtual English classes at Iran University of Science and Technology (IUST) to investigate how a number of indicators of Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework are manifested in terms of aspects of CDA in community of virtual instructors and students. Some of the results of the study indicated that (1) the students do not have power and freedom to choose what and when to study their materials and the instructors who have the power in the class plan how virtual interactions should take place and how management and direction of such interactions should be carried out to ensure learning outcomes. They do not give any role of choosing the content, the pace and sequencing of learning material to their students and their classes are totally teacher-centered. (2) Affective aspects are considered important since they help to compensate for body language, facial expressions, and vocal intonations in text-based discussions, but the instructors who are in power do not make great use of conspicuous capitalization for emphasis, emoticons and repetitious punctuations in order to express their emotions. (3) Instructors, who consider themselves in the position of better information, when deciding on the sources of virtual classes, do not inject knowledge from diverse textbooks, articles and/or internet-based materials and in each semester, they teach predetermined and old materials which are mostly based on Grammar Translation Method.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis; Community of Inquiry Model; E-learning; Identity; Power

Introduction

CDA concerns itself with examining social context along the lines of ideology, identity, power and inequality. It also illustrates how discourse affects the construction of 'social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief' (Fairclough 1993: 134). Distance education is also "a new, global technology-based education to facilitate easy, immediate learning and interaction for communicators, teachers and students in education programs" (İşman et al. 2004, p. 1).

The focus of this study is (1) the analysis of virtual learning environment in terms of aspects of critical discourse analysis i.e., power, identity and ideology. (2) It also aims to investigate how a number of indicators of Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework are manifested in community of virtual instructors and students with respect to their unequal status.

To this end, we analyzed the discourse of three virtual classes at Iran University of Science and Technology. A number of indicators of Community of Inquiry model are used as the framework of this study. We further make use of aspects of critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine how participants of this study incorporate the indicators of CoI model in their virtual learning community.

Background

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis concerns itself with examining social context along the lines of ideology, power and inequality. As Fowler (1996) suggests, critical discourse analysis goes “beyond the formal structure of Language as an abstract system, toward the practical interaction of language and context” (p. 10). In this sense, language is seen as a social practice, as a mode of action that is always socially situated “in a dialectical relationship with other facets of ‘the social’...it is socially shaped, but it is also socially shaping or constitutive” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 131). From this viewpoint, discourse is seen as constitutive of social reality in a general sense.

In this study, three major aspects of critical discourse analysis i.e., power, identity and ideology are taken into account. Below is some information related to them.

Drawing on Street’s (1993) metaphor “culture is a verb”, Roberts and Sarangi (1999, p. 229) propose that “identity is a verb” suggesting that similar to culture, identity is something that people do. Heller (2003) argued that “identity is among the entities that are frequently commodified in the globalized world, and it is constantly negotiated in institution/individual interactions as a key factor involved in the definition of the social order” (p. 474). Gumperz (1982, 1992) proposed that individuals do not choose and construct social identity alone, but rather that identity is co-constructed by all participants in a given interaction.

Power and dominance are the key concepts for critical discourse analysis (CDA) in looking at how people in hierarchically higher positions, majority groups, and organizations use and maintain power and control over other people and minority groups (Fairclough, 1992, 1995; Gee, 1996, 1999). Power and solidarity was a concept first presented by Brown and Gilman (1960), and later extended by Brown and Levinson (1987) in their model of politeness.

Fairclough (1989) stresses the ideological significance of lexical choices and argues that “a text’s choice of wordings depends on, and helps to create, social relationships between participants” (p. 116). Sykes (1985) also contends that the choice of different words for referring to the same thing by different speakers reveals “different ideological affiliations” (p. 87) on the part of the speakers.

E-Learning

“E-learning” is a general term covering many different approaches that have in common the use of information and communication technologies. Learners have more choice of when, where and at what pace to learn. This places a lot of responsibility on them that in a traditional course is provided by its structure and the tutor. Online and e-Learning, are sometimes used interchangeably and they are general terms covering a wide range of approaches” (Clarke, 2004, pp. 1 & 22).

E-learning gives the learners potentially more freedom to choose the place, pace and time of their learning. However, it does place more responsibility for learning on them and the design of e-learning courses varies, so the degree of freedom will change from course to course (Clarke, 2004). Garrison & Anderson (2000) believed that:

E-learning will inevitably transform all forms of education and learning in the twenty-first century. Notwithstanding that e-learning’s influence in traditional educational institutions has been weak - in reality, little more than an enhancement of current practices - as we gain a better understanding of its potential and strengths, e-learning will effectively transform how we approach the teaching and learning transaction.

E-learning in Iran

E-learning in Iran is still in its infancy stages and there are only a few online programs. There are some studies which also affirm the lack of coherent paradigm for e-learning education in Iran.

Dilmaghani (2003) and Noori (2003) believed that the process of changing traditional education into a modern one in the Iranian society involves many critical problems. They summarized the problems as below:

- Lack of realistic comprehension concerning the process of learning
- Ambiguous understanding about students' educational needs in different levels
- Defective implementation of computer hardware and software
- Weak IT education
- Faint IT infrastructure
- No realistic point of view or strategic program for higher education
- Budget and equipment shortages
- Influential atmosphere of political, social and economic situations
- Lack of information literacy

Yaghoubi et al. (2008) also argued that the developing e-learning systems could be considered as a solution for the hazed situation of online higher education in Iran. If e-learning is to have a meaningful role in higher education, it is important that universities focus on students' attitudes and their expectations with regard to the role of e-learning within their higher education experiences. E-learning represents an important, growing trend in the application of technology to facilitate student's learning in Iran.

Community of Inquiry

Garrison et al. (2000) developed a model of a community of inquiry which combines three elements: cognitive presence, teaching presence and social presence. The Community of Inquiry (COI) framework reflects the dynamic nature of higher-order learning and has shown to be useful in guiding research and practice in online higher education (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007). It is grounded in a broad base of research in teaching and learning in higher education (Garrison & Anderson, 2003). Community of Inquiry framework consists of a number of indicators.

Social presence can be classified through a series of indicators that fit into these categories: Affective, Open communication and Group cohesion. The participants engage in a variety of behaviors in order to strengthen the social aspect of their community: Expressing emotions, Use of humor and Self-disclosure (Affective), Risk-free expression, Continuing a thread, Quoting from others' messages, Asking questions, Complimenting and Expressing appreciation and agreement (Open communication), Encouraging collaboration, Vocatives, Addresses or refers to the group, Using inclusive pronouns and Phatics and Salutation (Group cohesion).

There are three major categories of teaching presence (Design and organization, Facilitating discourse and Direct instruction). These are built through behaviors of: Setting curriculum and methods, Designing methods, Establishing time parameters, Utilizing medium effectively, Establishing netiquette, Making macro-level comments about course content (Design and organization), Sharing personal meaning, Identifying areas of agreement/disagreement, Seeking to reach consensus/understanding, Setting climate for learning, Drawing in participants, Prompting discussion, Assessing the efficacy of the process and Encouraging, acknowledging, or Reinforcing student contribution (Facilitating discourse). Focusing discussion on specific issues, Press content/questions, Summarize the discussion, Diagnose misconceptions, Inject knowledge from diverse sources and Responding to technical concerns (Direct instruction).

The indicators of cognitive presence include: Sense of puzzlement, Recognize problem (Triggering event category), Information exchange, Divergence, Suggestions, Brainstorming and Intuitive leaps (Exploration category), Connecting ideas, Applying new ideas, Solutions, and Synthesis (Integration category) and Apply, Test and Defend (Resolution).

From among these indicators, some will be analyzed on the basis of some aspects of critical discourse analysis.

Methodology

The methodological approach to both data gathering and data processing is what Lincoln and Guba (1985) call an interpretivist qualitative approach by focusing on naturally-occurring discourse of three virtual classes.

In order to investigate aspects of CDA in virtual environment, we examined a corpus of three online graduate-level classes at the Iran University of Science and Technology. A total of 90 students enrolled in the online General English language course which is a compulsory subject and is held fourteen sessions during a semester at this university. The students' fields were Industrial Engineering and Information Technology and their textbook is entitled "General English for Engineering Students".

A number of Indicators of Community of Inquiry framework and three aspects of CDA (that is, power, identity and ideology) provide the framework for the analysis of this study.

Results and discussions

In this section, a number of indicators of the CoI model are discussed, based on aspects of critical discourse analysis.

Social Presence

Self-disclosure is the least frequent indicator in the virtual center of this study. The instructors do not like to comment on their emotions and on disclosing things about themselves or their life or present details of their life and experiences out of class in their virtual communities. It shows that the instructors are attempting to be less intimate with their students.

Affective aspects are considered important since they help to compensate for body language, facial expressions, and vocal intonations in text-based discussions, but the instructors who are in power do not make greater use of conspicuous capitalization for emphasis, emoticons and repetitious punctuations in order to express their emotions. In contrast, it is a strategy which is mostly used by virtual students. In this case, the students intend to express solidarity and emphasize in group status and group membership and they try to express trust in the participants in virtual environment.

The students could easily ask their questions of the members of their virtual community and they typically but not always communicated in an online forum via text but not via audio. The instructors try to provide the answers orally and due to the lack of time, it is not possible for them to separately answer all the questions in written form. That is, through answering questions and making suggestions, they try to support and moderate the discussion.

Regarding quoting from others' messages indicator, the instructors refer to their students' posts. They try to construct a balanced and functional relationship among virtual students.

With regard to the Complimenting indicator, when students do their homework or when their replies to grammar and reading exercises are correct, the instructors try to praise their students with expressions such as "Great job! Keep up the good work!", "Well done" to help them feel comfortable in the virtual learning environment. They make use of compliments when they want to acknowledge that they are aware of their students' presence or when the students send their homework on time or when they answer grammar or reading exercises correctly.

The virtual instructors are aware of the functions of Phatics utterances in strengthening the community that the students are developing in that at the beginning of their classes, TEFL

Instructors directly refer to their previous ideas and they recognize students by welcoming them into the class and acknowledging their first post. They also make use of statements like “Hi, how are you?” and “what’s up? Do you have voice? Do you have image?” at the beginning of their class and expressions like, “Have a great weekend” and “If you do not have any question, cheer up and take care” at the end of their classes.

Teaching Presence

The students do not have power and freedom to choose what and when to study their materials and the instructors who have the power in the class plan how virtual interactions should take place and how management and direction of such interactions should be carried out to ensure learning outcomes. They do not give any role of choosing the content, the pace and sequencing of learning material to their students and their classes are totally teacher-centered. In order to show their authority in class and to clarify the rules and guidelines of virtual engagement, the instructors set up some boundaries on the students’ interactions. For example, the students are asked not to interrupt when reading section is being taught or when the instructors are explaining a grammatical point.

The instructors communicate important date/time frames for learning activities at the beginning of the course to maintain the power and to help the students have an organized program to study during the classes. The students are informed that they need to complete the assignments and submit them via email to their instructor during the specified time in virtual centers of the present study.

All teachers should be equally adept at using medium appropriately. Virtual instructors of the present study do not receive specific instruction in regard to teaching in virtual centers and they have different levels of computer and information literacy and this may threaten the power and identity of the instructors and their authority may be endangered in the class.

Sharing personal meaning indicator is relatively frequent in TEFL instructors’ classes. The students could share their personal meanings although the primary focus is on presenting the material of predetermined syllabus. This would mean sharing power at some level with the students who are of the lower ranking and the instructors’ awareness of students’ needs to have their wants acknowledged and their values respected and shared.

Instructors, who consider themselves in the position of better information, when deciding on the sources of virtual classes, do not inject knowledge from diverse textbooks, articles and/or internet-based materials and in each semester, they teach predetermined materials which are mostly based on Grammar Translation Method. In this case, the instructors ‘do power’ explicitly. Instead, Instructors who are in power should share a part of their power with their students and they should apply it more delicately to avoid consecutive problems.

Regarding students’ technical concerns, the instructors try to be a facilitator and attentive because they try their best to solve the students’ technical problems; for instance, in cases when student ask how they can get access to the file on the website, instructors guide them. But there are some specific technical problems that instructors cannot solve; for instance, when the students do not have voice or image of the virtual class. This may be threatening for the power of the instructors.

Cognitive Presence

Considering the Brainstorming indicator, the method adopted to teach the materials do not require brainstorming technique to be practiced in the class. Considering Divergence indicator, the students are allowed to offer supporting or contradictory ideas with regard to classroom activities and exercises. This is an acceptable strategy which de-emphasizes the power differential and avoids the overt enactment of power or authority and leaves the power relations untouched.

Although one of instructors' responsibilities in virtual environments is to be a facilitator who models critical discourse in the process of solving problem, the instructors of the present study do not make use of critical discourse and critical thinking methods in their classes to construct meaning and in this case they 'do power' more explicitly.

In regards to Resolution category, the primary focus is on improving reading, grammar and vocabulary of students but speaking, listening and writing skills do not receive due attention in this system. Further, there are not specific speaking or listening activities in the materials and writing is limited to typing their answers to grammar and reading activities and questions. That is, the virtual classes are based on principles of Grammar Translation Method (GTM) which is one of the traditional ways of teaching English. In this method the teacher holds the power and is the authority in the classroom.

Conclusions

This study aims to investigate what power relations and identity the superiors and subordinates try to establish in their communicative exchanges in virtual learning environment with respect to some of the indicators of Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework. It could be concluded that the indicators of Community of Inquiry model do not exist completely in virtual learning environments of the present study. In cases where the indicators of CoI model are relatively frequent, the instructors try to 'do power' less explicitly and share power at some level with the students who are of the lower ranking. Also, they try to incorporate some indicators in their classes in order to de-emphasize the power differential and avoid the overt enactment of power or authority. On the other hand, a number of indicators are not available in virtual classes and consequently, in some instances, it could threaten the power and identity of the instructors.

Although power differences are maintained in virtual learning environment of the present study to a great extent, the difference does not obscure communication between the teacher (as the one who has power in the class) and the student. On the other hand, they help communication proceed smoothly without parties being required to prove their identities to each other. The person of high power (in educational context, i.e. the instructor) can find the opportunities to exercise his/her power less explicitly, which makes the environment more intimate and thus learning can happen easier. This implies that while the teacher is trying to downgrade the power position, the teacher is simultaneously making use of power to reach goals that are otherwise impossible.

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