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Using Subtitles to Enliven Reading

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Abstract

There are an increasing number of foreign language teaching techniques that integrate with the latest technology, such as computers, video materials. As the emphasis in multimedia shifts to success for all language learners, educators tend to carry out various techniques to demonstrate benefits. Presenting subtitles aids visual channels to communicate verbal information. The presenter examines whether video English captions improve or impede EFL students' reading comprehension.

Using the instructional videos with English subtitles 1hour every 2 weeks over 10 weeks. Two versions of videos, one with captioning and one without it, were used by two groups randomly selected among freshmen at the university in Taiwan. Reading comprehension test- General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) – intermediate- was administered by participants in order to determine the influences of using subtitles on learners' reading comprehension.

Keywords: Subtitles, English learning, Reading comprehension

1. Introduction

There are an increasing number of foreign language teaching techniques that integrate with the latest technology, such as computers, video materials. In other words, the movement of language teaching goals and practices has shifted from the printed word and knowledge of language systems to the use and communicative value of the spoken language in the everyday setting (Vanderplank, 1993). In this particular setting, learners gradually develop their language acquisition by being exposed to the genuine environment of the target language. Many researchers have claimed that multimedia have beneficial effects on language learning because of abundant and authentic comprehensible input.

Likewise, television programs and videotapes have found a place in the transmission of information and are powerful tools in promoting language teaching (Anderson & Lorch, 1983). The subtitles or captions, a key function on television and videotapes, are synchronized with the dialogue or narration of the program's audio track, augmenting and understanding of TV programs and videos. The terms subtitles and captions are interchangeable in this paper and are defined as the translations of the spoken word to the written with the identical language shown at the bottom of the television screen. Lambert, Boehler and Sidoti (1981) have asserted that the stable general trend indicates that information coming through two input form is more thoroughly processed than if either dialogue or captions are presented alone. Moreover, Paivio (1971) proposed the dual-coding theory which suggests that when pictures are added to the message the number of cues associated with the message increases. Viewers then will be more likely to remember the message. In that sense the results of past research seem to sustain the aspect that the use of captions triggers multi-sensory processing, interacting with audio, video and print components.

Despite much research has hypothesized the benefits from the use of captions for language learners, little research related to this interest has found in Taiwan. Thus, there is a need for exploration. In addition, as the emphasis in multimedia shifts to success for all language learners, educators tend to carry out various techniques to demonstrate benefits. Presenting subtitles aids visual channels to communicate verbal information. The present study investigated whether video English captions improve or impede EFL students' reading comprehension. Using the

instructional videos with English subtitles 1hour every 2 weeks over 10 weeks. Two versions of videos, one with captioning and one without it, were used by two groups randomly selected among freshmen at the university in Taiwan. Reading comprehension test - General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) – intermediate was administered in order to determine the influences of using subtitles on learners' reading comprehension.

2. Literature Reviews

2.1 Dual-coding Theory

Allan Paivio (1971) proposed the dual-coding theory (DCT) as an attempt to explain how learners use associations when the pictorial and linguistic information are processed differently. Inclined toward giving equal weight to verbal and non-verbal processing, Paivio asserted that information could be represented by pictures and words at the same time. The two information sources trigger two coding systems: visual codes and verbal codes which are functionally independent and interconnected by referential links (see Figure 1). The theory assumes that there are two cognitive subsystems: one subsystem is specialized for verbal information and the other is specialized for non-verbal information.

This concept of independent verbal and imagery representation systems is at the heart of Paivio's dual-coding model. According to this model, Paivio postulated the two different recreational units: *imagens* for mental images referring to any concrete stimuli and *logogens* for verbal entities containing abstract stimuli that include vague visual as well as verbal information. Paivio contended that *imagens* are coded twice, both as images and corresponding verbal labels, whereas *logogens* are more difficult to image and are coded only as verbal information. DCT claims that *imagens* are faster and easier to recall than the *logogen* which is structured in discrete, sequential units. In other words, dual-coding theory evolved from Paivio's studies on the role of imagery in associate learning, supporting the learning effectiveness of illustrated texts and proposing that information is much easier to retain and retrieve when dual-coded systems occurs. The result indicates that the availability of two mental representations instead of one promotes comprehension

In this regard, the use of captioned videos demonstrating pictures and words in an auditory form and in a visual form simultaneously enhances the comprehension for viewers. Moreover, if pictorial cues are redundant with the audio message, then viewers will be more likely to remember the message.

2.2 ACT Model

Based on a cognitive view of language development, language acquisition is regarded as a gradual automatization of skills through stages of restructuring and linking new information to old knowledge. John Anderson (1983) describes the process of learning development from declarative to procedural knowledge. He distinguishes between two different kinds of knowledge, being necessary for second language learning. Declarative knowledge refers to knowledge that is conscious and stored as a series of statements or images. It is knowledge about rules, words and facts, whereas procedural knowledge refers to knowledge that is unconscious and consists of routines or procedures that allow us to bring declarative knowledge into use. For example, our procedural knowledge of our mother tongue permits us to construct grammatically correct sentences without consciously thinking about it.

Moreover, Anderson also points out that learning takes place in three stages. First, the cognitive stage describes that the learner needs to explicitly utilize mental processes to access knowledge. In the case of the language example, that an *-s* must be added to a verb after a third person subject. In this stage, the acquisition process is likely to involve many errors, and hesitant fluency. Second, the associative stage asserts that the learner can more readily correct their errors, and produce language. There is a more comprehensive source of knowledge to access in comprehending and producing language. For example, how to add *-s* when the context requires it. Last, the autonomous stage claims that the performance becomes native-like, with errors free. The mental processes needed to access knowledge have become implicit. Learners might not be able to explain what they are doing.

Briefly stated, the ACT model views second language learning as a movement from declarative to procedural knowledge, which takes place in three stages stated above. The three stages can be characterized to be from conscious, slow and incorrect to unconscious, fast and correct.

In short, Anderson claims that language learning involves a shift from the cognitive stage toward the autonomous state processing via practice, and initial practice during the cognitive and associative stages lies in proceduralization and initial automation of a new skill.

2.3 Research on L2 captions on reading comprehension

In Rochester, NY, Parlato (1985) used in-class captioned TV viewing as a group activity that provided a common

frame of reference or talking point from which to build vocabulary and concepts. Subjects viewed programs, looked for differences between captions and dialogue, and discussed these differences after the viewing. This activity helped learners improve their reading fluency and metalinguistic knowledge about how language can be used and manipulated. In accordance with the above mentioned finding, Goldman (1993) contended that CCTV motivated ESL students of intermediate and advanced levels in terms of their reading comprehension. In addition, CCTV is a powerful and dynamic supplemental teaching aid (Goldman, 1996).

2.4 Research on L1 captions on reading comprehension

In addressing the effectiveness of the presence of captions, d'Ydewalle, Praet, Verfaillie, and Van Rensbergen (1991) conducted a study pertaining to the relationship between subtitled televisions and reading behavior. American and Dutch-speaking subjects who differ in terms of subtitling familiarity participated in this study. In experiment 1, American subjects watched an American movie with English subtitles. The authors asserted that Americans spend considerable time in the subtitled area in spite of their lack of familiarity with subtitles. In experiment 2, a movie in Dutch with Dutch subtitles was viewed by Dutch-speaking subjects. As a result, they suggested that reading subtitles is preferred because of efficiency in following and understanding the movie.

Similarly, to investigate the effects of various translation methods used in imported instructional video programs on Taiwan elementary school students' visual and verbal memory, Tyan (1995) assigned 128 fourth grade students into 5 different modes of presentation. The five groups were (i) Chinese narration, with no subtitles, (ii) English narration, with complete Chinese subtitles, (iii) Chinese narration, with complete Chinese subtitles, (iv) Chinese narration, with key-words subtitled in Chinese, and (v) English narration, with no subtitles. The results of this study revealed that groups viewing Chinese narration with no subtitles significantly outperformed the English narration group on the posttest.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The participants of this study were 80 freshman students from a college in central Taiwan whose average age was 19. They are male and female students in two groups. The minimum of length of learning English is about seven years. All of the participants enrolled the English comprehension class as one of the required courses designed for freshman students once a week. The participants were randomly assigned to one of the two different condition groups. Each group consisted of 40 students.

3.2 Instruments

Two instruments were administered in this study and were introduced in detail as follows. The first instrument was the Content-Specific Test (CST) for assessing the language comprehension on a particular video episode. The construct of the CST developed by the researcher focused on the student's comprehension of the major concepts in the fifth video episode, especially on listening comprehension, vocabulary recognition and content comprehension. The second instrument utilized in the study was the practice sample of the General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) – intermediate for measuring students' overall language proficiency. The GEPT is a standardized test established by the Ministry of Education in Taiwan to evaluate the student's overall language proficiency in terms of listening and reading skills.

3.3 Procedures

Firstly, the researcher planned the first meeting with the cooperating teacher, discussing who the participants were and what instructions should be used in the class. Secondly, teacher was asked to send syllabi to the research for both classes in order to ensure consistency of instructions in both groups. Thirdly, the cooperating teacher randomly divided participants in two groups. One group, an experimental group, watched the English videos with captions; whereas, the control group watched it without captions. Prior to the date of the actual experiment, participants in the two groups announced they would take part in the study and explained the goal and the purpose of the study. They were asked to take the practice sample of the GEPT - intermediate. After the fifth episode was viewed in class, participants in both groups were given the CST immediately. Finally, during the fifth week, the practice sample of the GEPT- intermediate, one identical to a pretest, was administered again to the control group and the experimental group. The SPSS statistical package was used to analyze the data in this study after the test data were received. An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) statistical method was utilized in the study to control for extraneous variables and any bias which might be attributed to the randomization process. The results of ANCOVA showed the difference between two groups. The level of significance was set at 0.05.

4. Data Findings

4.1 Subtest of the GEPT- Reading Comprehension Results

The raw scores on multiple-choice test items in the reading comprehension subtest were analyzed for a possible high score of 15. Table 1 presented the means and the standard deviations of the two groups on GEPT. The description reported that the experimental group outperformed the comparison group ($M = 6.80$; $SD = 2.41$ vs. $M = 5.70$; $SD = 2.69$, respectively).

Applying the same statistical procedures on the raw scores of the composite GEPT and GEPT listening subtest, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was done to determine whether the two conditions differed significantly from each other on the scores of the reading subtest. The results of this statistical analysis were presented in Table 2. As a result, an ANCOVA showed no significant differences between the mean reading scores of the experimental and that of control group ($df = 1$, $F = 3.24$, $p = .076$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

5. Discussion

Compared to the mean reading GEPT scores of the experimental and the control group, the results revealed no significant disparity between participants' reading performances on both conditions after the experiment. The findings address the fact that students watching captioned videos did not score higher on the GEPT - reading subtest than those who watched non-captioned videos over a period of five weeks. This conclusion led to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. According to this finding, the result of this hypothesis differed from that obtained by Goldman (1993), examining the relationship between ESL students of intermediate and advanced levels' reading comprehension. Goldman showed that the CCTV improved students' reading performance.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate whether video English captions improve or impede EFL students' reading comprehension. Possible reasons for a failure to reject null hypothesis are two-fold. One possibility might be that the single channel learning is inferior to multiple-channel learning. On the practice sample GEPT – intermediate reading subtest – text is processed through only one channel. One representation is not thought to be as comprehensible as two representations. Thus, information encoded is not easy to associate and retrieve. According to Hartman (1961), print alone might be beneficial for literate students. The subjects in this study were still in a language learning processing phase and were far from being masters of the target language.

Secondly, the length of practice on the captioning viewing was too short to draw significant conclusions about the reading performance in the experimental group. In the ACT model, Anderson (1983) asserts that initial practice during the cognitive and associative stages lies in proceduralization and initial automation of a new skill. Therefore, it is suggested that caption viewing, regarded as one learning strategy, is meant to be introduced and practiced as often as possible in the experimental group for the automation of the new skill of watching videos with captions. Even though learners are exposed to authentic and contextually rich materials, they still receive insufficient input from authentic exposure. Therefore, even if input is considered comprehensible, it is not necessarily accessible for effective reading proficiency. While the results in this study indicate that captioned videos did not affect students' reading proficiency after five weeks, it was hard to establish the cause and effect relationship between the presentation of captioned videos and the experimental group's reading abilities. To ensure efficient and effective captioned materials for learners' reading performance, exposure to an authentic environment and a great deal of practice on caption viewing should be achieved and remain consistent. This leads to significant reading improvement.

In short, captioned materials as a medium for teaching reading skills are limited to having theoretical justification as well as practical application.

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Table 1. Mean Reading Scores on GEPT

| Group | N | M | SD |
|-------------|----|------|------|
| Caption | 40 | 6.80 | 2.41 |
| Non-caption | 40 | 5.70 | 2.69 |

Table 2. ANCOVA: Scores on the Reading Subtest of the GEPT

| Source | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Squares | F-Value | P-Value |
|---------|----------------|----|--------------|---------|---------|
| Pretest | 46.98 | 1 | 46.98 | 7.80 | .006 |
| Group | 19.43 | 1 | 19.43 | 3.24 | .076 |
| Error | 461.83 | 77 | 5.99 | | |

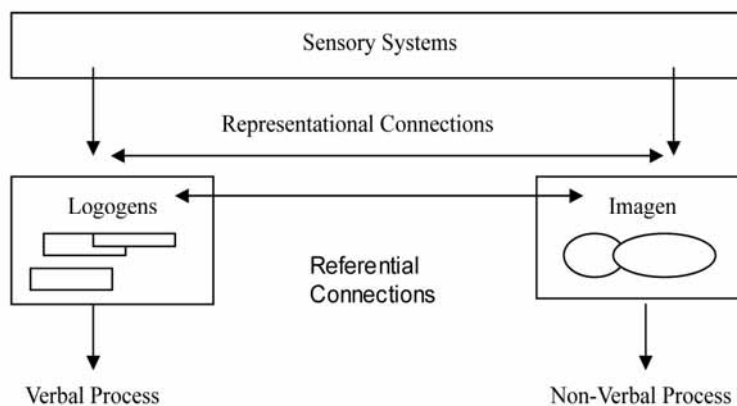


Figure 1. Paivio’s Dual-Coding Theory

The Influence of Informal Language Learning Environment (Parents and Home Environment) on the Vocabulary Learning Strategies

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Abstract

Vocabulary learning strategies play an important role in vocabulary learning. Admittedly, lack of vocabulary knowledge will have an effect over all four of language skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. In addition, vocabulary learning and word retention are always the problems encountered by students at university. This study, hence, investigates ESL students studying teaching English as a second language in Universiti Putra Malaysia. This investigation attempts to understand the influence of informal language learning environment (parents and home environment) on the vocabulary learning strategies. This paper describes how mediating agents interfere in acquiring vocabulary learning strategies of ESL students or support them.

The present study adopts the qualitative method. The researcher gathered data through in depth interviews and used open coding to code the data as well as constant comparative methods to analyze the data with ten students at the Faculty of Educational Studies in UPM. In order to the significance of mediating agents, the data revealed that parents' views of the importance of English are factors that elevate the process of learning vocabulary in all ten interviews. However, the information collected from the interviews showed that their parents had different perceptions on the learning of the English language due to their education level. Besides, language teachers have an effect on the students' beliefs, behaviors, and their choice of VLSs. Other contributors are affecting the vocabulary learning strategies were classroom and peers.

Keywords: Vocabulary learning strategies, Informal language learning environment, LLS, ESL

1. Introduction

In learning any language, vocabulary is the center focal point of acquisition. As put forward by McCarthy (1992) "without words to express a wider range of meanings, communication in L2 just cannot happen in any meaningful way (p.50)". Vocabulary has been gradually recognized as crucial to language use in which insufficient vocabulary knowledge of the learners led to difficulties in second language learning.

One of the most important challenges that learners will face during the process of second language learning is learning vocabulary. Chung and Nation (2004) mentioned that learners need to apply effective strategies to mastering technical words which frame a considerable constituent in academic texts. In Malaysian context, tertiary students studying science in English language (their second language) face the problem of understanding both the technical terms and clarification of the knowledge (Maznah Ali and Zurida Ismail, 2006). In addition, knowing a word for second language learners means to know hundreds and thousands of new words in order to be able to communicate successfully by using the language.

Schmitt (2000) stated that "Unless a high percentage of words on a page are known; it is very difficult to guess the meaning of any new words" (p.120). For that reason, second language learners should regularly learn to use their newly acquired L2 words while learning strategies to guess the meaning of words from their contexts and their derivation.

2. Models for Vocabulary Learning Strategies

A model of L2 vocabulary acquisition strategies has been developed. First of all, it specifies the gap that the detailed research of vocabulary learning strategies significantly lacks a complete taxonomy of lexically-focused strategies. Second, an earlier research has favored to deal with individual or small number of strategies. Third, it outlines six models of language/vocabulary learning strategies (Ahmed, 1989; Stoffer, 1995; Sanaoui, 1995; Gu and Johnson, 1996; Schmitt, 1997 and Nation 2001) by reviewing the necessary literatures.

From the observation of the six models, three rationales have been ascertained from the classification of language or vocabulary learning strategies from the previous researchers. The first is to categorized groups of strategies with their similar characteristics (Stoffer, 1995; Gu and Johnson, 1996). The second is to classify strategies used in learning stages (Sanaoui, 1995 and Nation, 2001). And the last one is to attach clusters of strategies and learning stages together (Schmitt, 1997).

Consequently, it is essential to obtain those strategies which influence learning vocabulary in classrooms, from the society, given formal and informal instructions and by learners themselves. The present study is based on the third rationale from Schmitt's model which has improved the previous model's limitations and combined with the findings from the researcher's empirical experiment where learners' motivations of learning vocabulary is an important factor which influence the use of their effective learners' strategies.

3. Vocabulary Learning Strategies Done in Asia

The emphases of cultural background are proved in many studies and it can influence the learners' choice of the methods for them to learn new words. Reid (1995) found that Japanese EFL students preferred using more analytic strategies aiming towards accuracy, work alone, and to look for small details. They lean more towards accuracy, search for small details, studying alone, and they preferred predicting, guessing from the contexts, and working with peers (rather than alone) whereas, EFL Hispanic students preferred predicting, working with peers and guessing from the contexts (rather than alone) (Reid, 1995). Students from Korea, and Arabic-speaking countries, conversely, are labeled to prefer learning words in some specified progression because, according to Reid (1995), their respective cultural and educational backgrounds encouraged them to do so.

Kudo (1999) investigated the vocabulary learning strategies exploited by Japanese senior high school students. He developed the research instrument based on Schmitt (1997)'s taxonomy to carry out study. The questionnaire includes four categories: social, cognitive, memory and metacognitive strategies. However, the findings do not show a distinction between discovering and consolidating strategies. The same questionnaire, in a modified form, is also used during the main study. The results of the study demonstrated that the students are not very aware of the different vocabulary learning strategies. The results also revealed that the students preferred 'shallower' vocabulary learning strategies such as rote learning and the use of a bilingual dictionary compared to the strategies which involve 'deeper' cognitive processing (e.g. the keyword method, semantic mapping). In addition, social strategies are ranked the lowest which suggest that the students are not particularly willing to cooperate with anybody when learning the vocabulary. Hence, the findings of Kudo's research, significantly, corroborated with the results obtained by (Schmitt, 1997). Kudo (1999) also made an interesting remark by suggesting that strategies used may not be culture specific: his Japanese subjects and the students investigated by Oxford (1990) in Alabama seemed to prefer the same strategies.

Apart from that, the study carried out by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) approved that cultural background is one of the important variable which affect learners' attribute when it comes to vocabulary learning. In their experimental research, they divided participants of the study to the control and the experimental group, from the results they found out that Hispanics who have the training strategy improved their vocabulary scores compared to the Hispanic control group. Nonetheless, Asians in the strategy training group are performed much worse than the Asian control group. This is why the Asian students in the training group resisted training.

Giridharan and Conlan (2003) conducted a study of employed vocabulary strategies by second language learners among seventy students from foundation programmer at Curtin University of Technology. The purposes of her study were to understand the different aspects of vocabulary learning among second language learners towards their lexical expansion (Giridharan and Conlan, 2003). She considered the variety of linguistic and cultural surroundings in her study. She divided her representative sample to three groups, two groups were from Foundation Engineering and one group was from Foundation Commerce. All the students had studied English as a second language in their schools. Her data collection methodologies were classroom observation, tests to assess their vocabulary standards, questionnaires to obtain the strategies employed, and personal interviews.

Giridharan and Conlan (2003) found that generally second language learners were try to understand the word meaning through reading. In addition, L2 learners attempt to guessing word meanings through contextual clues and

determining word meanings through dictionary reference. The low level students were lean to memories the word with the assistance of bilingual dictionaries. In contrast, the high proficiency level learners expand their vocabulary knowledge increasingly through reading and listening activities as they encountered them in context (reference).

Giridharan and Conlan (2003)'s study can be seen as a considerable study that have done in Malaysia regarding to acquiring vocabulary. But she did not focused on diverse vocabulary learning strategies that, mentioned by other researchers (Schmitt, 1997 and Gu and Johnson, 1996). On the contrary, she explains the process of acquiring word meaning through reading and using dictionary.

Noor and Amir (2009) used a survey to evaluate the various vocabulary learning strategies among thirty five post graduate students in University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). Her aim of this research is to explore the type of vocabulary learning strategy used by respondents participated in the study. The instrument of the study is distributing questionnaires which had been adopted from Gu and Johnson (1996)'s questionnaire. The result showed that most frequently used VLSs by the subjects were memorization (in terms of mental images), dictionary strategies and linguistic clues.

4. The Effects of Different Variables on the Choice of Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Vocabulary learning strategies play an important role in vocabulary learning. The significance of vocabulary learning strategies is reflected practically in all the factors. The strategies activate understandable language which leads to many aspects, such as selective attending, making conscious efforts to notice new lexical items, context-based inference and storing in to long-term memory (Ellis, 1994). However, the influence of other factors which are the descriptions of individual learner differences, such as effective language learning aptitude or (motivation, attitudes towards vocabulary learning strategies, fear of failure) should not be ignored. However, Ellis (1994) makes a distinction between the following two broad categories of factors:

- 1). Individual learner differences, including age, motivation, learning style, personality type;
- 2). Situational and social factors, such as the learning setting, the type of the task, and sex (pp. 540-545).

In the following part only the most important factors will be dealt with which include certain variables such as, mediating agents and informal language learning environment.

5. Sociocultural Perspectives on Learner Autonomy: Focus on Mediated Learning

This Sociocultural perspective was established by (Vygotsky, 1978). This theory of human learning, expresses the learning as a social process and the initiation of human brains in society or culture (Lysaght, 2007). The major theme of Vygotsky's theoretical outline is that social interaction plays an essential role in the expansion of cognition (Lysaght, 2007). Vygotsky (1978) considered learning second language process in two stages:

- 1). Learning through interaction with others;
- 2). Learning is integrated into the individual's mental structure (Oxford, 2003).

A recent study by Oxford (2003) states that in reference to Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective in acquisition of L2. She modified the cognitive process as interaction between social relations and mental functions through mediated learning which this mediation agent helps the learner move throughout the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Oxford (2003) explains "the zone of proximal development as difference between a) the learner's performance without assistance and b) the learner's performance with assistance (p, 86)".

The current study has been conducted based on Oxford (2003)'s model which explains the concepts of 'more capable other' as process that parents, peers, and teachers develop the self-regulatory abilities of learners to act intentionally and independently. Capable other (resource of knowledge) helps the learner move through the ZPD (Oxford, 2003). However, one of the major concepts which are involved in this study is vocabulary learning strategies. Because VLSs have been developed based on language learning strategies it is necessary to explain this concept in the next section.

6. The Role of Mediating Agents (teachers and parents)

Mediating agents, or significant others, include language teachers, language learning experts, classmates, celebrities, family members, friends, or print materials, from whom language learners try to find support for their language learning process, and that often have an impact on learners' strategy use (Gao, 2006). These mediating agents directly or indirectly help out the learners to implement certain strategies (Oxford, 2003).

Gardner has identified two important roles of parents in their children's second language learning process which known as both an active role and passive role (Gardner, 1985). When parents encourage and support their children to learn L2 parallel monitoring their performances towards their language learning are called active role. On the other hand, passive role entails parent's aptitude and attitudes towards the second language community. Parent's passive and

active roles play an important role on the improvement of attitudes and motivation in the child that could manipulate second language acquisition.

Gardner (1985) added the parents' positive attitudes towards certain language communities would serve to support an integrative motive in the students; though, they might state negative estimations about the other language community at the same time. In either an active or a passive role, the parents' attitudinal personality could influence their children's second language proficiency. Gao (2006) found that family members in China left their mark on his informants' early development in learning strategies.

Gao (2006) conducted a research in qualitative approach based on socio-cultural theoretical framework. The sample consisted of fourteen Chinese learners of English in England. His aim of this research was to explore the use of students' language learning strategies after they moved from the Mainland of China to Britain. The means of the research is by using retrospective interviews to find out participants' motivation for learning English and strategy used. In regards to the vocabulary learning strategies, some subjects indicated that their strategies used in Mainland China are influenced by people with authority, their teachers, and internet, for instance, "you can remember a word if you review it seven times" (p.62) (Gao, 2006). These subjects replied that repetition could extend their consciousness of the word after they adopted the strategy.

Additionally, the researcher also recognized that the choice of vocabulary learning strategy by Chinese learners is manipulated by encouraging English speakers in Britain. Some subjects stopped memorizing, have regular reviewing strategies to retain new words, note taking, and turned to using social and interactive strategies, such as acquiring and applying meaning of new words in actual conversations, and guessing. As a final point, Gao (2006) specified that the mediating agents do present influence on learners, whether in EFL or ESL situations.

Li (2007) showed that economic capital was not affect the children's second language learning in its place, parents educational achievement played a significant responsibility in their ability to foster their children's second learning language. Her finding indicated that parent's education level enable them to facilitate their children's second language learning.

The present study attempts to explore the use of vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) experiences in process by undergraduate ESL students in Universiti Putra Malaysia. The other aim of the study is to find out the influence of informal language learning environment (parents and home environment) on the vocabulary learning strategies. Hence, the following research question is examined in this paper "how do the ESL students' informal learning environment (parents and home environment) influence their vocabulary learning strategies?"

7. Methods & Materials

The qualitative study intends to gain detailed information on the strategies that ESL learners use when they learn a new vocabulary item in the English language. Nonetheless, the phenomenology qualitative study design allows an understanding and identification of the phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation (Lester, 1999). In addition, phenomenology research provides a deep understanding of phenomenon as experienced by a number of individuals (Creswell, 2007). In this investigation, the researcher tried to understand how mediating agents help shape the ESL learners' perspectives about learning vocabulary.

The participants were randomly chosen between 19 and 22 years of age and they all were in their second year of studies in Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). All of them had English as their second language and had studied it for almost fifteen years or more in the school setting. The students' participations were voluntary and all of them were eager to participate in this research.

The major section of current study is to understand the influence of parents, teachers, peers and the classroom atmosphere on the learners' choice of VLSs accordingly and the only way to attain the appropriate answer was to conduct interviews. The instrument used to collect the data for the present investigation consist of a thirty-minute (on the average) audio-recorded interview which were conducted with ten subjects to gain a deep understanding of the subjects' varied backgrounds in vocabulary learning, the strategies that they used to learn new words in English, their contact with mediating agents (parents, teachers, and peers), and the influences of informal language learning environments. The interviews were conducted individually with ten students (five males and five females) between September 25th and October 15th, 2009, at the Faculty of Education Studies in UPM.

8. Result and Findings

In answering this research question, how do the ESL students' informal learning environment (parents and home environment) influence their vocabulary learning strategies. Two themes came out from data: educated parents versus uneducated parents' espouse, which will be explained in detail in the following discussion.

8.1 The Role of Supportive Parents

When the subjects are asked about how they started their English learning in general and learning vocabulary in specific, majority of the students exhibited that their parents are their first teachers who are ready to read the English story books for or with them. According to Jim, his parents tried to teach him new English words since he was three or four years old. He has indicated that this happened because his parents were English educated. *"...home, it really depends on parents. If the parents know how to speak English this is advantage, my mom is an English educated teacher and she has high level of vocabulary and she explains it to me if I don't understand new words. ...I was lucky because my parents are English educated and I grow up in an English environment"*.

His parents sent him to a Chinese kindergarten where all the things were taught in English and their expectations for him to learn new words were high. Besides sending him to an English language kindergarten, they asked him to read simple pictorial English story books and spoke to him in English. No doubt that sometimes their demands on him were heavy. His parents provided good facilities either at home or in school to improve his English vocabulary.

As for Jasmine, learning the English language is like learning her mother tongue because of her grandfather's awareness on the importance of English. Her grandfather saw the importance of teaching her the English language where he would provide a regular schedule which included reading story books, newspapers, and scientific articles. In addition, he spoke and discussed daily matters in English with her every day. He has taught her how to learn new words and their application. Her grandfather regarded her vocabulary learning seriously. *"... he asked me to read articles and kids magazines and he corrected my pronunciation. He asked me to go and check the dictionary for the meaning of difficult word"*.

Her family members did not force her to learn the language instead they allowed and encouraged her to learn the English language. This is one of the main reasons which encourage her to learn new words and she felt that learning English was fun. Her family surrounding provides good inspiration for her to be more and more eager to read, speak, listen and learn new words of the English language.

Interestingly, compared to the other key informants, Jasmine and Jim have a diversity of strategies to learn new vocabularies, and had recognized that they learn vocabulary all the time. For instance Jim describes his vocabulary learning: *"For me, mostly I learn vocabulary through reading and watching TV, and using new words in my daily speaking"*.

Rose reported that her parents were her first two teachers. They tried to help her by talking to her in English and buying story books as well as CDs in the English language. Therefore, whenever she encounters any problem in learning new words, her father is the main source for her to seek assistance.

Eva claimed that because her grandparents are English educated they have been supporting her to learn new words. At home her grandfather helped Eva to doing her assignments. *"Because he is good in English and then when I was doing my assignments he would sit beside me and watch and look at my sentences"*.

8.2 The Role of Unsupportive Parents

Despite living in America for seven years, Jamal's English is not as fluent as Jasmine's and Jim's. He does not have any variety of strategies to learn vocabulary and this shortage comes from his home environment. As he exhibited *"Even though we lived in US, my parents didn't encourage me to learn English language, they spoke in Malay language. Usually I spoke with my mother in English but she replied me in Malay language (their mother tongue)"*. He does not get the supports from his parents to learn new words at home.

Sarah had different thought *"I learnt English vocabulary on my own... actually home environment didn't encourage me ..."* this has revealed the lack of parents' positive attitudes towards learning of vocabulary. In this regard Emma added *"My parents are not English educated. I learnt English from television, I was learning in watching English TV shows, English cartoons. My parents didn't influence me much in my English acquisition"*. It can be seen that the levels of encouragement by educated parents can affect children's motivation to learn the language. In short, it influences children's second language learning process of the English language.

Surprisingly, one of the important reasons that enhance Emma to study English in university is that no one in her family is English educated.

9. Conclusion and Implications

In the current study, the data showed that parents' views of the importance of English are factors that elevate the process of learning vocabulary in all ten interviews. However, the information collected from the interviews revealed that their parents had different perceptions on the learning of the English language due to their education level. None of Sarah's family members are legally educated, so home environment was not supportive for her in any way to enhance her in learning new words. Jamal's parents are aware of the value of the English language, but they

do not push their son to learn it.

On the other hand, the other parents sent their children to private English institutions and urged them to learn the English language, encouraged them and supported them to learn the language in general and new English words in particular at the early stage. Jim and Jasmine have indicated several times that because of their home environment and their parents' awareness of the need to learn the English language, they themselves go further to learn the new English word by attending English tuition classes. In addition, there are similarities between the attitudes expressed by participants in this study and those described by (Gardner ,1985; Gao, 2006 and Li, 2007) which discover that informal factors such as parents and environment can have strong influence over one's mastery of a second or foreign language.

In order to the significance of mediating agents, parent's passive or active factors play an important role in the second language acquisition. However, language teachers have an effect on the students' beliefs, behaviors, and their choice of VLSs. Other contributors are affecting the vocabulary learning strategies were classroom and peers.

The aim of the present study is to describe the current situation of vocabulary learning strategies used by ESL students in UPM. Unfortunately based on the interviews conducted, most of the students are not aware of the existence of the numerous strategies used to learn words other than using dictionaries and rote memorization. As Oxford (1990) remarked, learning strategies can facilitate the learning process and help the learners to become more self-directed and to contribute positively to their own learning process.

Besides, learner autonomy is vastly valued in second language education. Nevertheless, to be able to assist the learners to learn the language on their own, the teachers have to make them aware of the different strategies available in the literature. It is noted that when a learner has mastered the use of vocabulary learning strategies, he or she is able to accomplish his or her goal to be successful in language learning. Teachers are required to introduce the various ways of learning vocabulary to improve learner independence and to guide the students to be more autonomous learners.

The results of the current study can help language teachers to enhance their teaching methods to facilitate students with regards to second language learning and teaching in Malaysia. Second, the findings of this research will assist language teachers to design their teachings based on factors such as learners' language learning experiences, home environment, peer groups, and individual differences. Apart from that, teachers who are interested in their students' performance in learn the English vocabulary can introduce the vocabulary learning strategies and techniques to their students by designing useful tasks and giving relevant assignments.

Studying the effect of culture, home environment, peer groups, effective teaching methods and classroom atmosphere on vocabulary learning strategies could be very helpful to get better understanding of the relevant strategies. In addition, investigating the English teachers' beliefs and teaching styles are recommended. It would be exciting to know how teachers' beliefs and teaching strategies affect their students' beliefs and their learning strategies used.

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Ignoble Fate and Noble Sentiment: On Yan Geling's Feminine Mentality and Her Immortal Fusang

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Abstract

It is Yan Geling's invariable literary thoughts and feelings that express the real deep affections and experiences of women. As a Chinese American writer, she has invented one Chinese story after another. All her stories are unique, intricate and imbued with deep affectations. In *Fusang*, Yan Geling revealed the hard, bloody and tragic history of the Chinese immigrants. Her narration is a new annotation of the ancient Chinese femininity, gender relationship and cross-cultural communication. In the novel, the author, basing on cross-cultural communication and combining her personal life experiences with the story, showed deep concern for the survival conditions of the traditional oriental females so as to arouse readers' rational thought and emotional resonance. Through the vivid feminine imagery living at the bottom of the social ladder, Yan opened the window for readers to spy on feminine primitive potency and explore into the secret buried deep in human nature.

Keywords: *Fusang*, Feminine consciousness, Salvation of humanity, Maternal tolerance, Ode to greatness

1. Literature Review

In the 1970s, some Chinese American writers, as a new emerging force, began to stand out in North American Literature. Ever since then, the force has been branching out and developing and has reached to a pinnacle in the world of literary creation and criticism just in the past forty years. Influenced by the American Democratic Movements, the Chinese immigrants were gradually awakened in their national awareness and began to take up writing in order to reflect on national identity, to narrate the cultural dilemma of a marginal population, and to improve the Chinese imagery in an attempt to obtain the understanding and acceptance of mainstream society. Impelled by the new form of creative thinking, a number of talented writers and leading figures have come to the fore – such as, Chin Frank, Maxine Hong Kingston, Amy Tan, Yan Geling, Gish Jen, Henry David Hwang and some others. And their literary achievements have drawn more and more attention in the field of dominant culture and their influence has extensively spread throughout the world. These writers have not only deeply attracted many American readers for their influential works but also won common acceptance and many literary awards in the world.

Yan Geling is one of the most influential overseas Chinese writers in America. Arguing from her own female experiences, Ms. Yan has constructed a female world with rich connotations in her novels by constructing a unique form of female dialogue. She has created a series of overseas Chinese characters to make known the cognition, understanding and reflections of the overseas Chinese and their native colony. As a female writer, Yan has adhered to a pure stance of female writing, always taking a feminist perspective through her unique narrative style and humanistic sentiments.

Fusang, or *The Lost Daughter of Happiness*, a novel by Yan Geling, has become the major concern in the circle of literature since its publication in 1996. This novel lays bare the life of the new Chinese immigrants and also deeply explores the meaning of legends, experiences, perplexities and spiritual journeys.

But nearly no one has ever been sincerely convinced that there was once such a real female as Fusang. Her extraordinary life experiences may be purely fabricated. However, because of *Fusang*, tribulation and perfect virtue

have now become many scholars' themes in their research, and though this research is able to show more concern for feminine visualization. Most researchers, proceeding from Feminism and Post-Colonialism, often dissect such problems as feminine consciousness, self identity, traditional virtue, self-sacrifice and great love that are revealed in such novels. However, as a controversial prostitute struggling in the underworld of American society, *Fusang*, an ignoble streetwalker, has seldom been found to possess unimaginable greatness in filth and loftiness in adversity. Limitation is to be pointed out to former fruits of research on *Fusang*. In this paper, a research of *Fusang* will be carried out in a fairly new angle.

2. Yan Geling's Feminine Mentality in Her Narration

Yan Geling was born in an intellectual family. Both her grandfather and father were writers and her mother an actress. Under the influence of these loved ones, Yan has a deep love for reading and began writing when she was young. She has had rich life experiences and gained a keen perception of human race. As a woman herself, she may know women better. Maybe just for this reason, she shows more concern for women in nearly all her literary works, especially for Chinese women of traditional type and of low social class. In her creative writing, she has created numerous unchangeable female images that impress upon readers their vulnerability. These images belong to a kind-hearted, virtuous and caring colony that remained aloof of all struggles. They always kept themselves pure and simple in a dirty and evil society where the weak fell prey to the strong, but shimmered for ever with the splendor of humanity as well as realism. They endlessly suffered from miseries and mortifications but never were there any obvious changes taking place in their kind and pure nature. They continuously resigned themselves to tribulation, believing in the philosophy of forgiveness, and often telling redeeming stories of human nature.

Yan Geling's female narrative feelings may derive from her own gender, family background and personal life experiences. It is no doubt that her parents' divorce and her own divorce impacted her so much. In her single life she lived to some extent through a wandering, eventful and painful life. So after her new marriage, Yan felt quite moved to tell to a reporter in an interview, "Without a marriage, I can not imagine what a life I shall live. Besides soulful comfort, my other half always gives me so much complementation, correction and makes me away from absolute ego and bigotry. Any kind person will keep improving himself in the marriage in order to avoid going one's own way doggedly on condition that he or she cares the opposite very much. My years of married life have made me know a lot."

Yan Geling went to study in America for a master's degree in 1988 and settled down after graduation. The Western concept of gender exerted a gradual, uplifting influence on her. And her gender narrative feelings were further aroused by the bitter experiences of the overseas Chinese women, especially more traditional women. In Yan's life time, she was once entangled in taking care of the old and young and in order to maintain her livelihood, worked as waitress in restaurants. She lived far apart from her first husband and moved with her second husband all over the world. The cast of feminist characters set before her in her writing profession was rich and varied. Her unusual life had acquainted her with every possible type of feminist nature. So she kept her feminist perspective all the time. Those acquaintances strengthened all her writing, but she had never written better than when she wrote of women in or from ancient China.

Her close attention to the survival state of Chinese women also means focusing on history, women's history, Chinese women's history and history of women's literature. Most of her writings have reflected the historical and tough-minded fate of females and tried to constitute a female's reality in the world. In an international cultural environment, there exist some generalities and particularities in the life of the Chinese women. The patience and benign attitude in Chinese ethical culture have been hidden from view for nearly a hundred years. However, in *Fusang*, Yan Geling has devoted a long-lost classic work by artistically activating the feminine good virtue and brought a new realization of maternal greatness.

3. *Fusang*, the Historical Reconstruction of Humble Women

3.1 *A Short History of Oppressed Women*

Fusang gives a glimpse of the Chinese women's history. Making a general survey of human history, all people will admit the indisputable fact that women have been living in an oppressed status which they have been trying to be rid from. In ancient China, prostitutes were undoubtedly the most oppressed. In a society where people advocated the concept of "Lady without talent is a matter of virtue", women's freedom of thoughts and actions was strangled and they had to live on men for existence. Once they lost men's protection, many women would usually have no other way but to live on their bodies and reduce themselves to prostitutes. But their miserable encounters seldom won social sympathy. In most cases, they would be condemned to and disdained by men at the time when they were sensually trampled by men. In the long history of China, there have been once so many famous prostitutes, including so many characters such as Su Xiaoxiao, Li Shishi, Chen Yuanyuan, Li Xiangjun, Dong Xiaowan and Diao Chan.

All of them were unmatched beauties, and all of them were of noble virtue. However, nearly all of them had a tragic end of their life. This cruel fact has distinctly shown that women have been living under oppression.

3.2 Fusang, a Victim of Chinese Traditional Concept of Ethics

In *Fusang*, Yan Geling revealed a history of oppressed women that had been covered with dust for a long time. In this novel, through Fusang, an overseas Chinese prostitute, Yan appealed boldly for a correct evaluation of women struggling in abysm and showed deep concern over women's status, destiny and rights, and bore a conspicuous tint of feminism. Fusang was a typically oppressed woman, who not only experienced numerous sufferings but also hummed with all the virtues of ancient Chinese women. She was an esteemed goddess as well as an ignoble whore. As a girl from impecunious China, she was looked down upon by the white race and even her fellow country men. However, she touched her surrounding world greatly with her virtuous, frugal, lenient, caring, dedicated and self-motivating spirit. It is the very traditional virtue reflected by the Chinese women that often surprises gentlemen in a foreign country. Although Fusang suffered greatly from oppression, she played a superlative song of the highest virtue in misery. She was a prostitute, but she owned the great virtue of a holly virgin.

4. Fusang's Greatness Concealed in Her Ignoble Representation

4.1 The Representative and Ignoble Features of Fusang

Fusang lived in a period when the feudal society would die out and capitalist society began to sprout. At that time, the feudal thought that women were inferior to men had deeply branded in women's minds. Women's destiny should only be arranged by men. So from the day Fusang was born, she was doomed to be a weak one, not only in body but also in ideology. She could only live by attaching herself to the patriarchal society. When Fusang was only an innocent baby in her cradle, her father already married her to a stranger. Since then, her life was, without any choice, sentenced to a man whom she never met. Her slow of mind and speech was viewed as a big advantage in the eye of her husband's families, for "once she married in, they could treat her like chattel and she wouldn't say a word of reluctance." Although Fusang's husband had left home for a gold rush, she was still constrained by her husband's family. When grown up, she was made to kowtow with a cock, instead of her husband on her wedding. And she began to do the entire household since the day she arrived in the family. Fusang was always mocked by others, "Your mother-in-law has married you in for herself. Don't you know that?" Several years after the marriage, she was abducted and stepped onto a ship to the America. With great expectation, Fusang set foot on the foreign land. But she still could not rid herself of the oppression of patriarchal society. Without any economic ability and survival skills, she was sold to be a prostitute. In order to survive, she had to devote her body to any man, one after another. At the same time, her weak life turned to ignoble fate.

Fusang hated to be a prostitute, so she once tried to rail against her fate. She ran off with another girl. But she came back voluntarily the next day. All sympathetic people may congratulate her for her escape. But her unexpected return cruelly discouraged so many readers. Some may angrily think that she would degrade herself and had no real sense of rebellion at all; some may feel that she was a little imbecile. However, if they will put themselves in Fusang's place, the readers will know that without the hateful whorehouse, it was impossible for a girl like Fusang to survive in the patriarchal society. She had no alternative, since she had no money, no skill, and no social status. She even had no right to own them. The patriarchal society had deprived her of everything materially and psychologically. The only thing she possessed was her meal ticket, her body. In order to earn her basic sustenance, she had to keep selling her body to men.

4.2 Fusang's Helpless Greatness Reflected by Her Inexplicable Smile

In old China, a woman was often a helpless mess. As a virgin, she had to obey orders of her parents; as a bride-to-be, she had to go in accordance with the advice of her match-maker; as a married woman, she had to follow her husband and act on his volition; and as a mother, she had to listen to her son in dealing with things once her husband died. So she would have a lot of frustration with family and social life. Every "honest woman" was helpless for it, and so was Fusang.

In the novel, Fusang was commonly without assistance. Whenever it happened, she would do nothing but smile inexplicably. Her smile became the indication of her frustration. Her helplessness was repeatedly betrayed by her wordless smile. This smile did not mean that she was happy and gay. In Fusang's story, her smile was mentioned several times. In fact, she dealt with all things and people with her impressive smile. When the trader told Fusang that her mother-in-law had married her in for herself, she said nothing but smiled and kept doing her work. In front of the whoremaster, Fusang did not flirted wounded, but she did not speak anything in defense of herself, seemingly not knowing what people were arguing for. She did nothing but lowered her head and smiled heartily to herself. For Dayong's sake, she did not hesitate to be maligned as a thief. All reasonable people will laugh at Fusang for her idiotic choice. And in a sense, she was odiously silly. She was unforgivable for foolishness. However, we have no

alternative as she did if we put ourselves in her position. She already knew at that time that Dayong was her long-seeking husband and only relative in the strange land, no matter whether he was bad or not. To Fusang, a woman raised on traditions, the loss of that man meant the loss of all hopes and spiritual support. So her decision is a helpless choice, whether others can understand it or not.

To some, Fusang's smile on a special occasion may often be inexplicable since she always smiled, even before danger. Actually, her smile often meant challenging, unyielding and subjugating. Once at an auction, Dayong, already a trader, choked an innocent baby to death in order to hide from the police, and then raised a flame up directly to Fusang. However, she didn't duck away, instead, she gave him a smile. It is a "sudden, unconscious, simpleminded smile of a lamb at slaughter." Fusang's smile always seemed to be superficially unconscious, yet in fact derived from her inner reaction. They were unquenchable smiles; they were helpless smiles; they were also courageous smiles. These smiles will not be restrained by anything. Females, like Fusang, could do nothing in face of males' cruel persecution. In many cases, their spiritual rebellion and physical resistance can prove nothing, so a queer smile may be helpful.

Chris witnessed Fusang's merciless ravage from countless whore masters when he was very young. He showed deep concern for her and planned to offer some help. One day, Chris bought Fusang for a night with ten dollars in order to rid her away from sensual torture for the time being. However, there was no appreciative and delighted expression as he had been expected to appear in her face. Instead, when she learnt this, she only smiled and faced the "young whore master" wordlessly with an unspeakable expression appearing in her face. There was everything except gratitude or thanks in it. She was at a loss as how to make the innocent boy understand that her life had been closely connected with misery. She knew that she had been combined with blood, suffering and pleasure. To Fusang, escaping out of misery meant escaping out of life. That was another aspect of Fusang's helplessness. Its theoretical basis of the helpless smile rooted in the soil of fatalism.

As a matter of fact, all people find themselves at some point helpless. But why does there always exist too much helplessness in people's life? Helpless people, how do you often solve your helpless problems? To those who live in a special condition, helplessness is a common occurrence. In Fusang's life, Chris was the second male that she loved whole-heartedly. But she couldn't marry the well-to-do young man in order not to influence his future negatively. Chris was captivated by Fusang. In his eye, she could be compared to a saintess. But he was a man of poor mental health and liked to see Fusang dressed in her bloodied and dirty red skirt, so when he saw her in a clean white dress and lying in bed in the hospital, his obsessed appreciation disappeared immediately. He even wondered if she deserved his love. In his eye, that red skirt was not only a part of her body, but the true symbol of her nature. The clean white dress erased all the oriental traces embodied by Fusang: degeneration, crime, evil, corruption and contemptibility. What he was infatuated with was the prostitute who lay in bamboo bed in the whorehouse, opening her body to the whole world.

As the novel goes, Fusang perceived Chris' psychological suggestion and she smiled to herself. She knew that, without her oriental red blouse, without her oriental living environment, she could not be Chris' dreaming lover anymore. So in order to satisfy Chris' psychological need, Fusang once again dressed herself in her red satin blouse, a symbol of sin and lewdness. In Chris eyes, the change of clothes meant the resurrection of Fusang and the primitive oriental virgin. To Fusang, it is another helplessness and greatness.

5. Fusang's Elegy for the Spiritual Salvation

In Yan Geling's literary works, the heroines always keep a watchful eye to the world and all the things around them with their pity and sympathy. In front of shame and disaster, they often represent amazing clemency and tolerance and return goodness for all ugliness and impudicity in human nature. Their primary maternal love and good human nature often urge them to fulfill the salvations toward people who lose their virtue and human nature. What was it that gave them the strength and courage to tolerate everything? It is maternity. This kind of maternity makes a kind of sacrificing feeling. The feeling contains a spirit of suffering willingly and selfless devotion and sacrifice. A female like Fusang is "as good as water" (an analogy in Chinese). She is the feeblest; meanwhile, she is also the strongest in the world.

5.1 Fusang's Humanistic Salvation to Dayong

Dayong was a complicated figure in the novel. He was a famous mob. On the one hand, he had a ruthless character, enjoying satisfaction in human trafficking and he could even kill an innocent baby without hesitation. On the other hand, he was the one who dared to say "No" to Caucasians. He fought with white human traders on the ship and organized the Chinese laborers to strike. To this man, Fusang was only a pet and a tool to release wants. But Fusang was dedicated to taking care of Dayong's daily life. She never said no to his arrangement and decision. She could not remember the name of any of the whore-masters, but remembered clearly every habit and itching of Dayong. Even after suffering gang-rape during a revolt, she also prepared soup for Dayong as usual on the next morning.

When Fusang knew that the man who had bought and sold her was the husband she had been looking for, she may had sorrow, desperation and anger in her heart. But she kept the misery for herself and bore all the pain silently. The silent Fusang was dumb in front of Dayong. Her silent tolerance of misery changed him gradually.

More and more goodness were revealed in Dayong's human nature. He stopped selling prostitutes and stopped killing people arbitrarily. When he found that the watchman of the whorehouse stole his money and wanted to run away, he did not kill the watchman as he did in the past. He simply said, "Go away". He also stopped treating Fusang as a pet and a tool for making money. He was purified by what she did and began to respect her. He wanted to marry her off to make her live a normal life as a normal woman. For the sake of Fusang's happiness, he decided to marry her to the one whom she could recognize by name. When Fusang misnamed all the men, he decided to give her freedom. In fact, she had recognized Dayong by the silver bracelet a long time ago. But she knew that since the day she was driven to prostitution, she could not return to the normal life any more. According to Chinese traditional concepts, she had lost the right to be a wife. The wife in home was the only spiritual support for Dayong. In order to maintain the beautiful imagination and hope in Dayong's heart, she turned his capital punishment into the most glorious moment of his life with marriage. So he died with deliberation in the longing for happiness. Fusang used marriage to perform a wife's responsibility for the last time. The contradiction between female and male under the paternity and manus is defused. By that time, the contradiction was deduced to a romantic love legend. Dayong who seemed strong in fact had become the object of remorse and pity.

5.2 *Fusang's Spiritual Salvation to Chris*

To Chris, Fusang was a beautiful legend and story of the Orient. Her every smile and gesture contained myth of the magic orient. His primal desire and deep-seated impulse were lifted by her red blouse. So in a revolt in the Chinatown, he raped the Chinese beauty. But Chris was not an evildoer in nature. He began to be tormented by his conscience later and he hoped that Fusang did not know who committed this crime. However, she discovered evidence of the crime, a brass button from his coat which she kept in her hair silently during the violation.

Fusang hated Chris, but the Chinese original ethical concept had made her a tenderhearted maid. So when she saw the sad eyes and knew that Chris suffered a lot for her, her hatred melted and she forgave him by pretending she could not remember him. She did not have the heart to see him troubled in the mind all the time and responded to Chris crime with her tolerance, sympathy and care. In fact, she even transformed her hatred into love. Fusang's behavior and attitude made Chris feel ashamed of himself. So he decided to make up for his outrage and compensate Fusang for her sufferings with a marriage. Chris dated with her regardless of his father's instructions, directly betraying his family. But Fusang always held a sheltered love which was full of maternity. This kind of tender love from a mother toward her son made Chris become more infatuated.

In order to answer Chris love, she refused the marriage proposals from other men and abandoned her chance to have a normal life. But she did not choose to live with him. In face of happiness, she suppressed her love and chose self-sacrifice, since she knew that the standard of the cultural society required a woman to be of clean body and heart and to follow the prescribed norms. Maybe, Chris would really marry her, but they may not be able to keep love and marriage at an identical position all the time. Fusang was a kind of beauty which generated from crime. She could not exist in the cultural criterion and order. All the education, family and discipline of Chris could not bear such a woman like Fusang. She understood the identity and status of herself, so she suppressed her affection toward him. She cut off this entanglement with Chris by a separate marriage. She used marriage to make sacrifice and protection for Chris for the last time. Her choice preserved their love at the most beautiful moment which left Chris a sweet memory. Her cruel choice was decided for the benefit of Chris future.

Fusang lost her only love as she fulfilled a spiritual salvation toward him. Her sacrifice produced a condition of the harmony in Chris's family and made Chris safe against ridicule and discrimination. Fusang's decision shocked Chris and made her shine before him. At the same time, Fusang became his 'forever'. He was completely purified in the soul. In his later days, he spent his whole life on opposing the persecution of Chinese. He tried his best to save Fusang's fellow men with a grateful mind. He developed Fusang's salvation into a new range which transcended gender and race.

6. Conclusion

All in all, Fusang was a woman with bountiful vitality. As a prostitute, she might be looked down upon by conventional people, yet many traditional virtues of an oriental female embodied in her can be respected by most people. Her docile, humble, perseverant, apprehensive and self-sacrificing character will be extolled by all men. A woman like Fusang may live in whatever humiliating and humbling environment, but her humanity and maternity will always shine brightly. Therefore, an individual's greatness cannot be judged objectively by his or her earthshaking achievements, but by his or her extraordinary approach in dealing with the ordinary. This is the main melody of Fusang's virtuous song. While reading *Fusang*, a careful reader may find a strangely familiar gaudiness to

it. It is not a literal gaudiness, nor a descriptive gaudiness. It is the primitive gaudiness inherent within humanity.

An outstanding literary work offers esthetic sentiment at the time when it plays a positive role in enriching both the writer and the readers' knowledge and cultivating an even-keel temperament. Just as Yan Geling informally said in an interview, "As a writer, you can't lose your artistic conscience even if you will not assume any cultural and political responsibility. You have to carry out your bound duty: aesthetic satisfaction. Your writing is successful if you have earnestly excavated aesthetic value in your narration." As a matter of fact, Yan's basic prerequisite of success in her writing is her tireless pursuit of uncommonly aesthetic value. That is the foundation upon which she establishes her creative writing. Therefore, she can continue creating her imaginative, artistic literature. Her rich and tortuous experiences of time and emotions have greatly influenced the formation of her writing style and encourage her to maintain a watchful eye on the mental world of those vivid people treading on the fringes of society. They might be of little importance in the real life, yet they performed a melody of true benevolence at the cost of emotional sufferings. Fusang, as well as many other female characters in her other novels, dragged out an ignoble existence in order to realize her illusory ambition, while never losing her authenticity at any life stage. So Fusang's story is not only a thought-provoking novel, but also a bloody history that paints a portrait of the reality of Chinese immigrants. That is a central motivation for Yan Geling to write this book. That is motivating force behind Yan Geling's literary thoughts and feelings in expressing the profound effects and experiences of women.

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Speech Errors in English as Foreign Language: A Case Study of Engineering Students in Croatia

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Abstract

The study reported in this paper investigates the frequency and distribution of speech errors, as well as the influence of the task type on their rate. The participants of the study were 101 engineering students in Croatia. A recorded speech sample in the English language (L2) lasting for approximately ten hours was transcribed, whereby more than three and a half thousand speech errors were recorded. Morphological errors were dominant due to a significantly frequent omission of articles. The distribution of different subcategories of lexical errors pointed to a relatively low frequency of unintended L1 switches, indicating that the participants were able to separate the two languages during lexical access.

Statistical testings of the influence of the task type on speech errors displayed that the retelling of a chronological order of events resulted in a significantly higher rate of syntactic errors if compared to other tasks. Due to limited attentional resources and insufficient knowledge, the speaker cannot process the message within the time constraints. The rate of lexical and phonological errors depended on the frequency of use, that is, less frequently used words were more susceptible to lexical errors than high-frequency words. The retelling of a chronological order of events is a demanding task, for this reason, this task type should be more practiced in foreign language teaching.

Keywords: Models of speech production, Monitoring, Disfluencies, Speech errors, Syntactic errors

1. Introduction

The creation of an utterance is a demanding, complex and continuous process, where different components in the mechanism of language production can fail causing speech errors (Kovač and Horga, 2010). The process of speech production comprises four main activities which proceed in successive order, as follows: a) conceptualization, that is, planning of the content of the utterance; b) formulation, which includes grammatical, lexical and phonological encoding; c) articulation, the phase that represents overt speech, and finally d) self-monitoring, that includes the verification of the correctness or appropriateness of the produced utterances (Kormos, 2006). While content planning in the native language requires increased conscious attention on the part of the speaker, the formulation and articulation are automated processes that can run in parallel without any conscious speaker's effort. However, despite the automated nature of the native language, the speakers do not produce perfect speech, on the contrary, their speech displays different forms of disfluencies, such as hesitations, false starts, repetitions, vowel prolongations, speech errors and the like. Speech errors are deviations from the speaker's communicative intention and are an important source of information for understanding the complex mechanisms of language production. The researches dealing with speech errors in the native language (e.g. Fromkin, 1973; Dell and Reich, 1981; Stemberger, 1985; Levelt, 1989; van Hest, 1996; Erdeljac, 2005) and in the foreign language (e.g. Poulisse, 1999; van Hest, 1996) indicated that lexical errors, which occur as a result of erroneous retrieval of lexemes in the mental lexicon, are very frequent. On the other hand, in the foreign language, errors are often results of insufficient knowledge of language or the semantic noise in the communication process (Jaeger, 2005). There are different theories regarding the reason for the occurrence of speech errors. Dell (1986) argued that the erroneous activation of certain nodes causes speech errors, explaining that the realization of a particular unit depends on the degree of its activation, but also on the degree of activation of other units that are organized in an associative network. This means that the unit, which is in the process of realization, has to be deactivated at some point in order to empty the place for another unit.

Nooteboom (1980) concluded that 50% of all errors remain uncorrected for several reasons. Sometimes the monitoring mechanism does not register and respond to an error or, in the speaker's point of view, the speech is

sufficiently redundant, that is, the interlocutor can correctly interpret the message without correction. However, most errors are corrected without the intervention of the interlocutor, which confirms the existence of a system for speech monitoring and the feedback loops. Their task is to control the correctness of speech utterances and consequently, if necessary, to execute the correction or enrichment of the propositional content. In recent decades a growing interest in language production has resulted in numerous psycholinguistic models which try to explain the mechanisms in the service of speech production, which is speech errors, self-corrections and various forms of disfluencies.

The aim of this study was to investigate the distribution of different categories of errors, and to determine the influence of the task type on the rate of certain categories of errors in the speech of technical studies students. The paper describes Kormos' bilingual model (2006) of speech production, which is based on Levelt's model (1989) as the empirically most accepted theory for monolingual speech processing. In addition, a brief overview of the findings dealing with speech errors and self-monitoring is presented, as well as the classification of errors based on the described model for the purpose of this study. Afterwards, the research methodology is presented, followed by the obtained results and corresponding conclusions.

2. Speech production

2.1 *Speech production models*

Kormos' bilingual speech production model (2006) is based on Levelt's model (Levelt 1989; 1993; 1995; 1999), as the most accepted and most widely used model in studies of speech production (Figure 1). She assumed that the bilingual speech production is modular and can be described as a series of relatively independently functioning processing components: the conceptualizer, the formulator, the articulator and the acoustic-phonetic processor, and finally, the speech comprehension system or parser. There are also three knowledge stores: the mental lexicon, the syllabary and the store for the knowledge of external and internal world. She proposed that the new model contains one large memory, called long-term memory, which is subdivided into several subcomponents: episodic memory, semantic memory including the mental lexicon, the syllabary, and a store for declarative knowledge of L2 rules. All knowledge stores are shared between L1 and L2, that is, there is a common episodic and semantic memory for L1 and L2, a shared store for L1 and L2 lemmas and lexemes, and for L1 and L2 articulatory scores. In L2 production, however, she postulated the existence of a fourth and L2 specific knowledge store: a declarative memory of syntactic and phonological rules in L2.

In Kormos' model the processing components are "specialists" in certain functions that must be executed, which means that they do not share processing functions. A component or module will start processing only if it receives a distinctive input. Kormos assumed that processing is incremental, that is, a fragment of a module's characteristic input can trigger encoding procedures in this module. Consequently, the articulation of an utterance can start even before the speaker has finished planning the entire message. This also means that in the case of more proficient speakers parallel processing is possible. Incremental and parallel processing as well as the automated nature in the native language may explain the high rate of speech production. In L1 production message conceptualization requires attention, whereas formulation and articulation are automatic processes which work in parallel, which makes L1 speech generally smoother and faster compared to L2.

Abutelabi et al. (2001; 2005) conducted neuroimaging studies and provided support for the similar nature of L1 and L2 speech processing, that is, neither the extent of brain activation nor the regions involved in the processing in L1 and L2 are different for bilinguals who learned the L2 early in their lives and for high proficient speakers with extensive L2 exposure. On the other hand, low proficient speakers and those who have had a low exposure to the target language, were found to activate larger and slightly different cerebral areas when speaking in L2 than in L1 (Kormos, 2006). Kormos' model accounts for this finding because proficient bilinguals do not rely on the separate knowledge store of declarative rules, whereas for learners at lower levels of proficiency grammatical and phonological rules are stored in a separate brain region.

The second theory explaining speech production is Dell's (1986) spreading activation theory. According to this theory, the lexicon, which contains non-productive knowledge, is seen as a network of interconnected units, the so-called nodes, which represent linguistic units such as concepts, words, morphemes, phonemes and so on. In the lexicon conceptual nodes are associated with nodes defining the words, which are in turn associated with morphemic nodes, which represent specific morphemes. Furthermore, there is a relationship between morphemic and phonemic nodes that determine the phoneme, and finally phonemic nodes that are connected with nodes for phonemic features. The mechanism responsible for the production of a sentence is the process of spreading activation. During speech processing the node of the required category (e.g. the node representing a word) is approached, in other words, it is the node that has the greatest degree of activation or arousal. Activation spreads from one level to another, from nodes representing semantic features to the corresponding word or lemma nodes,

which is then forwarded to phonemic nodes. This means that activation cascades from one level to another.

Priming produces increased subthreshold activity in a node. It spreads in parallel across nodes, with its strength being positively related to how well it matches the input. In the same fashion, priming spreads to the phonological nodes and, finally, to the lexical nodes. At each level, priming strength is a function of the match to the input from the preceding level. Although several nodes may be primed at once, only the node that is primed to a higher degree than all the others becomes activated (Shoaf i Pitt, 2002:1).

The model suggests the existence of inhibitory connections between nodes at the same level of processing and thus ensures the correct selection of nodes. Dell (1986) and his followers assumed that activation can spread in both directions. This means that a wrongly selected and activated node starts spreading activation in the opposite direction, that is "bottom up". In the case of wrongly chosen words, activation will spread from the level of nodes that represent words to conceptual nodes. It is assumed that this same feedback mechanism operates in the perception of speech and makes the monitor an inherent property of the process of perception and speech production.

2.2 Speech errors and self-monitoring

Errors can occur at each phase of speech production, that is, during lemma retrieval, grammatical and phonological encoding, as well as articulation. When the monitor notices an error, an alarm signal is sent to the conceptualizer, which then in turn issues the same preverbal plan, hoping that the renewed message will now be properly articulated (Levelt, 1989). Levelt (1983) distinguished lexical, syntactic and phonetic errors that correspond to the three basic levels of processing. Lexical errors are "any lexical item, color words, direction terms, prepositions, articles, etc." (Levelt, 1989:54). Levelt (1989) assumed that in the case of lexical errors an incorrectly activated lexical entry is retrieved and then articulated. The results of speech error studies indicated that errors as a result of faulty L2 lexical access are very common (Poullisse, 1993), but they also often occur in L1 (Dell and Reich, 1981; Fromkin, 1973; 1980; Stemberger, 1985). In Levelt's theory (1989) content and functional words as well as collocations and idioms are considered lexical entries. Errors of derivational morphology, such as *different* instead of *difference* also belong to the category of lexical errors, because derivations in Levelt's model of the lexicon represent different lexical entries. Syntactic errors include the syntactic structure that leads to a deadlock after which the speaker can not continue the utterance (Levelt, 1983:54). Unfortunately, Levelt did not give a precise definition of phonetic errors and did not provide a definition of morphological errors.

Nevertheless, speakers correct most errors without being interrupted by the interlocutor, which points to the existence of the speech monitoring system. Levelt's (1983; 1989) perceptual loop theory explains the detection of erroneous output data. The model includes three loops for checking the utterance. The first or conceptual loop (Levelt, 1989; Blackmer and Mitton, 1991) compares the preverbal plan with the original intention of the speaker before it is forwarded to the formulator for further processing. Its task is to check the appropriateness of the expression, that is, to detect conceptual errors. Blackmer and Mitton (1991) and Van Hest (1996) concluded that conceptual errors are significantly slower corrected than lexical and phonological errors. It is explained by the assumption that an erroneous concept is more difficult to reject and replace with a new one and therefore more time is required for self-correction of conceptual errors (Postma, 2000).

The second or inner loop is responsible for monitoring the phonetic plan or the inner speech before articulation, which is known as covert monitoring (Wheeldon and Levelt, 1995). It allows the speaker to reveal the error before articulation. Nootboom's (2010) analysis based on a collection of experimentally elicited spoonerisms and a collection of speech errors in spontaneous Dutch supported an important aspect of Levelt's perceptual loop theory of monitoring, that both inner and overt speech are being monitored for speech errors. There is at least a delay of 200 or 250 ms between the two (Hartsuiker and Kolk, 2001), and potentially much more, depending on how much material is buffered in inner speech. If an error is not detected in inner speech, detection of this error in overt speech is of course perfectly appropriate. It has been assumed that monitoring for speech errors is under attentional control (Hartsuiker, Kolk and Martensen, 2005) which means that the speaker can pay either more attention to inner speech or more to overt speech. Postma and Kolk (1993) suggested that the articulator has an autonomous ability to restart, and will implement the old program for the second time if it does not receive new input data on time. This usually happens at higher speech rates, which prevent the temporary storage and thus increase the possibility of time miscalculation, resulting in repetitions of shorter speech segments. Error detection of overt speech depends on the availability and capacity of the articulatory buffer. Higher speech rates reduce temporary storage of speech (Levelt, 1989; Blackmer and Mitton, 1991; Van Hest, 1996).

Finally, the produced utterance is checked after articulation, which constitutes the outer loop of monitoring or the

acoustic-phonetic processor. According to Levelt, the monitor is located in the conceptualizer but receives the information from a separate speech comprehension system, the parser, which is associated with the mental lexicon. The monitor will issue an alarm signal if an error or inappropriateness is detected in any of the stages of processing, whereby the same mechanisms of speech production will run for a second time. In order to avoid reduplication of knowledge, Levelt considers that the same lexicon is used for the production and perception of one's own speech, and the same system is used for understanding and monitoring of the interlocutor via the acoustic-phonetic module.

Studies of speech errors in the native language confirmed the superiority of this theory over others (e.g. Blackmer and Mitton, 1991; Nootboom, 2005; 2010). Moreover, theories of foreign language speech production (e.g. Kormos, 2006) also accepted this theory and consider that there are no qualitatively different monitoring mechanisms in a foreign language.

3. The research project

The aim of this study was to determine the distribution and frequency of different categories of speech errors in English as foreign language, and to examine the influence of the task type on their occurrence.

3.1 The experimental procedure and tasks

The participants of this study were 101 native speakers of Croatian, 51 male and 50 female first-year students at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture in Split. The students received 8-9 years of formal English instruction and it was presumed that the participants' instructional background was very similar, since all of them claimed to have received a mixed form-focussed and communicative syllabus, as a method of instruction in their primary and secondary school. The participants were randomly chosen and no test was previously administered to measure the level of proficiency. The error data were collected by means of five different tasks which were performed in English (L2). All data were collected in an ordinary room with no special facilities at the Faculty. It was preferred to an experimentation room because it would contribute to the informal atmosphere in which the tasks were performed. The subjects were seated opposite the researcher at the same table. The computer with the microphone were placed between the subjects and the researcher. Each student was individually audio-recorded and afterwards the speech samples were transcribed by two independent researchers. Time parameters were measured in *Audicity*, the programme for acoustic analysis of speech. The number of words was counted manually.

Errors, as variables of speech fluency, were collected by means of five tasks. Before carrying out the first task (CARTOON), the students watched the cartoon Johnny Bravo in the English language. This cartoon was chosen under the assumption that it was relatively unknown to the subjects and that its content represented a significant cognitive effort in terms of discourse organization. After watching the cartoon which lasted for six minutes, each participant described the chronological order of events in his/her own words in the English language. The participant had one minute to prepare and was not time limited.

The second task was preceded by the researcher's instructions which explicitly stated that the subject had to describe the picture of a room (ROOM1) that had six pieces of furniture in such a way that someone who could not see the picture could produce a global setting on the basis of the description. The second task (ROOM2) was almost identical to the first one, except for the furniture that was slightly differently arranged.

In the fourth task (UTTER) the subjects formed twenty utterances based on different, semantically unrelated drawings. The syntactic frame was not defined by the researcher, and the only requirement was that the drawing and the corresponding colour (e.g. the rose which was red or the blue shirt) appeared in the utterance. As in the case of previous tasks, each participant had one minute to prepare.

The fifth task (STORY) was a story narration. The participant had to make up a story based on five unrelated drawings and none of them was allowed to be omitted.

3.2 Classification of errors and analysis

A system of classification of errors was devised on the basis of previous taxonomies of errors and self-corrections (Levelt, 1983). The reason for choosing Levelt's model was because it was the most complete and the most widely applied system available. For the analysis of errors, Lennon's (1991) definition was used.

An error is a linguistic form or combination of forms, which in the same context and under similar conditions of production, would in all likelihood, not be produced by the speaker's native counterparts (Lennon, 1991:182).

On the basis of this definition, the researcher identified all the possible instances of errors in the transcripts of 101 students. All the cases where no unambiguous judgements could be made, data were collected and were shown to

two educated native speakers of English. The native speakers were informed about the nature of the tasks the subjects had to perform and were shown the errors together with their contexts. Only the cases which were considered unacceptable by the researcher and native speakers were counted as errors.

Errors were analyzed in accordance with Levelt's (1983:44) structure of error self-repair which includes three parts:

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|
| <u>'Go from left again to</u> | <u>uh.</u> | <u>from pink again to blue'</u> |
| Original utterance | editing | alteration |
| | phase | REPAIR |

The first part '*Go from left again to*' is the original utterance and consists of a problematic spot or reparandum which needs to be corrected (*'left'*). Shorter or longer speech segments can be erroneous, that is, ranging from an erroneous phoneme to a whole utterance. The speaker may interrupt the speech before or after overt articulation, but an interruption delay can also occur. An interruption may be followed by different kinds of disfluencies, such as editing terms, silent pauses, vowel prolongations which represent the editing phase, and finally, the third phase is the repair. After the identification of errors, all the instances of erroneous utterances were classified in accordance with the classification taxonomy.

The main criterion for distinguishing lexical from grammatical errors was the way of accessing lexical entries. Lexical entries can be accessed via syntactic building procedures or on the basis of their conceptual specifications, or lemma activation. Firstly, it is proposed that errors of derivational and inflectional morphology should be handled separately. As derivations (*rotate, rotating, rotation*) are assumed to be different lexical entries, and word-formation is supposed to take place as a part of lexical encoding (Levelt et al. 1999), errors of derivational morphology should be classified as lexical errors. On the other hand, inflectional morphemes are encoded and processed in the grammatical encoding phase and therefore are handled as morphological errors. Lexical, syntactic, morphological and phonological errors are errors arising at lower levels of processing, whereby conceptual errors (Van Hest, 1996) have their roots at higher levels and occur as a result of an erroneous conceptual plan. Conceptual errors are not found in Levelt's classification system, nor are they included in the classification of this study, because the author believed that only a retrospective analysis could reliably determine whether an error was a result of faulty lemma retrieval or occurred at the level of conceptualization.

a) Lexical errors

The first type of error to be discussed is lexical errors. Three subcategories of lexical errors have been established: a) idioms, collocations, functional and content words, errors of derivational morphology (1); b) unintentional use of L1 lexemes (2); c) non-existent words (3).

(1) *And then they hear some **beautifully** singing and er, er, knew it was Johnny's mother.*

(2) *Johnny Bravo went to the **šum-sorry**, to the wood.*

(3) *er, so, Johnny Bravo, his mother was making him a sweater of **/pineko/**.*

One of the problems in the classification of lexical errors are errors within idioms and collocations. In example (4) the subject chooses the preposition 'on' and then replaces with 'in'.

(4) ***On** the second -in the second picture I can see a lamp and a vase.*

It can be assumed that in the case of L2 speakers many idioms and collocations are not fully automated, therefore they are not stored as complete lexical entries. It is assumed that the mechanisms by which the L2 speakers produce these phrases are similar to those by which new words are created (Kormos, 1998), and for this reason these errors are classified as lexical errors, which do not occur at the stage of lemma activation, but in the process of lexical encoding.

b) Grammatical errors

i) Syntactic errors

Opposite to lexical errors that arise as a result of incorrect lexical approach, grammatical errors occur as a result of problems in grammatical encoding (Levelt, 1989). The differentiation between lexical and grammatical errors is not simple, since the processes of lexical access and grammatical encoding are closely related. For example, prepositions are in some cases classified as lexical, whereas in some other instances as grammatical errors. In order to overcome these difficulties of classification, it is important to distinguish function words which have conceptual specifications from those which do not have them. The preposition "under" (e.g. the ball is under the desk) has its conceptual specification, whereas the preposition "to" (e.g. She listens to music) has no conceptual specification and is addressed via the syntactic building procedures and therefore regarded as a syntactic error.

Syntactic errors were analyzed according to where they occurred in the the three stages of the grammatical encoding phase, that is, (i) when the various complements, specifiers and parameters are encoded and (ii) handled by the different subroutines, and (iii) when these processed materials are ordered (Kormos, 1999). The next phase involves the production of speech errors that occur at the stage of grammatical encoding.

The following subcategories of syntactic errors have been established: a) wrong word order (5); b) unfinished expressions or false starts (6); c) completely unacceptable morpho-syntactic and/or semantic structure (7) (Note 1); d) wrongly encoded complements and specifiers, which are accessed via syntactic building procedures (8).

(5) *Johnny met a bear who was, er, sleeping...er, he woke **up him** in the middle of, er, winter.*

(6) *And he came to er, er, cave...**er, er, that cave was er, er** -in that cave he saw er, a bear.*

(7) *They start to arguing and hunting into the woods **but er, it er, didn't er, was success.***

(8) *The bear and Johnny listened--- beautiful singing of Johnny's mother.*

ii) Morphological errors

include a) inflexional errors, when the speaker chooses the wrong verb form (9); b) incorrect plural of nouns (10);

(9) *well Johnny Bravo's mum **was mading** er, was making a coat for Johnny.*

(10) *Lots of **womans** wear black shoes.*

c) errors for "time and aspect" (11), when the speaker uses the wrong time or aspect. In Levelt's classification of errors (1989) this category does not exist, probably because these errors are very rare in L1 (Van Hest, 1996);

(11) *He er, er, was trying to find er, er, to find his mum and he **wants** to escape from er, forest.*

d) omitted article (12) or misused article (13).

(12) *er Johnny was in -- wood with his mum*

(13) *we are now er in front of **the** my room.*

c) Phonological errors

The next steps in speech processing are phonological encoding and articulation. Phonological errors mainly included articulatory clumsiness (14), whereas other forms of phonological errors were not analyzed, since a systematic differentiation of inaccuracies due to the speaker's accent and lack of knowledge of phonological forms of lexical entries could potentially cause serious problems.

(14) *his mother, his mother er, er, sang a **/ole/** lullaby and er, they fell asleep.*

Table 1 presents the classification of errors used in this study.

4. Results and discussions

4.1 Error distributions

The participants of the study produced a total sum of 56 862 words, Table 2, whereby almost ten hours of recorded speech was collected.

Table 3 displays the error distribution for all tasks. It can be observed that a total number of 3518 errors was recorded, which outnumbered the total number of errors in the native language (Croatian, L1-943) (Kovač and Horga, 2010) for the same task types. Morphological errors were the most frequent ones (over 60% of the total number of errors), followed by syntactic and lexical errors which occurred in approximately equal proportion (18%). Phonological errors constituted 2.5% in the error corpus. The main reason for such a large number of morphological errors can be found in the article system, which is, omitted or incorrectly used articles. If this subcategory had been left out, the total number of morphological errors would have been only slightly higher than the number of lexical and syntactic errors respectively.

Considering the proportions of certain subcategories of syntactic errors in their total number, Figure 2, it can be noted that the subcategories: wrong word order or unfinished utterances (false starts) and morphosyntactic and/or semantically completely unacceptable utterances occurred more frequently than the subcategory of wrongly encoded complements and specifiers, which are accessed via syntactic building procedures.

The distribution of the subcategories of lexical errors, Figure 3, pointed to a rare presence of L1 lexemes and L2 non-words in relation to lexical errors caused by incorrect selection of L2 lexical units. It follows that the speakers at this level of language competence generally manage to keep separate two languages while lexical selection. Separation of the two languages is hypothesized to be controlled by the language cue added to the concepts in the

conceptualization phase (Kormos, 2006).

The analysis of the distribution of morphological errors showed that the participants of this study displayed severe difficulties in English article use, Figure 4. They were found to employ bare nouns without the definite/indefinite article. The omission was the main problem and notorious source of difficulty, largely because it is based on a complex set of abstract distinctions, which are to a certain degree, arbitrarily mapped onto surface forms (*a, the* and *zero*) in article use. This difficulty only occurs when learner's first language does not share the same surface features and/or the same semantic conceptualizations with the second language (L2) (Ekiert, 2007). This statement can be confirmed by the results shown in Table 4. In 96% of all cases of difficulties in article usage, the definite/indefinite article was omitted, whereas in only 4% of all cases it was overused or incorrectly used. This study confirmed the results of a recent study (Avery and Radisic, 2007), emphasizing omission as the main problem in article use when the L1 semantic and conceptual system is different from L2, which points to lower levels of proficiency than expected.

Considering the distribution of errors for each task separately, Table 3, it may be noted that morphological errors occurred in the highest proportion in each task, whereas the difference between syntactic and lexical errors for each task was within the limits of $\pm 6\%$, that is, their proportions were very similar. It is noticeable that incorrect verb form as a subcategory of morphological errors outnumbered the total number of lexical errors in CARTOON and STORY. The explanation can be found in the nature or cognitive complexity of the retelling task, which imposes a frequent usage of the past tense and the participants very often faced the problem of verb formation, as they often did not know the inflexion of the verb forms, due to insufficient grammar knowledge. On the other hand, in designing simple utterances, as in tasks ROOM1, ROOM2 and UTTER, speakers deliberately used simple tenses and simple syntactic frames.

4.2 The influence of the task cognitive complexity on error categories in L2

The present paper examined how the task type influenced the specific error category, in other words, whether there was a statistically significant difference in the rate of certain error categories among different tasks.

Speech duration per participant may be of varying size in each task. In order to facilitate the comparison of various tasks by applying appropriate statistical tests, it was necessary to perform the calculations by reducing the corresponding categories of errors per subject to a pre-specified number of words. In the available literature that number is in most of the cases 100 words, so the same approach was chosen in this paper. The analysis of the influence of the task type on the rate of examined error categories was performed on the same subjects (101 undergraduate student). Consequently, there were five dependent samples.

4.2.1 Syntactic errors

Table 5 presents descriptive statistics related to the rate of syntactic errors in L2. The main reason for such a detailed data presentation was a requirement for a good knowledge of samples, in order to decide which samples to compare with each other, if the statistical test results displayed that the population from which the samples come, were not identical.

Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality (Marques de Sá, 2007) was selected, Table 6, being highlighted in recent works as the most efficient test of normality (Thode, 2002; Zhang and Yuehua, 2005; Keskin, 2006; Henderson, 2006; Coin, 2008). According to this test, it may be noted that the distributions of all five populations significantly deviated from the normal distribution. Therefore, the non-parametric Friedman's test was selected (Field, 2005; Marques de Sá, 2007; Demšar, 2006), as probably the most commonly used (Al-Subaihi, 2000) and most popular (Van de Wiel, 2004) nonparametric repeated measures test in the case of three or more dependent samples, Table 7. Nonparametric tests are called distribution-free tests, which require neither normally distributed data, nor homogeneity of variance (Montgomery and Runger, 2003). However, one of the drawbacks of nonparametric tests are that they are less efficient than parametric ones, but only if the assumptions for using parametric tests are fulfilled, which was not the case with regard to the result of Shapiro-Wilk's test. If the assumptions for using parametric tests are not met, the nonparametric tests often provide considerable improvement (Montgomery and Runger, 2003). The value of Friedman's test was lower than 0.0001, Table 7, displaying that statistically significant differences in the rate of syntactic errors among individual tasks were obtained. Thus, all populations were not identical considering that the p-value was lower than or equal to the threshold value α ($p < 0.0001 \leq \alpha = 0.05$).

The results of Friedman's test revealed that the null hypothesis of identical populations should be rejected, yet, it did not answer the question which tasks, when compared, displayed statistically significant differences in the rate of syntactic errors. Dunn's multiple comparison test (Daniel, 1990; Pett, 1997), an effective test with a careful assessment of statistically significant differences between compared pairs (Pett, 1997) answered this question.

Comparisons can be performed only for selected pairs of tasks or for all possible combinations of pairs. In the case of implementing multiple comparisons with a threshold value $\alpha = 0.05$ for each pair, it is necessary to take into account that the greater number of comparisons considerably increases the overall probability of error type I, that is, the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis when it is true in at least one case of comparison (e.g. it is 0.226 for 5 compared pairs, whereas in the case of 10 comparisons, which is the maximum number in the case of 5 samples, it exceeds 0.4). The solution may be to lower the threshold of significance for each comparison to a value which ensures that the overall probability of error type I does not exceed 0.05. On the other hand, by reducing the threshold value for each comparison, the risk of error type II also increases (null-hypothesis is not rejected, even though the alternative hypothesis is correct), which leads to the conclusion that it is useful to compare only the chosen pairs. Thus, the risk of error type II is being reduced. The decision which pairs to compare can be made based on a good knowledge of descriptive statistics related to each sample, Table 5. In conclusion, it is important to be restrictive in choosing comparison pairs (Marques de Sá, 2007).

The lower quartile was different from zero in CARTOON, while in other tasks the lower quartile and the median equaled zero, Table 5, and therefore Dunn's multiple comparison test for the rate of syntactic errors was implemented for combinations of task pairs that included CARTOON as a member of the pair. In other words, CARTOON was compared with each task, Table 8. The results of Dunn's test, Table 8, showed that the retelling of a chronological sequence of events resulted in a high rate of syntactic errors. An analog conclusion was presented in the case of the rate of syntactic errors in the native language (Kovač and Horga, 2010). In recounting the chronological sequence of actions, it was necessary to organize the speech acts under time constraints and therefore monitoring was very important. However, monitoring is a conscious process that requires special attention (Levelt, 1989) and it can be assumed that attentional resources are very limited in the case of less proficient speakers, consequently, the amount of attention available for monitoring will have an impact on the efficiency of the process of speech production. This is especially important for L2 speakers whose production processes are partly automated and more attention is required than the encoding process in the native language. Since L2 speakers at a lower level of language competence have a limited amount of declarative knowledge and the mechanisms of linguistic encoding are not automated, it can be concluded that the speaker's attention was oriented towards the processes of lexical, grammatical and phonological encoding, and that less attention was available for other stages of messages production. This referred to the conceptualization of the message, formulation and articulation, and finally monitoring. Since the speech acts followed each other in successive order, which happened in the case of the retelling of a chronological order of events, the speaker needed more time for message planning, and very often did not have sufficient time to properly form the utterance.

4.2.2 Lexical errors

Descriptive statistics for the rate of lexical errors per 100 words can be seen in Table 9. According to Shapiro-Wilk's test for the rate of lexical errors per 100 words, Table 10, all distributions significantly deviated from the normal distribution. The p-value of Friedman's test was 0.0108, Table 11, indicating that statistically significant differences in the rate of lexical errors were obtained. In CARTOON the lower quartile was different from zero, whereas in all other tasks (except UTTER) even the median equaled zero, Table 9, therefore, CARTOON was compared with the tasks ROOM1, ROOM2 and STORY. Dunn's test, Table 12, showed that in CARTOON speakers made significantly more lexical errors than in the tasks ROOM2 and STORY. The findings could be explained by the fact that the same lexemes occurred in ROOM1 and ROOM2, some of which were high frequency words and more familiar to the speakers (e.g. *chair, table, desk, bed*). A very similar conclusion could be made for STORY, due to the occurrence of high frequency words such as *church, forest, children* etc.

4.2.3 Morphological errors

Descriptive statistics for the rate of morphological errors are presented in Table 13. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk's test, Table 14, lead to the same conclusion as in the previous analysis of error categories, pointing that all distributions significantly deviated from the normal distribution. The p-value of Friedman's test was 0.0036, Table 15, which indicated that statistically significant differences in the rate of morphological errors among different tasks were obtained.

The lower quartile differed from zero in CARTOON, only. CARTOON was compared with all tasks since it is evident that the greatest difference in medians and means existed between ROOM2 and UTTER, Table 13. For that reason, the pair ROOM2-UTTER was added to the chosen ones. Dunn's test confirmed the statistically significant differences in the rate of morphological errors between CARTOON and ROOM2, as well as between ROOM2 and UTTER, Table 16. A significantly greater rate of morphological errors was obtained in the task ROOM2, compared to CARTOON and UTTER. As can be seen in Table 3, in CARTOON 1.683 omitted or incorrectly used articles were recorded per 100 words, whereas that number significantly

increased in ROOM2 and amounted to 5.034 per 100 words. This discrepancy could be clarified by the nature of task ROOM2 which required frequent article usage (*There is a bed, a table...on the right side, on the left side, near the table...*).

Kormos (2000) concluded that formal methods of language teaching influence the degree of importance that students pay to grammatical accuracy. In a research review on the impact of formal instruction on grammatical accuracy, Ellis (1994) argued that if formal language teaching is directed towards grammatical accuracy at the appropriate stage of speaker's L2 language development, it will result in improved accuracy. From the results of this study it can be concluded that speakers paid very little importance to the use of articles, which can be explained by: a) the influence of the native language (Croatian) which does not have the article system, b) the students' attitude that articles are not important for message understanding and c) formal language teaching in primary and secondary schools does not give adequate importance to article acquisition.

4.2.4 Phonological errors

Descriptive statistics for the rate of phonological errors per 100 words can be seen in Table 17. According to Shapiro-Wilk's test, the distribution of all five populations significantly deviated from the normal distribution, Table 18. Table 19 displays the results of Friedman's test. Statistically significant differences between tasks were obtained, since the p-value of Friedman's test was 0.0002.

Only two pairs were compared by implementing Dunn's test: ROOM2 – UTTER and UTTER – STORY, since the upper quartile was different from zero in UTTER, whereas in the tasks ROOM2 and STORY even the ninth decile equaled zero. The results are shown in Table 20. A statistically significant difference was obtained between tasks ROOM2 and UTTER. The nature of the task UTTER required the use of low frequency words. The speaker attempted to retrieve the lexeme for which only incomplete phonological information (e.g. usually the initial phonemes) was available and finally pronounced it incorrectly.

5. Conclusion

The distribution of more than three and a half thousand elicited speech errors in the English language (L2) displayed a distinct dominance of morphological errors in relation to other categories of errors. The significantly frequent omission of definite and indefinite articles contributed to the dominance of morphological errors. The students have been found to use bare nouns without the definite/indefinite article very frequently, that is, in most of the cases the article was omitted. This study supports the results of previous findings, indicating that omission of articles is the main problem when the L1 semantic and conceptual system differs from L2. Also, wrong verb formation, as a subcategory of morphological errors, outnumbered the total number of lexical errors in tasks that required retelling. The participants had to use the past tenses and very often did not know the inflexion of the verb forms. On the other hand, in the design of simpler expressions, the speakers deliberately avoided complex tenses. Arguably, the most numerous subclass of syntactic errors which appeared in the retelling task was the completely unacceptable morphosyntactic and/or semantic expression. The retelling of the chronological order of events has proven to be very demanding for the learners, consequently, due to insufficient language competence, they tended to create expressions which were completely unacceptable as far as form and meaning are concerned. The distribution of different subcategories of lexical errors pointed to a relatively low occurrence of unintended L1 switches and non-existing L2 lexemes (non-words) if compared to errors as a result of lexical access failures. Unintended L1 use was proven to be the consequence of an error in accessing the intended L2 lemma, therefore it can be concluded that the participants of the study can separate the two languages during lexical access.

The results of statistical testings of the influence of the task type on the occurrence of speech errors have displayed that the retelling of the chronological sequence of actions of longer duration resulted in a significantly higher frequency of syntactic errors, in relation to the tasks aimed at describing the static, spatial constellations. Since L2 speakers at a lower level of language competence have a limited amount of declarative knowledge and since the mechanisms of linguistic encoding are not automated, the speaker's attention is directed towards the processes of lexical, grammatical and phonological encoding, and less attention is available for other phases of message production. Story retelling is proven to be a complex cognitive process, whereby the speaker's attention is oriented towards planning and organization of speech acts under time pressure, for this reason, the speaker's system very often does not manage to coordinate production processes on different levels in real time.

The rate of lexical and phonological errors depended on the frequency of use, that is, low-frequency words were more susceptible to lexical errors than high-frequency words. Certain task types, such as precise descriptions, required more often the definite and indefinite article, resulting in a significantly higher rate of morphological errors. The speakers paid very little importance to the use of articles, which can be explained by: a) the influence of the native language (Croatian) which does not have the article system, b) the students' attitude that articles are not important for message understanding and c) formal language teaching in primary and secondary schools does not

give adequate importance to article acquisition.

The conclusions of this study might find a practical application in foreign language teaching, that is, formal language teaching in primary and secondary schools should be more directed towards grammatical accuracy and the students should be reminded that the correct usage of the definite and indefinite article is an important prerequisite for the development of communicative competence in general. Finally, it may be concluded that the retelling of a chronological order of events is a demanding task, for this reason, this task type should be more practiced in foreign language teaching.

The presented findings of this research are related to the population of engineering students. Future speech error research might answer the question if the corresponding conclusions are also valid for the general population.

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Note:

Note 1. An L2 learner whose speech contains so many lexical and/or morphosyntactic errors that it is incomprehensible cannot reasonably be considered "fluent" (Mizera, 2006:3).

This subcategory was suggested by Kormos (personal communication, London, 2008). If the utterance had a completely incorrect syntactic structure or incomprehensible propositional content, after being interpreted by two native speakers, the same was categorized as completely unacceptable.

Table 2. Word count and speech duration

| | ALL TASKS | CARTOON | ROOM1 | ROOM2 | UTTER | STORY |
|----------------------------|-----------|---------|--------|--------|---------|--------|
| <i>r</i> | 56 862 | 24 536 | 6 656 | 6 118 | 13 068 | 6 484 |
| <i>t_m [min]</i> | 598.058 | 233.803 | 61.865 | 47.472 | 186.775 | 68.143 |

r – word count, *t_m* – speech duration in minutes

Table 3. Error distributions

| Errors | ALL TASKS | | CARTOON | | ROOM1 | | ROOM2 | | UTTER | | STORY | |
|-----------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| | N _E | p _E (%) | N _E | p _E (%) | N _E | p _E (%) | N _E | p _E (%) | N _E | p _E (%) | N _E | p _E (%) |
| <i>E_{SI}</i> | 256 | 7.277 | 98 | 6.617 | 29 | 6.729 | 27 | 5.921 | 81 | 11.035 | 21 | 5.048 |
| <i>E_{S2}</i> | 282 | 8.016 | 169 | 11.411 | 15 | 3.480 | 13 | 2.851 | 38 | 5.177 | 47 | 11.298 |
| <i>E_{S3}</i> | 123 | 3.496 | 79 | 5.334 | 17 | 3.944 | 13 | 2.851 | 6 | 0.817 | 8 | 1.923 |
| <i>E_S</i> | 661 | 18.789 | 346 | 23.363 | 61 | 14.153 | 53 | 11.623 | 125 | 17.030 | 76 | 18.269 |
| <i>E_{L1}</i> | 546 | 15.520 | 221 | 14.922 | 80 | 18.561 | 67 | 14.693 | 129 | 17.575 | 49 | 11.779 |
| <i>E_{L2}</i> | 50 | 1.421 | 29 | 1.958 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.219 | 17 | 2.316 | 3 | 0.721 |
| <i>E_{L3}</i> | 50 | 1.421 | 17 | 1.148 | 5 | 1.160 | 2 | 0.439 | 20 | 2.725 | 6 | 1.442 |
| <i>E_L</i> | 646 | 18.363 | 267 | 18.028 | 85 | 19.722 | 70 | 15.351 | 166 | 22.616 | 58 | 13.942 |
| <i>E_{M1}</i> | 441 | 12.536 | 310 | 20.932 | 2 | 0.464 | 1 | 0.219 | 67 | 9.128 | 61 | 14.663 |
| <i>E_{M2}</i> | 215 | 6.111 | 103 | 6.955 | 16 | 3.712 | 17 | 3.728 | 4 | 0.545 | 75 | 18.029 |
| <i>E_{M3}</i> | 1362 | 38.715 | 413 | 27.887 | 255 | 59.165 | 308 | 67.544 | 252 | 34.332 | 134 | 32.211 |
| <i>E_{M4}</i> | 103 | 2.928 | 21 | 1.418 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.219 | 77 | 10.490 | 4 | 0.962 |
| <i>E_M</i> | 2121 | 60.290 | 847 | 57.191 | 273 | 63.341 | 327 | 71.711 | 400 | 54.496 | 274 | 65.865 |
| <i>E_P</i> | 90 | 2.558 | 21 | 1.418 | 12 | 2.784 | 6 | 1.316 | 43 | 5.858 | 8 | 1.923 |
| <i>E</i> | 3518 | 100 | 1 481 | 100 | 431 | 100 | 456 | 100 | 734 | 100 | 416 | 100 |

E_{SI} – wrong word order or unfinished utterance (false start), *E_{S2}* – morphosyntactically and/or semantically unacceptable utterance, *E_{S3}* – wrongly encoded complements and/or specifiers accessed via syntactic building procedures, *E_S* – syntactic error, *E_{L1}* – L2 lexeme, *E_{L2}* – nonexisting L2 word (non-word), *E_{L3}* – L1 lexeme, *E_L* – lexical error, *E_{M1}* – wrong verb form, *E_{M2}* – errors of “time and aspect”, *E_{M3}* – omitted or misused article, *E_{M4}* – wrong singular or plural ending, *E_M* – morphological error, *E_P* – phonological error, *E* – error, N_E – total number of errors, p_E – percentage of a particular error category

Table 4. Percentages of omitted and incorrectly used articles

| <i>E_{M3}</i> | <i>N_{ar}</i> | <i>p_{ar}</i> (%) |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Omitted article | 1 310 | 96.182 |
| Incorrectly used article | 52 | 3.818 |
| Total | 1 362 | 100 |

N_{ar} – number of articles, *p_{ar}* – percentages

Table 5. Descriptive statistics for syntactic errors in L2

| E_s | CARTOON | ROOM1 | ROOM2 | UTTER | STORY |
|---|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| n | 101 | 101 | 101 | 101 | 101 |
| x_{min} | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| D₁ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Q₁ | 0.471 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Me | 1.042 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Q₃ | 2.165 | 1.878 | 1.464 | 1.351 | 2.120 |
| D₉ | 3.278 | 2.564 | 2.688 | 2.343 | 3.371 |
| x_{max} | 4.918 | 5.085 | 5.769 | 6.349 | 6.452 |
| d | 4.918 | 5.085 | 5.769 | 6.349 | 6.452 |
| d_Q | 1.694 | 1.878 | 1.464 | 1.351 | 2.120 |
| \bar{x} | 1.460 | 0.924 | 0.806 | 0.887 | 1.128 |
| s | 1.250 | 1.265 | 1.324 | 1.327 | 1.621 |
| s² | 1.563 | 1.600 | 1.753 | 1.761 | 2.628 |
| S_{\bar{x}} | 0.124 | 0.126 | 0.132 | 0.132 | 0.161 |
| V | 85.58 % | 136.95 % | 164.26 % | 149.62 % | 143.76 % |
| α_3 | 0.976 | 1.327 | 1.767 | 2.055 | 1.453 |
| α_4 | 0.235 | 1.142 | 2.880 | 4.535 | 1.460 |

n - sample size, *x_{min}* - sample minimum, *D₁* - the first decile, *Q₁* - lower quartile, *Me* - median, *Q₃* - upper quartile, *D₉* - the ninth decile, *x_{max}* - sample maximum, *d* - sample range, *d_Q* - interquartile range, \bar{x} - sample mean, *s* - sample standard deviation, *s²* - sample variance, *S _{\bar{x}}* - standard error of the mean, *V* - coefficient of variation, α_3 - skewness, α_4 - kurtosis

Table 6. Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality for syntactic errors in L2

| Shapiro-Wilk | CARTOON | ROOM1 | ROOM2 | UTTER | STORY |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| W | 0.9036 | 0.7576 | 0.6725 | 0.7110 | 0.7364 |
| p | < 0.0001 | < 0.0001 | < 0.0001 | < 0.0001 | < 0.0001 |

W - Shapiro-Wilk's test statistic, *p* - the *p* value

Table 7. Friedman's test for syntactic errors in L2

| Friedman | n | df | F_r | p |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|----------------------|----------|
| | 101 | 4 | 42.893 | < 0.0001 |

n - sample size, *df* - degrees of freedom, *F_r* - Friedman's test statistic, *p* - the *p* value

Table 8. Dunn's multiple comparison test for syntactic errors in L2

| Dunn | Difference in rank sum | Statistically significant difference |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| CARTOON - ROOM1 | 99 | Yes |
| CARTOON - ROOM2 | 113 | Yes |
| CARTOON - UTTER | 107.5 | Yes |
| CARTOON - STORY | 90.5 | Yes |

Table 9. Descriptive statistics for lexical errors in L2

| E_L | CARTOON | ROOM1 | ROOM2 | UTTER | STORY |
|---|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| n | 101 | 101 | 101 | 101 | 101 |
| x_{min} | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| D₁ | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Q₁ | 0.494 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Me | 0.985 | 0 | 0 | 0.901 | 0 |
| Q₃ | 1.618 | 2.003 | 1.942 | 1.924 | 1.575 |
| D₉ | 2.635 | 3.955 | 4.249 | 2.849 | 3.169 |
| x_{max} | 3.774 | 8.974 | 7.576 | 5.854 | 6.452 |
| d | 3.774 | 8.974 | 7.576 | 5.854 | 6.452 |
| d_Q | 1.124 | 2.003 | 1.942 | 1.924 | 1.575 |
| \bar{x} | 1.160 | 1.263 | 1.157 | 1.200 | 3.169 |
| s | 0.907 | 1.733 | 1.745 | 1.315 | 1.401 |
| s² | 0.823 | 3.003 | 3.045 | 1.729 | 1.963 |
| S_{\bar{x}} | 0.090 | 0.172 | 0.174 | 0.131 | 0.139 |
| V | 78.15 % | 137.22 % | 150.87 % | 109.59 % | 152.39 % |
| α_3 | 0.750 | 1.768 | 1.562 | 1.381 | 1.620 |
| α_4 | 0.006 | 3.798 | 1.787 | 1.916 | 2.306 |

n – sample size, *x_{min}* – sample minimum, *D₁* – the first decile, *Q₁* – lower quartile, *Me* – median, *Q₃* – upper quartile, *D₉* – the ninth decile, *x_{max}* – sample maximum, *d* – sample range, *d_Q* – interquartile range, \bar{x} – sample mean, *s* – sample standard deviation, *s²* – sample variance, *S _{\bar{x}}* – standard error of the mean, *V* – coefficient of variation, α_3 – skewness, α_4 – kurtosis

Table 10. Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality for lexical errors in L2

| Shapiro-Wilk | CARTOON | ROOM1 | ROOM2 | UTTER | STORY |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| W | 0.9359 | 0.7565 | 0.7141 | 0.8368 | 0.7130 |
| p | 0.0001 | < 0.0001 | < 0.0001 | < 0.0001 | < 0.0001 |

W – Shapiro-Wilk's test statistic, *p* – the *p* value

Table 11. Friedman's test for lexical errors in L2

| Friedman | n | df | F_r | p |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|----------------------|----------|
| | 101 | 4 | 13.095 | 0.0108 |

n – sample size, *df* – degrees of freedom, *F_r* – Friedman's test statistic, *p* – the *p* value

Table 12. Dunn's multiple comparison test for lexical errors in L2

| Dunn | Difference in rank sum | Statistically significant difference |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| CARTOON-ROOM1 | 33.5 | No |
| CARTOON-ROOM2 | 59 | Yes |
| CARTOON-STORY | 60 | Yes |

Table 13. Descriptive statistics for morphological errors in L2

| E_M | <i>CARTOON</i> | <i>ROOM1</i> | <i>ROOM2</i> | <i>UTTER</i> | <i>STORY</i> |
|---------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| n | 101 | 101 | 101 | 101 | 101 |
| x_{\min} | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| D_1 | 0.953 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Q_1 | 1.903 | 1.258 | 1.227 | 1.598 | 1.424 |
| Me | 3.361 | 3.704 | 5.128 | 2.857 | 4.211 |
| Q_3 | 5.401 | 7.692 | 10.396 | 4.578 | 6.351 |
| D_9 | 7.449 | 12.279 | 14.857 | 6.357 | 10.130 |
| x_{\max} | 11.765 | 17.949 | 23.881 | 16.667 | 22.222 |
| d | 11.765 | 17.949 | 23.881 | 16.667 | 22.222 |
| d_Q | 3.498 | 6.434 | 9.169 | 2.980 | 4.927 |
| \bar{x} | 3.752 | 4.829 | 6.153 | 3.322 | 4.641 |
| s | 2.406 | 4.489 | 5.658 | 2.796 | 4.232 |
| s^2 | 5.789 | 20.151 | 32.013 | 7.818 | 17.910 |
| $S_{\bar{x}}$ | 0.239 | 0.447 | 0.563 | 0.278 | 0.421 |
| V | 64.12 % | 92.95 % | 91.95 % | 84.17 % | 91.17 % |
| α_3 | 0.703 | 0.902 | 0.718 | 1.640 | 1.415 |
| α_4 | 0.099 | 0.015 | -0.258 | 4.868 | 3.080 |

n – sample size, x_{\min} – sample minimum, D_1 – the first decile, Q_1 – lower quartile, *Me* – median, Q_3 – upper quartile, D_9 – the ninth decile, x_{\max} – sample maximum, *d* – sample range, d_Q – interquartile range, \bar{x} – sample mean, *s* – sample standard deviation, s^2 – sample variance, $S_{\bar{x}}$ – standard error of the mean, *V* – coefficient of variation, α_3 – skewness, α_4 – kurtosis

Table 14. Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality for morphological errors in L2

| Shapiro-Wilk | <i>CARTOON</i> | <i>ROOM1</i> | <i>ROOM2</i> | <i>UTTER</i> | <i>STORY</i> |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| W | 0.9535 | 0.8967 | 0.9065 | 0.9777 | 0.8799 |
| p | 0.0013 | < 0.0001 | < 0.0001 | < 0.0001 | < 0.0001 |

W – Shapiro-Wilk's test statistic, *p* – the *p* value

Table 15. Friedman's test for morphological errors in L2

| Friedman | <i>n</i> | <i>df</i> | F_r | <i>p</i> |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|--------|----------|
| | 101 | 4 | 15.607 | 0.0036 |

n – sample size, *df* – degrees of freedom, F_r – Friedman's test statistic, *p* – the *p* value

Table 16. Dunn's multiple comparison test for morphological errors in L2

| Dunn | Difference in rank sum | Statistically significant difference |
|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| CARTOON – ROOM1 | -5.5 | No |
| CARTOON – ROOM2 | -59.5 | Yes |
| CARTOON – UTTER | 22.5 | No |
| CARTOON – STORY | -25 | No |
| ROOM2 – UTTER | 82 | Yes |

Table 17. Descriptive statistics for phonological errors in L2

| E_p | CARTOON | ROOM1 | ROOM2 | UTTER | STORY |
|---------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| n | 101 | 101 | 101 | 101 | 101 |
| x_{\min} | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| D_1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Q_1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Me | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Q_3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.539 | 0 |
| D_9 | 0.483 | 0.808 | 0 | 1.508 | 0 |
| x_{\max} | 1.176 | 4.651 | 2.632 | 3.571 | 5.556 |
| d | 1.176 | 4.651 | 2.632 | 3.571 | 5.556 |
| d_Q | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.539 | 0 |
| \bar{x} | 0.096 | 0.199 | 0.100 | 0.336 | 0.171 |
| s | 0.231 | 0.698 | 0.419 | 0.669 | 0.171 |
| s^2 | 0.053 | 0.487 | 0.176 | 0.448 | 0.029 |
| $S_{\bar{x}}$ | 0.023 | 0.069 | 0.042 | 0.067 | 0.071 |
| V | 241.01 % | 350.45 % | 421.23 % | 199.00 % | 418.21 % |
| α_3 | 2.601 | 4.319 | 4.469 | 2.343 | 5.500 |
| α_4 | 6.653 | 21.015 | 20.355 | 6.047 | 34.899 |

n – sample size, x_{\min} – sample minimum, D_1 – the first decile, Q_1 – lower quartile, Me – median, Q_3 – upper quartile, D_9 – the ninth decile, x_{\max} – sample maximum, d – sample range, d_Q – interquartile range, \bar{x} – sample mean, s – sample standard deviation, s^2 – sample variance, $S_{\bar{x}}$ – standard error of the mean, V – coefficient of variation, α_3 – skewness, α_4 – kurtosis

Table 18. Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality for phonological errors in L2

| Shapiro-Wilk | CARTOON | ROOM1 | ROOM2 | UTTER | STORY |
|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| W | 0.4836 | 0.3232 | 0.2540 | 0.5792 | 0.2616 |
| p | < 0.0001 | < 0.0001 | < 0.0001 | < 0.0001 | < 0.0001 |

W – Shapiro-Wilk's test statistic, p – the p value

Table 19. Friedman's test for phonological errors in L2

| Friedman | n | df | F_r | p |
|----------|-----|----|--------|--------|
| | 101 | 4 | 21.971 | 0.0002 |

n – sample size, df – degrees of freedom, F_r – Friedman's test statistic, p – the p value

Table 20. Dunn's multiple comparison test for phonological errors in L2

| Dunn | Difference in rank sum | Statistically significant difference |
|---------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ROOM2 – UTTER | -51 | Yes |
| UTTER – STORY | 46 | No |

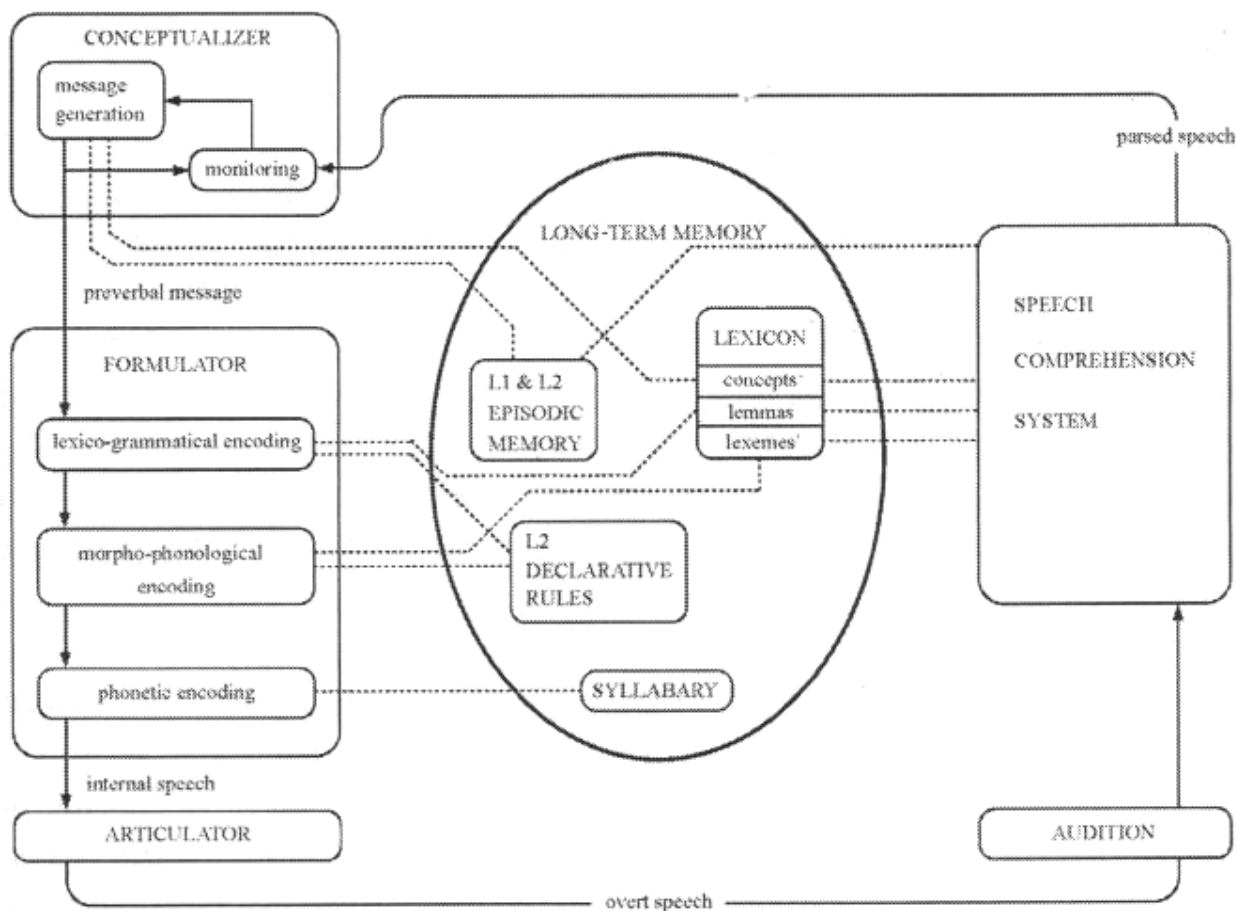


Figure 1. The model of bilingual speech production (Kormos, 2006: 168)

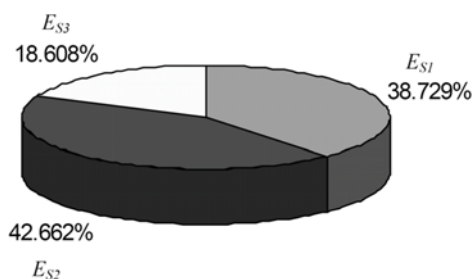


Figure 2. Percentages of subcategories of syntactic errors in their total number in all tasks

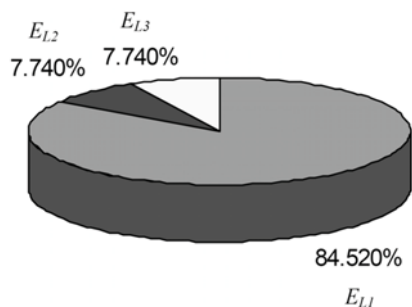


Figure 3. Percentages of subcategories of lexical errors in their total number in all tasks

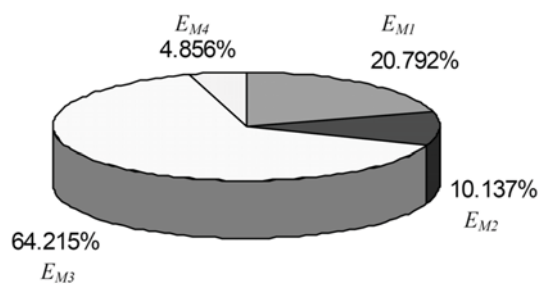


Figure 4. Percentages of subcategories of morphological errors in their total number in all tasks

Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*: A Postmodernist Study

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Abstract

This study tends to delve into the different facets of the play *Waiting for Godot* on a postmodern bedrock, where the role of modernism cannot be disavowed. *Waiting for Godot* shares both modernist and postmodernist features. Nullification of linear historical time, imprisonment within an ahistorical prospect, predisposition toward the perception of uncertainty or the notion of 50/50 chances, evincing numerous signs of binary opposition and most important of all displaying absolute absurdism in all parts of the play have paved the path to give it a postmodern scrutiny.

Keywords: Godot, Nihilism, Postmodernism, Modernism, Binary opposition

1. Introduction

It is so hard to live your life knowing the person you want to be with for the rest of your life never actually notices you. Hoping that someone might notice you, wishing that this person feels the same one of these days, can be so hard to cope with. How long can we be hopeful? How long does a believer have to wait? Everyone is waiting for that somehow, someday. But why does it have to be this way? Why does every time we wait for somebody or something we mostly fail...? Maybe we fall in the trap of waiting; a waiting that has no solution except keeping on waiting.

This study begins with a prelude to postmodernism, which is followed by a concise look at *Waiting for Godot*, and finally the play will be analyzed on postmodern bedrock.

1.1 Postmodernism

Modernity and postmodernity are epochs posited in a quite common, although by no means universal, philosophy of history, as Lyotard asserts that "although the dates of preiodisation, a popular version identifies modernity as the period from Enlightenment to the mid twentieth century, and postmodernity as after that". (1984, p. 3)

The term postmodernism is still the subject of heated debates. It clearly succeeds modernism, a term which was prevalent as an international movement during the 1900s, a term which had two bloody World Wars under its shelter. Indeed these two devastating wars led to the everlasting question of the validity and eligibility of the Rationality in general and Modernism in particular. Actually postmodernism is a dramatic deviation of man's thought line; it is a renaissance towards breaking the fossilized shackles of the prescribed norms and notions, which have changed into economic and political institutions. These prescribed and unchanging beliefs are the trump cards of the power-maniac figures, who utilize them in expediency to rationalize and legitimize their brutality and unjust justice.

The phenomenon of postmodernism cannot be enunciated in purely temporal words. It somehow shackles most of the obvious epistemological points in various scientific points. In postmodernism, unlike modernism, we are not dealing with any scientific rules, but it is the absolute incredulity toward Metanarrative, which became popular, mostly after the Second World War. It postulates working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done and this is something quite ordinary in Beckett's works. Each one starts anew, inventing its own rules as it goes along.

Postmodernism relies heavily on fragmentation, paradox and questionable narrators. It puts science and technology at bay. It refers to the state that lacks a central hierarchy. According to Hooti & Azizpour (2010, p.15):

"Postmodernism" is used to describe a wide gamut of aesthetic, cultural, historical, literary, and philosophical

goings-on. It is often also used to suggest, variously, an eclectic style, a historical period, and a philosophical concept, as well as an anti-style, an atemporal event, and a non-concept. Often associated with deconstruction and poststructuralism, it is a term which undergoes uninterrupted redefinitions. In the visual arts and in architecture, postmodernism is referred as pastiche or eclecticism. In philosophy, it stands against defining logocentrism and epistemological certainty that has characterized Western philosophy since Descartes.

In postmodernism nothing is based on logical reasoning. Nothing is framed within a presupposed universal truth. In the 21st century everyone has lost faith in a perfectly ordered, rational universe. The world is a place where things happen randomly. You live or you die by chance. The conditions you endure, you endure by chance. There is no well-crafted plan, no scheme of justice in most parts of the world by which the universe operates.

In postmodernism you cannot find any certainties in any section of the universe and everything has been brought into question. The postmodernity tends towards elaboration, eclecticism, ornamentation and inclusiveness. It dismisses the existence of an absolute reality and is deeply suspicious of the concept of human progress. As a matter of fact, it is a new era of endeavor whose activities are unclear and whose meanings and implications are not yet well understood. Thus, postmodernism is characterized by insecurity, uncertainty and skepticism. As Hooti (2011, p. 330) asserts:

Postmodernism is a comprehensive concept which has been challenged and argued over in so many scientific, literary, philosophical, cultural fields. Some critics regard it as originating in architecture. Based on natural attributes, it cannot be defined as stable and fixed.

The postmodern world is shaped by pluralism, democracy, religious freedom, consumerism, mobility and increasing access to news and entertainment. Residents of this world are able to see that there are many beliefs, multiple realities and an exhilarating, but daunting profusion of world views, a society that has lost its faith in absolute truth in which people have to choose what to believe.

Sometimes the characteristics of postmodernism are brought into question, but it is quite crucial to point that the features of postmodernism cannot be put into a specified category or box. Its beliefs and characteristics are well beyond any particular establishments; instead they are somehow more personal. Here are some elemental notions of postmodernism:

- (1). There exists no absolute truth. As a matter of fact, truth is viewed as an illusion, abused by those who want to gain control over others.
- (2). Truth and fallacy are synonyms. Facts and falsehoods can be used interchangeably and what is right today may appear to be wrong tomorrow.
- (3). Traditional thinking and rationality are absolutely spurned by postmodernism. There is no determined rule to designate rationality or irrationality. It is all just up to the people's standpoint.
- (4). Morality is personal. In general postmodernists subject morality to personal opinion. They define morality as to be followed by each person's code of ethics, rather than any secular or traditional rules.
- (5). Modernism considered the fragmented view of the human life as bad or tragic; however, postmodernists rather celebrate this seemingly meaningless view of the world.
- (6). Disillusionment with modernism- postmodernists rue the unfulfilled promises of the science, technology, government and religion.

1.2 Literature and Postmodernism

Postmodernism is a phenomenon of vast interpretation and focuses on so many aspects. In different fields including literature, philosophy, social sciences, arts, and so on what it tries to do is the portrait of all the artifacts as Human constructs. Though postmodernism was not born in the mind of literary critics, literature is one of the best ground in which postmodernism can be represented. In the postmodernism literature the boundary between fact and fiction is often dissolved. There is no boundary between fiction and reality; therefore, there is nothing absolute or eternal. Postmodern literature during 1960 to 1990 was the dominated mode in the literary works. Some features of postmodern literature are: ambiguity, complexity, decenterment, fragmentation in dialogue, pastiche, irony, parody, black humor, and allegory.

Although postmodernism has influenced all the literary forms, but usually it focuses on one kind of writing which mostly is narrative fiction. The narrative advances in flash backs, flash forwards and is frequently interrupted; it is like cinema and movie techniques. Beside the stupidity of war, another subject in postmodernism is ethnicity. It is about marginal groups: common man, black people and race and gender. Also it focuses on cultural aspects. Another concern of postmodern literature is the exploitation of human beings, especially woman and feminist issues.

Feminism has developed its own criticism of the legal and ethical implications from postmodernism.

It is necessary to emphasize that postmodernist literature is not nihilistic or devoid of values, but it attacks injustices. However postmodern literature wishes to be free from conventions and traditional attachments.

Most important scientific concept for postmodernism is borrowed from Quantum Mechanics and Einstein relativity. Therefore multiple readings are possible, desirable, and even necessary. The postmodern sublime is present of unrepresentable. This view attacks modernist sublime which says: there are some concepts which are unrepresentable, therefore, it is the moment of failure because in modernism unrepresentable cannot be present. One of the clearest definitions of postmodernism has been presented by Lyotard as follows:

The postmodern would be that which in the modern invokes the unrepresentable in presentation itself, that which refuses the consolation of correct forms, refuses the consensus of taste permitting a common experience of nostalgia for the impossible, and inquires into new presentations – not to take pleasure in them, but to better produce the feeling that is something unrepresentable. (cited in Malpas, 2005, p. 49)

2. *Waiting for Godot*

“let’s go” – “we can’t” – “why not” – “we are waiting for Godot” – “ah” (Becket, 1956 p. 16-henceforth Becket).

With this disconsolate utterance, Samuel Beckett introduces the strange world of *Waiting for Godot*, a mystery that is wrapped in enigma. Before the elucidation of any literary criticisms, it would be indispensable to take a perfunctory look at the play. *Waiting for Godot* was first written in French version in 1949 and then translated into English in 1954 by its Irish writer. The two down-and-out men who wait expectantly to visit inscrutable Godot, have nothing significant to do with their lives, while waiting at a tree in the middle of nowhere doing every possible thing, even contemplating suicide, just to keep the dreadful silence at bay. Their waiting is interrupted by passing through of three other characters of the play, Pozzo and his subservient slave, Lucky, and the boy whose name was not mentioned, but seems to be the messenger of Godot.

Waiting for Godot had the most strikingly profound impact on everyone, which commenced the trend that became known as the “theater of absurd”. More importantly Samuel Beckett made *Waiting for Godot* as the violation of the conventional drama and the direction of expressionism and surrealism experiment in drama and theater. *Waiting for Godot* was one of the most exceptional plays of the post-second world war era. Esslin calls it “one of the successes of the post-war theater” (1980, p. 3)

More importantly the play does not formally end when the boy, who is somehow the harbinger of dejection, keeps Vladimir abreast of the fact that Godot is not coming this evening. The play indeed begins with waiting for Godot and ends with waiting for Godot as well.

2.1 *Tragic-comic Elements in Waiting for Godot*

Although *Waiting for Godot* is said to be depressing, but as a matter of fact in different parts of the play the four characters fabricate different movements of humor in their mannerism and behavior. In other words, tragic and comic aspects of the play are amalgamated simultaneously. Most of the time, we can feel this helpless absurdity throughout the play.

Estragon: why don’t we hang ourselves?

Vladimir: with what?

Estragon: you haven’t got a bit of rope?

Vladimir: no

Estragon: then we can’t

Vladimir: let’s go

Estragon: oh, wait, there is my belt

Vladimir: it’s too short

Estragon: you could hang on to my legs

Vladimir: and who would hang onto mine?

Estragon: true (Becket, p. 42)

Or even when his pants are fallen off his feet, he does not notice that, and Vladimir makes him aware of that.

The expression “nothing to be done” (p. 2) is reverberated in most of their dialogues; it prevalently tries to impose the notion of absurdity in people’s life. In other words, they strike up a new conversation or terminate one with this

tangible feeling.

The meaninglessness or absurdity in the play is absolutely tangible when Pozzo utters out these meaningful words:

Pozzo: (suddenly furious.) Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time! It's abominable! When! When! One day, is that not enough for you, one day he went dumb, one day I went blind, one day we'll go deaf, one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you? (Calmer.) They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it is night once more. (He jerks the rope.) On! (p. 37)

It is not only trying to unravel the notion of absurdity of his life, that everything like becoming deaf and dumb affected them easily, but also it is trying to mention the absurdity of everyone's life when mundane matters are put at the central part of their lives. He is saying these strange expressions so downheartedly due to the fact that, he has realized the true nature of life and the eternal life.

2.2 *Truth and its Denial*

Samuel Beckett mostly involves himself and his works in the system of language in many of his plays like *Waiting for Godot* (1954), *Endgame* (1958), *Not I* (1974)... He tries to reform the nature of reality in his own way. The irony in his works is that, to speak is to exist, but so as to speak one must utilize the system of language and words, which have no intrinsic meaning. In most of his works "truth" is somehow closed off from the reader. Also we can make it more elaborated by mentioning the fact that Deconstruction, a term which was first applied by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), implicitly questions the validity of the hidden structure upon which other "truths" lie, a chain of truths that are linked together and this concept can be somehow attached to Beckett's works. White (2009, p. 1) aptly comments on Beckett, as he says "He is, however, a writer who confronts the realities of existence through a language that he himself deems to be ultimately ineffectual". He further comments that "everything in Beckett's world appears to be in decline and this erosion affects the characters physically and emotionally". (p.2)

Vladimir: "our saviour. Two thieves. One is supposed to have been saved and the other...damned" (Becket, p.5). Vladimir makes this point that even things which many consider to be true are subject to doubt. Beliefs are without rationality in waiting for Godot.

Beckett's outlook of postmodern life can be viewed as somehow bleak, helplessly hopeless and ironic where language does not have a certain meaning. *Waiting for Godot* illustrates the desire to prove one's existence and make sense of the world. Estragon and Vladimir have only one proved language in order to talk or communicate to one another and demonstrate each other's existence in that hopeless world; however, language is an inadequate system in reaching any abstract truth and more important than that, a word is only a representation of a truth, not the truth itself. Therefore we can imply that, the denial of the truth stems from the fact that there is no absolute truth in the world and also it is not too inapt to cast doubt on the absolute itself too, but still we draw our own subjective picture of truth in order not to get ourselves trapped in the mysterious complexities of the world around us. As Luntley (2003, p. 107) asserts:

This simple and commonsensical concept of truth is central to all our actions. Of course, this is not to say that we have the truth in all our actions. Rather it is to say that it is impossible to make sense of our lives without the idea that things happen independently of our thinking about them. We do not need to concentrate on science and the physical world to see that this is so.

As it is implied in the play, the only usage of communication is just to prove their existence as Estragon says: "we always find something, eh Didi, to give us the impression we exist" (p. 14)

2.3 *Uncertainty*

Although works of the theater of the absurd, particularly Beckett's, are often comical, their underlying premises are wholly serious, as Hutchings declares, "the epistemological principle of uncertainty and the inability in the modern age to find a coherent system of meaning, order, or purpose by which to understand our existence and by which to live" (1991, p. 28).

The other remarkable feature of uncertainty is that no one tries to make any movements. Estragon: "don't let's do anything. It's safer" (Becket, p.11) or "nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful" (p.27). Due to their uncertainty, they are somehow afraid of making any movements, so they remain still, or when Vladimir says "Nothing is certain when we are about" (p. 8).

Even the most fundamental things are not certain, in other words, nothing is certain, not even sickness and death:

Estragon: Wait! (He moves away from Vladimir.) I sometimes wonder if we wouldn't have been better off alone, each one for himself. (He crosses the stage and sits down on the mound.) We weren't made for the same road.

Vladimir: (Without anger) It's not certain.

Estragon: No, nothing is certain. (p. 45)

Another symbol of uncertainty is the lightening. The only lightening effect is when days turn rapidly to night and the moon rises. The surrealistic effect of this heightened change from day to night amplifies the theme of uncertainty. It should also be mentioned that, this play was written after the Second World War, when the insecurity about the Soviet Union was the order of the day as the arms race gave rise to the possibility of nuclear war.

Something which was never mentioned in the play, and can be taken into consideration is the characters' age. The humorous part is that, though it is not present as any dialogue, but it can be regarded as one of the points of uncertainty. Even when Pozzo asks Vladimir about his age he does not respond, because he is not sure. "Pozzo You are severe. (To Vladimir.) What age are you, if it's not a rude question? (Silence.) Sixty? Seventy? (To Estragon.) What age would you say he was? Estragon: Eleven." (p. 21)

But apart from all these points of uncertainty, even there is no sense of certainty in Godot's entry time. In act one, when Estragon and Vladimir are talking about the Godot's time of arrival, they do not even have the slightest certainty of when he appears:

Vladimir: He said Saturday. (Pause.) I think.

Estragon: You think.

Vladimir: I must have made a note of it. (He fumbles in his pockets, bursting with miscellaneous rubbish.)

Estragon: (very insidious). But what Saturday? And is it Saturday? Is it not rather Sunday? (Pause.) Or Monday? (Pause.) Or Friday?

Vladimir: (looking wildly about him, as though the date was inscribed in the landscape). It's not possible!

Estragon: Or Thursday? (p. 8)

The most helplessly humorous part of this uncertainty is that they do not even know whether the person they are waiting for is named Godot or not as Vladimir says: Vladimir: To Godot? Tied to Godot! What an idea! No question of it. (Pause.) For the moment. Estragon: His name is Godot? Vladimir: I think so. (p. 14)

But other than this, Who Is Godot? When does he come? Where does he show up? Why does he have to come? Or even the most fundamental question: Why do they have to wait for Godot?

It is not only about Estragon and Vladimir, but also about humankind who helplessly in each segment of life waits for a new Godot. We are searching for the meaning of life too repetitiously and without purpose, always trying to find somebody or something that can take the lead of our lives. This postmodern world comes into being, when salvation is expected from an external entity.

2.4 Helpless hope

Although it has been asserted in many interpretations of the play that there is not even a shade of hope in it, but in certain parts of the play we can feel that the existence of hope is oscillating in it. As Vladimir puts it "I am glad to see you back. I thought you were gone forever". (p. 2)

While they are in absolute boredom of the despondent life, they have not lost their hopes or dreams as in:

Vladimir: do you remember the Gospel?

Estragon: I remember the maps of the holy land. colored they were. Very pretty. The Dead Sea was pale blue .the very look of it made me thirsty. That's where we'll go, I used to say, that's where we'll go for our honeymoon. we'll swim. We'll be happy. (p. 4)

However hope is sometimes felt substantially from the play, but hopelessness or deep gloom can be felt as well. When Pozzo's autocratic style or behavior toward his submissive slave, Lucky, especially when his arrival is displayed in act 1, indeed causes this sympathetic feeling in the onlooker's heart when he ties a person to neck and adjures him in the cruelest way. Moreover, this despairing feeling is intensified when Estragon and Vladimir take this tyrannical person for somebody else, as the person who is going to help them or save them, although that savior is called Godot.

Pozzo: (off). On! (Crack of whip. Pozzo appears. They cross the stage. Lucky passes before Vladimir and Estragon and exit. Pozzo at the sight of Vladimir and Estragon stops short. The rope tautens. Pozzo jerks at it violently.) back!

Noise of Lucky falling with all his baggage. Vladimir and Estragon turn towards him, half wishing half fearing to go to his assistance. Vladimir takes a step towards Lucky, Estragon holds him back by the sleeve. (p.15)

Or even when Estragon and Vladimir want to know why lucky never puts down his bags, Pozzo says that he wants to get rid of him, therefore he is trying to somehow wheedle him not to leave him alone. It is not only about Lucky who is trying so hard to coax his master to keep him, but also the sad story about the human being who is sometimes taken advantage of by those who have gained control over them everlastingly and are entangled in their master's orders, so that, they cannot become a normal human being again forever.

One of the most essential and praiseworthy parts to be considered is the fact that, with all these desperate incidents they come across during their waiting, they never leave each other alone. Even when they do, they find each other again and regret having left each other alone. Indeed they never decide to leave each other in the lurch. In their journey of life, uncertainties and obstacles push them toward failure and unhappiness, and although they pass each other derogatory words most of the time, but still they find each other's existence as a sparkling point of hope. As this dialogue can prove the claim "Estragon: (wild gestures, incoherent words. Finally.) Why will you never let me sleep? Vladimir: I felt lonely. (p. 37)"

One of the most spectacular but mystifying part of this play is Lucky's speech in act one.

Given the existence as uttered forth in the public works of Puncher and Wattmann of a personal God quaquaquaquaqu with white beard quaquaquaquaqu outside time without extension who from the heights of divine apathia divine athambia divine aphasia loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown but time will tell and suffers like the divine Miranda with those who for reasons unknown but time will tell are plunged in torment plunged in fire whose fire flames if that continues and who can doubt it will fire the firmament that is to say blast hell to heaven so blue still and calm so calm with a calm which even though intermittent is better than nothing but not so fast and considering what is more that as a result of the labors left unfinished..."(p. 34)

It is definitely one of the parts that conveys a whole lot of extraordinary ideas. He is speaking endlessly and clamorously in a way that the other characters are suffering from his monologue. No one can figure out what he really means by those strange words. Words like "belcher, testew, cunard, or apathia" are somehow hard to understand, but somehow it can be implied that he is talking about God or his existence or even when mentions that God has white beard. It can be construed as :Acknowledging the existence of a personal God, one who exists outside time and who loves us dearly and who suffers with those who are plunged into torment, it is established beyond all doubt that man for reason unknown, has left his labors, abandoned and unfinished. It is just a simple definition for those readers or audiences who are trying to decode this monologue, although here may be more to it than meets the eyes.

Faith in future is obvious not only from the dialogues, but it can also discernibly be grasped from the tree which was dead in act 1, while it bloomed in the second act, Though only four or five leaves were visible on the tree. The most pivotal part of the play is; however, they are kept posted by the boy that Godot is not coming this evening either, they acquiesce reluctantly to go far away, but neither of them leaves the stage or at least it is supposed that nobody moves. Therefore, it showed the same fluctuating hope which can be insinuated as a kind of hopeless hope in a helpless manner.

But apart from all these mindboggling points, absence of Godot, should not be neglected. Who Is Godot? When does he come? Where does he show up? Why does he have to come? Or even the most fundamental question: Why do they have to wait for Godot? The question of Godot's identity does more than tantalizing spectators of Beckett's play. It is a paradigm of textual tantalization itself. Its answer appears to lie outside the play, encouraging criticism to return to that realm it once called home: the author's intentions. However, this ancient ground of textual meaning now seems abandoned, most explicitly in Beckett's work, where its vacancy is announced, paradoxically, in the form of a text strongly marked with intentionality: the direct nonfictional statement of authorial intent.

2.5 Nihilism

Nihilism is a radical philosophy of meaninglessness. The world and the people in it exist without meaning, purpose, truth and value. Any system of belief, or artistic expression, which denies or drains away meaning can be described as "nihilistic". According to Baudrillard, "today's nihilism is one of transparency, a nihilism that is a major source of indifference" (quoted in Dicken, 2009, p. 42). Thus the 'transpolitical' order of the contemporary society is characterized by the "disappearance, of the real, of meaning, of the individual, of the social and so on" (ibid). When everything becomes political, politics disappear; when everything becomes sexual, sex disappears; when everything is social, the social disappears...

Postmodernism as a state of thought is often innocently accused of being nihilistic and postmodernity is often seen as a nihilistic state of society. Levin (2001, p. 5) aptly asserts that:

The modern epoch brought into being a world in which the effects of nihilism are spreading. Now, we can see, today,

if we look with care and thought, that nihilism is a rage against Being: 'nihilism' means the destruction of Being: the Being of all beings, including that way of being which we call 'human' and consider to be our own. Thus, in the postmodern situation, we need to achieve, both individually and collectively, a recollection of Being, of its dimensionality. This is possible, however, only if the question of Being can become, for us, a question of character – a question that questions the historical character of our vision.

Nihilism is the radical repudiation of values, meaning and desirability. As Nietzsche says: "Nihilistic thought has many related manifestations: ontological, epistemological, existential, political and moral" (1968, p.7). The common nihilistic debilitation is usually associated with moods of despair, random destructiveness and longing for nothingness.

In *Waiting for Godot*, the nihilistic atmosphere can be observed. Estragon and Vladimir, the two protagonists, thrust a lack of meaning and purpose upon the observer's soul. They often insist on chatting about meaningless matters in order just to kill the time. Beckett's use of nonsensical language exposes the existentialist theme throughout the whole play

As we go along the play, we come across with one of the Estragon's dialogues as he says, "Why don't we hang ourselves?" (Becket, p. 41) Even though their lives have turned to be so monotonous that they are inclined to hang themselves, it somehow implies something other than that. Nietzsche puts it better when he says: "suicide is the deed of nihilism" (1968, p. 143). Hence; it would not be inappropriate to declare that there is a very remarkable connection between waiting for Godot and nihilism which lies within postmodernism.

2.6 Binary opposition

Postmodern theories stand against all the predetermined, prescribed and fossilized norms and values which keep on lashing and leashing man and turning a blind eye and a deaf ear to his needs and expectations. The notions like black and white, dull and smart, beautiful and ugly...are the sad gifts of the world of modernism that torment the postmodern atmosphere.

Binary opposition is potently omnipresent in most of the writers' writings and it can be vividly observed in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, which highlights the lack of stability and coherence of the text as an exemplifier of a postmodern discourse. The following points can support the claim:

(1).The opposition between Vladimir and Estragon's actions, ways of thinking, feelings, appearance and even their levels of intelligence has created this extraordinarily magnificent appeal to the readers or observers' soul and mind. From the beginning of the play we can feel the philosophical manner

(2).of Vladimir's thinking, while Estragon is mostly obsessed with mundane matters. In other words estragon does not contemplate profoundly about different matters as in:

Vladimir: One out of four. Of the other three, two don't mention any thieves at all and the third says that both of them abused him.

Estragon: Who?

Vladimir: What?

Estragon: What's all this about? Abused who?

Vladimir: The Saviour.

Estragon: Why?

Vladimir: Because he wouldn't save them.

Estragon: From hell?

Vladimir: Imbecile! From death.

Estragon: I thought you said hell.

Vladimir: From death, from d (pp. 5-6)

3. Although Estragon and Vladimir are negligent of the notion of time, but pozzo is very cautious and heedful about it. More accurately, they do not even find the spending of the time something worthy, passing the time is what they like, but pozzo keeps track of the time alertly:

Stop! (Lucky stops.) Yes, the road seems long when one journeys all alone for . . . (he consults his watch) . . . yes . . . (he calculates) . . . yes, six hours, that's right, six hours on end. (p. 17)

4. The irritating behavior of pozzo is another important symbol. While he orders Lucky intermittently, estragon calls

him "Mr." and Pozzo does nothing, but making fun of his way of addressing:

Estragon: Mister . . . excuses me, Mister . . .

Pozzo: You're being spoken to, pig! Reply! (To Estragon) Try him again.

Estragon: Excuse me, Mister, the bones; you won't wanting the bones?

Lucky looks long at Estragon

Pozzo: (In raptures). Mister! (Lucky bows his head.) Reply! Do you want them or don't you? (Silence of Lucky. To Estragon.) (p. 20)

5. When they are so depressed with their monotonous life that they want to hang themselves, but it manifests their appearances which are the antithesis of one another.

Estragon: Let's hang ourselves immediately!

Vladimir: From a bough? (They go towards the tree.) I wouldn't trust it.

Estragon: We can always try.

Vladimir: Go ahead.

Estragon: After you.

Vladimir: No no, you first.

Estragon: Why me?

Vladimir: You're lighter than I am. (p.10)

6. One of the comic yet remarkable aspects of this play is forgetfulness of Estragon, while Vladimir remembers very little things vividly. In many different parts of the play, Estragon reminds his friend about the numerous things that he has forgotten:

Vladimir: Wait . . . we embraced . . . we were happy . . . happy . . . what do we do now that we're happy . . . go on waiting . . . waiting . . . let me think . . . it's coming . . . go on waiting . . . now that we're happy . . . let me see . . . ah! The tree!

Estragon: The tree?

Vladimir: Do you not remember?

Estragon: I'm tired.

Vladimir: Look at it. They look at the tree.

Estragon: I see nothing.

Vladimir: But yesterday evening it was all black and bare. And now it's covered with leaves.

Estragon: Leaves?

Vladimir: In a single night.

Estragon: It must be the Spring. (Becket, p. 10)

2.7 Toward Delogocentrism

Beckett's central characters in *Waiting for Godot* have created a logo called Godot, a logo, which seems to be the ultimate source of erasing the misery of the miserably helpless creatures who find themselves doomed and drowned in the oozy ocean of incapability. They do feel the vacuum of nothingness. Godot is the sole power, which is expected to save and enrich them and change their dystopia into utopia. By introducing such characters, Beckett wants to remind us of those people who seem to be simply moving and living creatures, but indeed lack the sense of existence in their lives. The sense of existence comes when there is the sense of self-esteem, the sense of ability of making decisions and changing one's own world and above all the sense of having the ability to think your own thoughts independently. Beckett's characters seem to be tied up to the logocentric term Godot and have taken it for granted that Godot is the dominant source of donation and salvation. They believe that the colorful meaning of truth can be only attained under the shelter of the presupposed logos. Actually such logos under different guises rule all such astray and thoughtless thinking creatures that lack self-esteem, self-confidence and above all self-determination. They find the sense of reality within the realm of their pre-assumed logos. The French philosopher Jacques Derrida is the one who has maneuvered enough on the logocentrism. As Hooti and Shooshtarian (2010, p. 151) comment:

Derrida, as one of those twenty-century philosophers who did research on the relationship between language and

reality, in his texts, *Writing and difference* and *Of Grammatology*, denied the stability of signification system and the pre-supposed stability between them and in this way, he argued the validity of "logocentrism. According to Derrida, there is no pre-existent truth, "transcendental signifier or "logos" to which one can appeal to find meaning. His "deconstruction" as Ulmann maintains, "affirms the importance of ambivalence, of the relation between terms rather than the choice of one term over another.

3. Conclusion

The conclusion for many critics has seemed inescapable. As Nealon puts it, "*Waiting for Godot* is an attack on modernism with its ideological and Grand Narrative that claims to interpret the world Estragon and Vladimir are trapped by their modernist nostalgia for legitimation in *Godot*" (1992, p. 51).

To put it in a nutshell, we can allude that the stream of consciousness in the play implies that nothing "out there" defines or determines Estragon and Vladimir; instead it is their own actions and freewill, their own choices that are the most "fundamental to their existence". The enigmatic road, the cryptic tree and more importantly all the characters in it are not primarily meaningful, orderly or rational; instead they exist in a basically indifferent, objective, often ambiguous and "absurd" world and although meaning is not "out there", they try to create it in themselves.

Waiting for Godot is a poignant play about a ceaseless waiting, about repetition, the meaninglessness, the absurdity of waiting, of feeling (and being) suspended in time instead of moving forward in a meaningful direction and, about waiting for waiting and finally being imprisoned in one's mind. It is not necessarily about the absence of God, or about Christian salvation, or existential despair, or nihilistic meaninglessness, or postmodern critique of language, though interpretation is a subjective enterprise, we can interpret literature how we choose. And finally, one way of understanding this play is to see it as an abstract play about waiting, about waiting for the responsibility of a better future that we are not quite fully convinced will never arrive. As Hooti and Azizpour (2011, p. 21) comment:

Our postmodern world seems very likely to become one of spiritual emptiness and cultural superficiality, in which social practices are endlessly repeated and parodied, a fragmented world of alienated individuals with no sense of self or history, tuned into a thousand different TV channels. This is certainly the vision of both present and future offered to us by the postmodernist Jean Baudrillard. For him, this postmodern world is one of simulacra in which there is no longer any difference between reality and surface.

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Can the Essential Lexicon of Geology be Appropriately Represented in an Intuitively Written EAP Module?

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Abstract

This study aimed to find out to what extent an intuitively developed ESP module for Science majors, taught at Sultan Qaboos University is appropriately written in terms of lexicon when compared to a core Geology textbook. The module was developed based on key topics which appeared in the Geology textbook. This study will only be evaluating vocabulary and will not be looking at other aspects of material evaluation. The digitized pages of the Module (LANC 2050) and the Essentials of Geology Textbook were loaded into the Software of WordSmith 5.0 for analysis. The results revealed low percentage word coverage in the module as compared with the limited pedagogical word list that was developed for Geology. In addition, the high density and low consistency ratios for the module as compared to the textbook indicated the compactness of the module for teaching purposes. A very low percentage of the technical words that were related to Geology was discovered in the Module (LANC 2050).

Keywords: EAP, ESP, Module, Textbook, Geology, Science, WordSmith

1. Introduction

Knowledge of vocabulary is an important matter for the learning of a second or foreign language. Its importance increases when it comes to the areas of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). For developing this knowledge, much more attention should be paid to the explicit and implicit ways of teaching the vocabulary. In some situations, direct teaching and learning are required, while, in other situations, indirect ways of learning, such as incidental learning in extensive reading, would suffice (Sutarsyah, Nation & Kennedy, 1994).

Encountering a word for enough number of times throughout the textbook would reflect the high frequency of that word which, in turn, would show its importance in learning and teaching. For example, knowledge of first 2000 words of general service list (GSL) (West, 1953) together with the academic word list (AWL) (Coxhead, 2000) would provide, according to Nation (1990, 2001), about 95% of the vocabulary required for the reading of academic texts essential for the ESL/EFL students' learning. A corpus-based content analysis of a textbook can make this decision easier for the teacher (Fox, 1998). However, the basic criterion in learning and teaching the vocabulary is the underlying purpose(s) on which they are based, i.e., whether the aim is to learn the words for general use (GE), academic use (EAP) or specialized use (ESP).

1.1 Background of vocabulary learning and teaching

Learning vocabulary in the ESL/EFL situations is one of the specific goals of learning in the language classroom. In the language classrooms and in a well-designed course, four important strands should be present (Nation, 2001). These strands approach learning new language items from four perspectives including: (a) comprehensible meaning-focused input through the listening and reading where about 95% of the running words are familiar to the learners. In other words, for learning to occur very few unknown words should be present in the input. (b) language-focused learning or form-focused instruction (Ellis, 1990) in which the focus is on the deliberate teaching

and learning of the language items. If the goal of the course is, for instance, teaching and learning vocabulary, the direct teaching and learning of vocabulary is needed. (c) meaning-focused output through the speaking and writing where the learners can strengthen their knowledge of previously met vocabulary; (d) fluency-focused development through activities in which they use and practice the items they already know. According to Nation (2001), in a language course approximately the same amount of time (i.e., 25% of the learning time) should be spent on any of these four strands.

In addition, Nation (2001) states that there are four types of vocabularies: the high frequency words, academic words, technical words and low-frequency words. High frequency words are words which are commonly used in a language textbook and they require high amount of attention by the teacher and students (Nation & Waring 1997; Fox, 1998). In the development of vocabulary list in different disciplines, priority has to be given to the General Service List (GSL) (West, 1953) comprising words that are of high frequency in all kinds of texts and which make up the most frequent 2000 words of English (Nation, 2001; Coxhead, 2000; Nation & Waring, 1997). The GSL is a list that is irreplaceable as it covers up to 87% of any academic texts (Nation, 2001; 1990; Coxhead, 2000) and teachers and learners alike should focus on comprehending the words in order to cope with academic reading materials at higher rates.

Besides academic words, technical words are important to learners who need the vocabulary to help in planning and achieving their specific goals in language use. Technical words are specialised vocabulary developed from specialised corpus, words which qualify in terms of frequency and relevance (Nation, 2001). "Strictly technical words are characterized by the absence of exact synonyms, resistance to semantic change, and a very narrow range; e.g., words such as urethane or vulcanise" (Mudraya, 2006, p.239). These words have low frequency but comprise a large number of words (Nation, 1990; 2001).

In academic texts, especially in specific fields, the frequency and coverage of academic and technical words are higher than in general English texts (Sutarsyah et al., 1994). Being ignorant about these words can pose challenging experiences to students who wish to learn more about field-specific vocabulary which can initiate the socialization of students into their discourse communities. Failing to be associated to their discourse community can hinder productive progress among students academically. Academic vocabulary occurs frequently in most kinds of academic texts; however, their frequency is lower than general service vocabulary (Worthington & Nation, 1996; Xue & Nation, 1984).

Having good knowledge of academic vocabulary has been emphasized for success at higher levels of education (Coxhead, 2000; Corson, 1997). Different corpus-based studies have been conducted with regard to the vocabulary of the texts in different areas and disciplines. Worthington and Nation (1996), for example, have investigated the feasibility of the texts that are used to sequence the target vocabulary of a course. Some studies have explored the technical vocabulary in specialized texts such as in anatomy and applied linguistics texts (Chung & Nation, 2003) or in the language of mathematics, science and English textbooks (Mukundan & Menon, 2005; 2007a; 2007b).

1.2 The need for ESP materials in the university

At Sultan Qaboos University, all science based colleges and specializations are taught in English, so proficiency in English has been deemed important for students' success in their majors since the inception of this university. From its start, the university has realized that almost all its students majoring in science based colleges might be in need for content area English tuition to prepare them for their majors and so it adopted ESP and EAP as the basis for its English modules. To teach these it established the Language Centre, which has been operating since 1986. In these modules, English is taught using context of the content related to students' majors. The learning outcomes of ESP are language-based (grammar, sentence structure, word forms, coherence, cohesion, the four skills, subject-area terminology, spelling and punctuation). The rationale is that EFL students are expected to perform at the same level in their university courses as native speakers of English, who commence their university education with a full command of general English, and who would have spent 12 years studying all subjects in English within a larger community in which English is the only medium of communication. The English for Science courses taught to College of Science students are credit courses designed with some input from the College of Science. Needs analyses were carried out informally and the colleges provided some input on how the English courses need to be structured and what skills or projects they should include. However, in terms of vocabulary, it was impressionistically included in the module by the college representatives based on their experience. One major drawback with the English for Science courses is that their content targeted general science because they were taught to all science majors. Therefore, the vocabulary and the topics might not match anyone specialization in particular. No thorough analysis of the science books was conducted.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The aim of this study is to compare the first of the two Modules (LANC 2050) which was intuitively written for

EAP with the Essentials of Geology Textbook as the Reference Corpus of the study for ESP course. The specific objectives of the study are: (a) to find out the similarities and differences of the words in the Module (LANC 2050) and the Essentials of Geology Textbook, their frequency range, density ratio, consistency ratio, and types of words; (b) to determine whether the Module (LANC 2050) can prepare the students for the ESP course in Geology.

1.4 Research questions

The two corpora were examined to seek the possible answers to the following questions:

- (1). To what extent are the 1,000 most frequently used specialised content words in the Module (LANC 2050) and the Essentials of Geology Textbook different?
- (2). With the creation of a limited pedagogical word list, to what extent do the words in the word list represent those in the EAP Module (LANC 2050)?

2. Methodology

This study compares two corpora, the Module (LANC 2050) and the Essentials of Geology Textbook. The Module (LANC 2050) is taught in the English for Science Course, the completion of which is one of the requirements for the students of Science in the College of Science in Sultan Qaboos University (SQU). It consists of six units with different sections covering topics related to *The Earth, Space, Matter and Materials, Technology, Biotechnology*, with the last unit as *Review and Practice*. The Module (LANC 2050) units are compared with eleven selected chapters of the Essentials of Geology Textbook that includes different topics such as *Introduction to Geology, Minerals: Building blocks of rocks, Igneous rocks, Volcanoes and other Igneous activity, Weathering and soils, Sedimentary rocks, Metamorphic rocks, Earthquakes and Earth's interior, Plate Tectonics, Geologic Time, and Earth history: A brief summary*. Most of the topics in the textbooks were used as the basis for the development of the module. The 1,000 most frequently used content words from both the Essentials of Geology Textbook and the Module (LANC 2050) will be compared to find out to the differences.

The keyword lists created in this study are based on the study carried out by Menon (2009), who created 'keyword lists' using the Word Smith software. Harvesting or building a word list can be done by comparing with a larger corpus which functions as a reference corpus (Nation, 2001). Thus, the limited pedagogical corpora for both the textbook and the module are compared with the British National Corpus (BNC), as a well-established corpus for word list building (Menon, 2009). WordSmith 5.0 was used for analyzing the data. In order to use this software all the related pages of the module and the textbook were digitized. These pages were scanned and converted into the text files. Then, the text files were fed into the software for further analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

The comparison of the output of WordSmith analysis for Module (LANC 2050) units and the Essentials of Geology chapters (see Table 1) revealed the number of running words, or tokens, in the textbook chapters (128 031) compared to the module (51 993). The types of the words were also higher in the textbook (8098) than those in the module (6006). The density ratio, that is the proportion of types to tokens, indicates the high intensity or compactness of the materials (Mukundan, 2007; Nation, 1990). The module has a density ratio reading of 11.5 compared to 6.4 of the text. It signifies that the density of the words in the Module (LANC 2050) is higher than the density of words in the Essentials of Geology Textbook chapters. In contrast, the consistency ratio, that is the proportion of tokens to types, is higher for the Essentials of Geology chapters (15.53) as compared to that of the Module (LANC 2050) units (8.71). It reflects the consistency on the introduction of new words in the Essentials of Geology Textbook and Module (LANC 2050). In other words, each new word is introduced after about 16 words interval in the textbook while its introduction is in every 9-word interval for the module. In this regard, the module is considered to be of high density with lower level of consistency interval. The compactness of the Module (LANC 2050) compared to the Essentials of Geology, may make the learning and acquiring of the new words rather difficult to the students. It requires the teacher to focus the attention of the students to these words, although the repetition of the words can help in this regard. Table 1 presents a summary of these findings:

Table 1:

The same pattern was found across the units and chapters of the Module (LANC 2050) and the Essentials of Geology Textbook (see Table 2). It was revealed that the mean density ratio of the module units (23) is much higher than that of the textbook chapters (17.91). It implies that, on average, the occurrence of the different words is more in the module compared to the textbook. This pattern would make the acquisition and learning of the new language more difficult to the students. Similarly, the mean consistency ratio or the interval unit of words for the introduction of each new word is lower (4.41) in the module compared to the textbook (5.67). This low interval in the module

indicates that every new word is introduced after four words, while in the textbook the introduction of each new word is after every six words. Therefore, learning new words would be easier in the pattern revealed in the textbook rather than the module.

Table 2:

In this regard, comparison of the density and consistency ratios across the units of the Module (LANC 2050) shows that Units 2 and 1 would be easier to learn followed by Units 3, 5, 4, and 6, respectively. Likewise, the Essentials of Geology Textbook chapters from the easiest to the most difficult would be chapters 3, 4, 16, 2, 6, 18, 15, 5, 7, 19, and 1, respectively. The best sequence for introducing the units of the module and the chapters of the textbook can be based on the difficulty level of the units or chapters. The more difficult ones would be better presented at the end of the books while bringing the easiest ones to the front. This would facilitate the acquisition of the new language more effectively.

3.1 Frequency range in the Module (LANC 2050) and the Essentials of Geology Textbook

Table 3 and Table 4 demonstrate the frequency range of the words in the Module (LANC 2050) and the Essentials of Geology Textbook. The tables show high numbers of the words belong to the low frequency words in both the module and the textbook. Low frequency words are words that appear only in the frequency range of 1 to 40. On the other hand, the high frequency words (words that appear more than 40 times) are very few in both of them. The number of the words for all the frequency range is more in the textbook than in the module. This is due to the high number of total types in the textbook.

Table 3:

Table 4:

The frequency range shows that very few words are repeated with high frequency, especially in the module. For instance, when 46 words are repeated between the range of 101-1000 times in the module, almost three times more words (149) are repeated in this range in the textbook. When the words are repeated frequently, their acquisition would be easier for the students (Mukundan, 2007; 2007a; 2007b, Nation, 1990; 2001). The same pattern is observed in the frequency range of both the module and the textbook. In order to differentiate what kinds of words comprise the module and the textbook, the researchers selected fifty words from the high frequency a word in their word lists (see Table 5). The selected words are the fifty most frequently used words in both the module and textbook. More function words are found in the module rather than in the textbook.

Table 5:

3.2 Comparability of the words in the Module (LANC 2050) and the Essentials of Geology Textbook

Among the wordlists for the two corpora, 3345 words are found to be comparable or overlap in both the module and the textbook (see Table 6). This comprises about 56% and 40% of the total types of the module and the textbook respectively. The rest includes the words that are different in both corpora. In other words, about 44% of the total types of the module are not found in the textbook. In the same vein, about 60% of the total types of the textbook are not found in the module.

Table 6:

Many of the high frequency content words in the textbook also occur in the module corpus, but with a much lower frequency. To further investigate the types of similar or different words introduced in the module as opposed to the textbook, the 1000 most frequently used specialised content words from both the textbook and module were identified. The specialised content words are words that are outside the GSL and the function words like 'AND', 'THE' and 'A' were removed from the lists as well. The definition used in this study is adapted from Coxhead's (2000) development of Academic Word List (AWL). The proper nouns and abbreviations identified are also removed from the lists. The specialised content words can also be regarded as words which appear very frequently in field-specific texts (Chung & Nation, 2003; Nation, 2001).

The Module (LANC 2050) is supposed to be tailored to the needs of students in the field of geology. Hence, the vocabulary introduced in the module should be almost similar to that of the textbook, especially the most frequently used content words. Appendix A indicates the similar content words which can be found in both the textbook and the module. From the result of the analysis, only 30% of the content words from the module are similar to the content words in the textbooks (considering the top 1,000 most frequently used content words of both materials). Hence, it proves that the module is done intuitively, not considering the important aspect of introduction of specialised geology vocabulary. The results should yield at least a higher percentage if the module is developed from data from

a corpus. After the analysis, the results revealed that the majority of the words that are in the textbook but are not found in the module are related to the technical geology words such as *earthquake, weathering, metamorphic, ions, eruption, volcano, shale, ore, intrusive, slate, richter, cinder, mica, magmatic, pumice, muscovite, chamber*.

3.3 Comparison of Key Words Derived from 'Keyword' Lists (Keyness)

Using Word Smith 5.0, the 'Keyword' function was utilized to generate the keywords list, after comparing with a larger corpus. Nation (2001) states one of the ways to create a word list is through the comparison of the study corpus with a much bigger corpus. The 'Keyword' function in the WordSmith 5.0 programme enables the researchers to create a word list by comparing the target corpora with a reference corpus. Menon (2009) in her study had created keyword lists for the field of English for Science and Technology. Menon (2009) also justified that using the British National Corpus (BNC) as a reference corpus is valid as the size of BNC is at least 5 times or more than the study corpus. In this study, the BNC is definitely much larger (more than five times) than the pedagogical module and the Geology corpora. The size of the BNC is almost 100 million running words as compared with the limited pedagogical corpora of the Module (LANC 2050) (51 993 tokens) and the Essentials of Geology Textbook (128 031 tokens). Hence, using the BNC as the reference corpus in the study is ideal. Only the words with the positive 'keyness' are included in the lists. The analysis results from the Word Smith 5.0 software yield the significant keywords of the Module (LANC 2050) (531 words) and the Essentials of Geology Textbook (1425 words). The words were not categorized into word families as learning words in the lexico-grammar context can yield better results in students' acquisition of the vocabulary (Ward, 1999; 2009; Mudraya, 2006). Out of the 531 keywords found in the Module (LANC 2050), only 155 words (29%) were found to be common with the 1425 keywords of the Geology corpus. The 155 common key words from both the module and the textbook are stipulated in Appendix B. The result shows that the intuitively produced module does not cover most of the essential vocabulary needed when students need to enrol in a Geology course. Knowing more field-specific words enables learners to associate into their discourse community much more effectively (Menon, 2009), hence it would be best for module developers to be informed by data regarding lexicon from analysis of field-specific corpora.

4. Implication and Conclusion

As a result of this research, we now have a limited pedagogic corpus of 1425 words. This would be useful when the Module (LANC 2050) is revised to make it resemble Geology texts commonly encountered by students. This study was conducted to find out the appropriateness of the Module (LANC 2050) as a preparatory ESP course for Geology majors. For this, the corpus-based content analysis of the words for each was explicated and the results were compared and discussed considering different criteria including the frequency of the words, density and consistency ratio, keyness, and coverage of the words.

The evaluation of the in-house produced Module (LANC 2050) revealed that the introduction of essential technical or field-specific words was not effectively executed throughout the module. Hence, it is not able to prepare students for assimilating into their majors. Most of the essential words found in the Essentials of Geology Textbook were non-existent in the Module (LANC 2050). Despite the meticulous process of developing a module, material writers should always take into consideration the essential vocabulary needed by learners which could be done by creating a field-specific corpus. Learners truly need the field-specific vocabulary to function well in their course and prepare them for their discourse community.

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Table 1. Tokens, Types, Density Ratio, and Consistency Ratio in Geology Module (LANC 2050) and Essentials of Geology Textbook

| | Module (LANC 2050) | Essentials of Geology Textbook |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Tokens | 51 993 | 128 031 |
| Types | 5969 | 8243 |
| Density Ratio | 11.5 | 6.4 |
| Consistency Ratio | 8.71 | 15.53 |

Table 2. Number of Tokens, Types, Density Ratio, and Consistency Ratio in the Module (LANC 2050) Units and Essentials of Geology Textbook Chapters

| Source | Tokens (Total words) | Types (Different words) | Density Ratio (Type/token) | Consistency Ratio (Token/type) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Module (LANC 2050) | | | | |
| Unit | | | | |
| 1 | 8460 | 1730 | 20 | 4.89 |
| 2 | 10 927 | 2194 | 20 | 4.98 |
| 3 | 10 320 | 2215 | 21 | 4.66 |
| 4 | 8032 | 1983 | 25 | 4.05 |
| 5 | 7108 | 1674 | 24 | 4.25 |
| 6 | 7146 | 1969 | 28 | 3.63 |
| Mean | 8665 | 1961 | 23 | 4.41 |
| Essentials of Geology Textbook | | | | |
| Chapter | | | | |
| 1 | 10 201 | 2077 | 20 | 4.91 |
| 2 | 10 732 | 1782 | 17 | 6.02 |
| 3 | 10 924 | 1717 | 16 | 6.36 |
| 4 | 15 924 | 2561 | 16 | 6.22 |
| 5 | 10 224 | 1914 | 19 | 5.34 |
| 6 | 11 962 | 2022 | 17 | 5.92 |
| 7 | 8066 | 1527 | 19 | 5.28 |
| 15 | 13 654 | 2426 | 18 | 5.63 |
| 16 | 13 752 | 2279 | 17 | 6.03 |
| 18 | 11 309 | 2006 | 18 | 5.64 |
| 19 | 11 283 | 2255 | 20 | 5.00 |
| Mean | 11 639 | 2051 | 17.91 | 5.67 |

Table 3. The Distribution of Low Frequency Words in the Module (LANC 2050) and the Essentials of Geology Textbook

| Frequency | Number of Words in the Module (LANC 2050) | Number of Words in the Essentials of Geology Textbook |
|-----------|---|---|
| 1 | 2,630 | 3,199 |
| 2 | 1,011 | 1,175 |
| 3 | 499 | 694 |
| 4 | 338 | 437 |
| 5 | 246 | 330 |
| 6 | 185 | 223 |
| 7 | 136 | 204 |
| 8 | 105 | 176 |
| 9 | 103 | 126 |
| 10 | 70 | 114 |
| 11-20 | 358 | 717 |
| 21-30 | 115 | 281 |
| 31-40 | 48 | 170 |

Table 4. The Distribution of High Frequency Words in the Module (LANC 2050) and the Essentials of Geology Textbook

| Frequency Range | Number of Words in the Module (LANC 2050) | Number of Words in the Essentials of Geology Textbook |
|-----------------|---|---|
| 41-50 | 36 | 96 |
| 51-60 | 19 | 83 |
| 61-70 | 17 | 44 |
| 71-80 | 13 | 33 |
| 81-90 | 17 | 34 |
| 91-100 | 8 | 25 |
| 101 – 1000 | 46 | 149 |
| 1001 – 3600 | 6 | 8 |
| 3700 - 8200 | 0 | 2 |

Table 5. The first fifty high frequency words in the Module (LANC 2050) and the Essentials of Geology Textbook

| No. | Module | Textbook | No. | Module | Textbook |
|-----|--------|----------|-----|--------|-------------|
| 1 | the | the | 26 | will | have |
| 2 | of | of | 27 | your | most |
| 3 | and | and | 28 | one | minerals |
| 4 | a | a | 29 | at | when |
| 5 | to | in | 30 | not | into |
| 6 | in | is | 31 | he | was |
| 7 | is | that | 32 | task | they |
| 8 | that | are | 33 | write | earth |
| 9 | are | as | 34 | earth | can |
| 10 | it | by | 35 | but | more |
| 11 | on | rocks | 36 | what | not |
| 12 | for | from | 37 | when | time |
| 13 | as | this | 38 | text | magma |
| 14 | from | figure | 39 | these | than |
| 15 | you | rock | 40 | about | other |
| 16 | be | for | 41 | his | because |
| 17 | by | with | 42 | which | some |
| 18 | was | it | 43 | notes | one |
| 19 | or | an | 44 | other | plate |
| 20 | have | or | 45 | has | earth's |
| 21 | with | these | 46 | were | sedimentary |
| 22 | can | be | 47 | been | called |
| 23 | they | on | 48 | used | mineral |
| 24 | this | at | 49 | there | years |
| 25 | an | which | 50 | space | their |

Table 6: The Number of Similar and Different Types of Words and Their Percentage in the Module (LANC 2050) and the Essentials of Geology Textbook

| Wordlist | Similar words (%) | Different words (%) | Total types (%) |
|----------|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Module | 3345 (56%) | 2624 (44%) | 5969 (100%) |
| Textbook | 3345 (41%) | 4898 (59%) | 8243 (100%) |

Appendices/Supplementary Materials:

Appendix A: Similar Specialised Content Words in Both Corpora

| Words | Frequency in the Module (LANC 2050) | Frequency in the Essentials of Geology Textbook |
|---------------|--|---|
| ACCUMULATE | 5 | 17 |
| ACCUMULATED | 4 | 7 |
| ACCURATE | 4 | 9 |
| ACID | 6 | 32 |
| AFFECT | 2 | 8 |
| AFFECTED | 4 | 6 |
| AFFECTS | 2 | 6 |
| AFRICA | 3 | 42 |
| AID | 2 | 20 |
| ALGAE | 2 | 12 |
| ALPHA | 8 | 15 |
| ALTERED | 2 | 17 |
| ALUMINUM | 2 | 41 |
| AMERICA | 5 | 80 |
| APPARENT | 3 | 12 |
| APPROPRIATE | 18 | 8 |
| APPROXIMATELY | 13 | 14 |
| AREA | 15 | 78 |
| AREAS | 11 | 52 |
| ATMOSPHERE | 56 | 80 |
| ATOM | 16 | 31 |
| ATOMIC | 18 | 46 |
| ATOMS | 23 | 72 |
| ATTRIBUTED | 2 | 6 |
| AVAILABLE | 7 | 23 |
| AXIS | 2 | 14 |

| | | |
|--------------|----|-----|
| BACTERIA | 9 | 11 |
| BASALT | 5 | 41 |
| BEDROCK | 3 | 14 |
| BETA | 3 | 13 |
| BIOLOGICAL | 10 | 25 |
| BOMBS | 2 | 10 |
| BRIEF | 18 | 18 |
| CAPABLE | 2 | 11 |
| CARBON | 21 | 91 |
| CASTS | 2 | 8 |
| CATEGORY | 2 | 6 |
| CHEMICAL | 44 | 210 |
| CLIMATE | 7 | 43 |
| CLIMATIC | 2 | 12 |
| CLUES | 4 | 17 |
| COM | 12 | 30 |
| COMPACT | 2 | 6 |
| COMPLEX | 9 | 47 |
| COMPONENTS | 7 | 28 |
| COMPOUNDS | 11 | 23 |
| CONCEPT | 8 | 8 |
| CONCEPTS | 2 | 12 |
| CONCLUDE | 3 | 8 |
| CONSIDERABLE | 4 | 19 |
| CONSIST | 3 | 28 |
| CONSISTING | 4 | 20 |
| CONSISTS | 4 | 38 |
| CONSTANT | 6 | 8 |
| CONSTANTLY | 4 | 7 |
| CONSTRUCTION | 6 | 12 |
| CONTACT | 5 | 28 |
| CONTINENTAL | 16 | 167 |
| CONTINENTS | 5 | 77 |
| CONVECTION | 3 | 23 |
| CORE | 14 | 70 |
| COURTESY | 3 | 20 |
| CRATER | 13 | 30 |
| CREATE | 17 | 22 |
| CREATED | 27 | 50 |
| CREATING | 5 | 17 |
| CRETACEOUS | 6 | 19 |
| CRUST | 31 | 185 |
| CRYSTAL | 8 | 33 |
| CRYSTALLINE | 4 | 40 |
| CRYSTALS | 11 | 98 |

| | | |
|---------------|----|-----|
| CUBIC | 4 | 12 |
| CURRENTS | 3 | 11 |
| DATA | 30 | 39 |
| DEBRIS | 3 | 31 |
| DECADES | 5 | 10 |
| DEFINITE | 4 | 11 |
| DENSE | 3 | 35 |
| DENSITY | 6 | 17 |
| DEPOSITED | 10 | 72 |
| DEPOSITION | 3 | 36 |
| DEPOSITS | 6 | 113 |
| DERIVED | 11 | 27 |
| DESIGNED | 9 | 7 |
| DIAGRAM | 3 | 13 |
| DIAGRAMS | 3 | 6 |
| DIAMETER | 11 | 10 |
| DINOSAURS | 48 | 36 |
| DIOXIDE | 10 | 41 |
| DISSOLVED | 3 | 37 |
| DISTINCT | 4 | 17 |
| DRIFT | 7 | 32 |
| EARTH'S | 3 | 268 |
| ELECTRONS | 6 | 62 |
| ELEMENT | 5 | 33 |
| ELEMENTS | 22 | 81 |
| EMISSION | 6 | 13 |
| EMIT | 3 | 14 |
| EMITTED | 5 | 16 |
| ENERGY | 48 | 94 |
| ENGLAND | 7 | 7 |
| ENVIRONMENT | 18 | 81 |
| ENVIRONMENTAL | 5 | 22 |
| EQUIVALENT | 3 | 14 |
| ERA | 5 | 57 |
| ERAS | 4 | 11 |
| ESTABLISH | 6 | 11 |
| ESTIMATED | 3 | 18 |
| EUROPE | 5 | 18 |
| EVENTUALLY | 9 | 69 |
| EVIDENCE | 29 | 81 |
| EVIDENT | 3 | 6 |
| EVOLUTION | 3 | 17 |
| EVOLVED | 5 | 24 |
| EXPAND | 9 | 13 |
| EXPOSED | 7 | 53 |

| | | |
|-------------|----|-----|
| EXPOSURE | 9 | 14 |
| EXTINCT | 7 | 14 |
| EXTINCTION | 12 | 23 |
| EXTRACT | 9 | 6 |
| EXTRACTED | 4 | 7 |
| FEATURES | 5 | 40 |
| FINAL | 8 | 7 |
| FINALLY | 5 | 11 |
| FLUID | 4 | 50 |
| FLUIDS | 5 | 27 |
| FOCUS | 3 | 50 |
| FOSSIL | 23 | 66 |
| FOSSILS | 40 | 98 |
| FRAGMENTS | 6 | 73 |
| FUEL | 4 | 7 |
| FUNDAMENTAL | 4 | 9 |
| FURTHERMORE | 4 | 14 |
| GASEOUS | 3 | 12 |
| GENERATE | 9 | 45 |
| GENERATED | 3 | 41 |
| GEOLOGIC | 3 | 134 |
| GEOLOGICAL | 19 | 42 |
| GEOLOGIST | 10 | 15 |
| GEOLOGISTS | 13 | 76 |
| GEOLOGY | 12 | 101 |
| GIANT | 7 | 7 |
| GLOBAL | 3 | 20 |
| GLOBE | 6 | 10 |
| GRAVITY | 20 | 30 |
| GROUNDWATER | 3 | 9 |
| HUGE | 12 | 26 |
| HYDROGEN | 13 | 15 |
| IDENTIFIED | 12 | 29 |
| IDENTIFY | 10 | 13 |
| IDENTIFYING | 5 | 7 |
| IGNEOUS | 8 | 236 |
| IMAGE | 3 | 7 |
| IMPACT | 18 | 42 |
| INDEX | 3 | 10 |
| INDIVIDUAL | 7 | 22 |
| INITIAL | 10 | 7 |
| INTERNET | 16 | 22 |
| INVOLVED | 3 | 8 |
| ISOTOPES | 4 | 29 |
| KILOMETERS | 5 | 155 |

| | | |
|-------------|----|-----|
| LABORATORY | 13 | 8 |
| LANDFORMS | 4 | 10 |
| LAVA | 7 | 150 |
| LAVAS | 7 | 38 |
| LAYER | 21 | 85 |
| LAYERS | 18 | 106 |
| LIMESTONE | 6 | 58 |
| LINKED | 4 | 7 |
| LOCATION | 3 | 18 |
| LOCATIONS | 4 | 22 |
| MAGMA | 4 | 303 |
| MAGNETIC | 13 | 53 |
| MAJOR | 6 | 124 |
| MANTLE | 6 | 195 |
| MARGIN | 3 | 17 |
| MATRIX | 3 | 11 |
| MATURE | 4 | 9 |
| METALLIC | 3 | 30 |
| METEORITES | 21 | 11 |
| METER | 3 | 11 |
| METERS | 10 | 81 |
| METHOD | 5 | 22 |
| METHODS | 9 | 18 |
| MICROSCOPIC | 10 | 9 |
| MINERALOGY | 3 | 12 |
| MODIFIED | 13 | 7 |
| MOLTEN | 10 | 34 |
| NEGATIVELY | 3 | 7 |
| NEUTRAL | 4 | 14 |
| NEUTRON | 4 | 9 |
| NEUTRONS | 12 | 25 |
| NITROGEN | 19 | 13 |
| NORMAL | 4 | 15 |
| NUCLEI | 10 | 22 |
| NUCLEUS | 21 | 48 |
| OBTAINED | 7 | 16 |
| OBVIOUS | 3 | 15 |
| OCCUR | 4 | 109 |
| OCCURRED | 9 | 63 |
| OCCURS | 4 | 88 |
| OCEANIC | 15 | 138 |
| ORGANIC | 3 | 49 |
| ORGANISMS | 21 | 67 |
| OXYGEN | 22 | 96 |
| PARALLEL | 3 | 29 |

| | | |
|---------------|----|-----|
| PERCENT | 5 | 87 |
| PERIOD | 17 | 108 |
| PERIODS | 8 | 35 |
| PHENOMENA | 7 | 7 |
| PHYSICAL | 10 | 64 |
| PLANET | 49 | 51 |
| PLANETS | 33 | 20 |
| POSITIVE | 7 | 13 |
| POSITIVELY | 4 | 8 |
| PREHISTORIC | 3 | 8 |
| PRIMARY | 7 | 31 |
| PRIMITIVE | 3 | 17 |
| PROCESS | 23 | 95 |
| PROCESSES | 6 | 140 |
| PROTON | 3 | 14 |
| PROTONS | 6 | 38 |
| QUARTZ | 5 | 100 |
| RADIATION | 24 | 8 |
| RADIOACTIVE | 12 | 46 |
| RADIOACTIVITY | 6 | 19 |
| RANGE | 5 | 59 |
| REACTION | 10 | 33 |
| REACTIONS | 5 | 11 |
| REGION | 7 | 45 |
| REGIONS | 6 | 54 |
| RELEASE | 3 | 7 |
| RELEASED | 12 | 22 |
| REMOVAL | 3 | 7 |
| REMOVED | 6 | 31 |
| REQUIRE | 4 | 7 |
| RESEARCH | 45 | 7 |
| RESEARCHERS | 4 | 29 |
| RESERVOIR | 11 | 9 |
| RESISTANT | 7 | 18 |
| RIGID | 3 | 19 |
| ROLE | 5 | 23 |
| SECTION | 36 | 47 |
| SEDIMENTARY | 17 | 266 |
| SEDIMENTS | 3 | 50 |
| SEISMIC | 4 | 54 |
| SEQUENCE | 7 | 26 |
| SERIES | 4 | 43 |
| SIGNIFICANT | 5 | 39 |
| SILICA | 5 | 99 |
| SILICON | 6 | 57 |

| | | |
|-------------|-----|-----|
| SIMILAR | 15 | 75 |
| SITE | 7 | 32 |
| SITES | 6 | 15 |
| SODIUM | 3 | 52 |
| SOLAR | 26 | 18 |
| SOURCE | 48 | 59 |
| SOURCES | 20 | 19 |
| SPECIES | 32 | 12 |
| SPECIFIC | 13 | 33 |
| SPHERICAL | 3 | 10 |
| STABLE | 6 | 50 |
| STRATA | 6 | 46 |
| STRUCTURE | 21 | 107 |
| STRUCTURES | 4 | 112 |
| SUCCESSION | 5 | 8 |
| SUCCESSIVE | 3 | 12 |
| SUMMARY | 58 | 24 |
| SURVIVE | 9 | 7 |
| SUSPENDED | 3 | 8 |
| TASK | 154 | 7 |
| TECHNIQUES | 9 | 13 |
| TECTONIC | 10 | 11 |
| TECTONICS | 4 | 65 |
| TERTIARY | 5 | 20 |
| THEORIES | 11 | 8 |
| THEORY | 64 | 43 |
| THERMAL | 4 | 11 |
| TINY | 7 | 23 |
| TOPIC | 10 | 7 |
| TRACE | 4 | 16 |
| TRACES | 3 | 8 |
| TRANSFER | 4 | 7 |
| TRANSPORT | 4 | 23 |
| TRANSPORTED | 3 | 22 |
| UNDERGROUND | 3 | 14 |
| UNSTABLE | 6 | 19 |
| URANIUM | 14 | 28 |
| VARIES | 3 | 8 |
| VAST | 6 | 33 |
| VEGETATION | 4 | 24 |
| VELOCITY | 3 | 8 |
| VISCOSITY | 4 | 15 |
| VITAL | 5 | 8 |
| VOLCANIC | 5 | 235 |
| VOLCANOES | 13 | 105 |

| | | |
|------------|---|----|
| VOLUME | 3 | 33 |
| WEAKER | 3 | 7 |
| WEB | 5 | 39 |
| WEBSITE | 6 | 11 |
| WEGENER | 3 | 25 |
| WIDESPREAD | 3 | 13 |
| WORLDWIDE | 3 | 15 |

Appendix B: Similar Common Keywords Found in Both the Module LANC (2050) and the Essentials of Geology Textbook

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| ALPHA | COMPOSED | DISTANCES |
| ANIMALS | COMPOSITION | EACH |
| APATOSAURUS | COMPOUNDS | EARTH |
| ARE | CONTAIN | ELECTRICAL |
| ATMOSPHERE | CONTAINS | ELEMENTS |
| ATOM | CONTINENTAL | EMITTED |
| ATOMIC | COOLED | ENERGY |
| ATOMS | CORE | ERAS |
| BASALT | CRATER | EXAMPLES |
| BELOW | CREATED | EXTINCT |
| BILLION | CRETACEOUS | EXTINCTION |
| BIOLOGICAL | CRUST | FORM |
| CALLED | CRYSTALS | FORMED |
| CARBON | DECAY | FORMS |
| CHARACTERISTICS | DEPOSITED | FOSSIL |
| CHEMICAL | DIFFERENT | FOSSILS |
| CLAY | DINOSAURS | FOUND |
| COM | DIOXIDE | FROM |
| GAS | MELTS | RADIOACTIVITY |
| GASES | METALS | RESISTANT |
| GEOLOGIC | METEORITES | ROCK |
| GEOLOGICAL | METERS | ROCKS |
| GEOLOGIST | MICROSCOPIC | SAMPLES |
| GEOLOGISTS | MILLION | SCIENTIFIC |
| GEOLOGY | MINERAL | SCIENTISTS |
| GRAVITY | MINERALS | SEA |
| HEAT | MOLTEN | SEDIMENTARY |
| HEATED | MOTION | SEVERAL |
| HELIUM | NATURAL | SHAPE |
| HTTP | NEUTRONS | SILICA |
| HUMANS | NITROGEN | SOIL |
| HYDROGEN | NUCLEI | SOLAR |
| ICE | NUCLEUS | SOLID |
| IGNEOUS | OCEANIC | SOURCE |
| IMPACT | OF | STRATA |
| INTERNET | ORBITING | SUMMARY |
| IRON | ORGANISMS | SURFACE |
| ISOTOPES | ORIGIN | TECTONIC |
| KILOMETERS | OXYGEN | TEMPERATURE |
| KNOWN | PALEONTOLOGISTS | TEMPERATURES |
| LANDFORMS | PARTICLES | THEORY |
| LAVA | PLANET | THESE |
| LAVAS | PLANETS | THORIUM |
| LAYER | PLANT | TYPES |
| LAYERS | PLANTS | URANIUM |
| LIFE | PLATE | VAPOR |
| LIQUID | PLATES | VOLCANOES |
| MAGNETIC | PRODUCE | WATER |
| MANTLE | PROPERTIES | WEBSITE |
| MASS | PROTONS | WEGENER |
| MATERIAL | QUARTZ | YEARS |
| MATERIALS | RADIOACTIVE | |

Design, Application, and Factor Structure of a Cultural Capital Questionnaire: Predicting Foreign Language Attributions and Achievement

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Abstract

Culture, as a variable which explains a great part of individual differences, has proved to be effective in defining the factors to which individuals ascribe their success or failure. This study introduced a completely new perspective to the relationship between culture and foreign language attributions by making reference to Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital. To this aim, a questionnaire for measuring cultural capital was designed, applied, and validated. The Factorability of the intercorrelation matrix was measured by two tests, namely, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity the results of which indicated that the factor model was appropriate ($0.65, p < .05$). Moreover, the results of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) based on the performance of 476 undergraduate university students yielded a two-factor solution of Textual literacy and Musical literacy. Moreover, the survey explored the relationship between the new factors and learners' foreign language attributions as measured by the Language Achievement Attribution Scale (LAAS) and the Causal Dimension Scale (CDS-II). Results from Pearson product-moment correlation revealed that the total score for cultural capital was significantly related to learners' ability, effort, and personal attributions. In order to investigate the role of cultural capital in predicting learners' foreign language achievement, Multiple Linear Regression Analysis was conducted. Results revealed that musical literacy was the best predictor of the listening and speaking skills, whereas reading, writing, and grammar were mostly predicted by learners' textual literacy. At the end, statistical results were discussed, and implications for English language teaching were provided.

Keywords: Exploratory factor analysis, Cultural capital, Attributions, Achievement, Correlation analysis, Regression analysis

1. Introduction

The term 'cultural capital' has been approached several times by professionals in educational sociology. The sociology of education has been defined as the study of individual and his interaction with his cultural environment (Chandra & Sharma, 2004). Bourdieu (1990) describes the role of educational sociology as explaining the relations between cultural reproduction and social reproduction; that is, the educational system reproduces the structure of power relationships that exists between different classes in society by re-producing the structure of cultural capital distribution among different classes. Cultural capital has proved to be an important factor in students' progress in different areas of academic achievement such as school grades (DiMaggio, 1982; Sullivan, 2001), educational attainment (Nakhaie & Curtis, 1998; De Graaf, De Graaf, & Kraaykamp, 2000; Merenluoto, 2009; Khodadady & Zabihi, 2011; Pishghadam, Noghani, & Zabihi, in press), and student persistence (Sandefur, Meier, & Hernandez, 1999; Wells, 2008).

To the researcher's best knowledge, no study has to date explored the relationship between cultural capital and EFL learners' foreign language attributions and achievement. Thus in this paper, the researcher has attempted to examine

the relationship between EFL students' cultural capital and their achievement scores in English language proficiency courses, namely, listening, speaking, reading, writing, and grammar. Moreover, the relationship between learners' cultural capital and their attributions for success and failure was examined. To these ends, the current study attempted to construct and validate a questionnaire of cultural capital through its application to EFL learners in the context of Iran. In this study, therefore, the researcher sought to find out answers to the questions: "What are the reliability and validity of the Cultural Capital Questionnaire when examined with EFL students?" And next, "Is there any significant relationship between EFL learners' cultural capital and their foreign language attributions and achievement?"

2. Review of the literature

2.1 Cultural capital in education

Cultural capital exists in three forms, namely, *embodied state* (long-lasting dispositions of body and mind), *objectified state* (cultural goods such as pictures, paintings, books, monuments, instruments, writings, machines, dictionaries, etc.), and *institutionalized state* (academic qualifications and degrees) (Bourdieu, 1986).

In his scientific construction of social space, Bourdieu (1996) regards the statistical distribution of economic and cultural capital as two differentiation principles which inscribe social agents or groups in the social space. The degree to which the individuals and groups differ from, or are similar to, each other is determined by their distance or proximity, with regard to different forms of capital they possess. "The closer they are to one another, the more they share in those two dimensions (commonalities), and the more remote they are from one another, the lesser they have in common" (pp. 13-4).

As Bourdieu and Johnson (1993, p. 21-27) put it, the process of culture acquisition is a cumulative process in the sense that "cultural capital attracts cultural capital." The family milieu, in which the initial necessary culture is inculcated in its members (children), plays the role of re-producing the cultural advantages for the children. So, although the owners of cultural competence partly owe its possession to school training, family inheritance is the main factor in determining the extent to which a child has acquired a particular cultural competence; and since not all families have the capacity to bequeath sufficient amount of cultural capital to their children (inequality among different social classes), similarly, not all children have the ability to acquire a cultural competence, not even through school training; however, the educational system treats these inequalities as though they were natural inequalities, while ignoring the individuals' social and cultural conditions of their families. So, it can be fairly said that school transforms the inequalities of culture to inequalities of success, while denying the link between culture and education. In their attempts to find an answer to the question "For whom does the school bell toll?", Beaulieu, Israel, Hartless, and Dyk (2001) conducted a study to examine the role of family, school, and community on students' educational achievement. They concluded that "... the school bell tolls for those students who have access to, and who actively engage in caring and guiding environments not only in the home, but also with other adults located with the school and broader community settings" (p. 127).

There is a plethora of empirical studies which aimed to investigate the role of cultural capital in students' academic success (DiMaggio, 1982; Nakhaie & Curtis, 1998; Sandefur, Meier, & Hernandez, 1999; De Graaf, De Graaf, & Kraaykamp, 2000; Sullivan, 2001; Dumais, 2002; Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Wells, 2008; Merenluoto, 2009; Tramonte & Willms, 2010; Khodadady & Zabihi, 2011; Pishghadam, Noghani, & Zabihi, in press). Based on students' self-reports of involvement in art, music, and literature, DiMaggio (1982) showed that cultural capital had a significant impact on students' high school grades. Nakhaie and Curtis (1998) studied the effect of parents' educational level (institutionalized state of cultural capital) on students' educational attainment and concluded that mothers' and fathers' education levels had strong positive relationships with children's educational attainment. Sandefur, Meier, and Hernandez (1999) also found that there is a positive relationship between parental education (i.e., a subpart of cultural capital) and students' likelihood of finishing high school, going on to post-secondary school and initially attending a four year college. In another study, De Graaf, De Graaf, and Kraaykamp (2000) showed that parental reading behavior (as one aspect of parental cultural capital) affects children's educational attainment in Netherlands. Sullivan (2001) investigated the impact of cultural capital on grades achieved in the GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) examinations. He found out that parents' cultural capital was a significant determinant of students' performance. In an attempt to examine the effect of cultural capital on school success with regard to gender differences, Dumais (2002) found out that cultural capital has a more positive and more significant influence on the grades of female students than on the male counterpart. Using ethnographic data, Lareau and Weininger (2003) showed how an African-American middle-class family exhibited cultural capital in a way that an African-American family below the poverty level did not; while the middle-class mother knew how to *fight for* her child, the working-class mother was unable to cope with the academic discourse because it was difficult for her to

understand (e.g., because the teacher often used jargons such as “word attack skills” and “written comprehension”). Wells’ (2008) investigation on college students evidenced that cultural capital had a positive effect on student persistence in postsecondary education. Based on a survey carried out among university students in Finland, Merenluoto (2009) revealed that cultural capital had a positive effect on students’ success and attainment in higher education. In another study, Tramonte and Willms (2010) distinguished between static cultural capital (i.e., the highbrow activities and practices of parents) and dynamic cultural capital (i.e., cultural interactions and communication between children and their parents). The results showed that dynamic cultural capital had stronger effects than static cultural capital on students’ schooling outcomes. In a recent study, Pishghadam, Noghani, and Zabihi (in press) observed that two subscales of cultural capital, i.e. cultural competence and literacy, were predictive of EFL learners’ English language grades.

2.2 Attribution theory and cultural capital

Developed by Weiner (1985), Attribution Theory is an approach to motivation which constituted a great part of research on student motivation in the 1980s (Dörnyei, 2005). It focuses on people’s beliefs about themselves and how they explain their perceived successes and failures. The theory, therefore, lies within the constructivist framework and deals with the ways by which individuals construct their own views and meanings from the world around them (Williams & Burden, 1997). It relates to motivation in the sense that attributions of success and failure can influence people’s motivation to tackle future tasks (Jarvis, 2005). For example, the extent to which a person attributes failure to lack of ability or to lack of effort affects that person’s future actions (Williams & Burden, 1997). Weiner (1986) introduces four sets of attributions, namely ability, effort, task difficulty, and luck, to which people tend to hang on their perception of success and failure. These attribution factors are related to three dimensions of locus (internal versus external), stability, and controllability. Aptitude, for instance, is internal, stable, and uncontrollable, while chance is external, unstable, and uncontrollable (Weiner, 2004).

Only a few studies have been conducted so far to explore learners’ attributions in the area of learning a second or foreign language (Tsi, 2000; Williams & Burden, 1997; Williams, Burden, & Al-Baharna, 2001; Williams, Burden, Poulet, & Maun, 2004). These studies mostly focus on identifying second or foreign language learners’ attributions for success and failure. Few of them, however, have focused on the extent to which other factors can affect individuals’ attributions for success and failure in learning a foreign language. Cultural differences, for example, have proved to be effective in defining the factors to which individuals ascribe their success or failure (Brown, Gray, & Ferrara, 2005; Yang, 2009). Cultural capital, as a sociological variable which explains a great part of individual differences, is a case in point. However, no study, to the researcher’s best knowledge, has been done to date to investigate the role of cultural capital in foreign language learners’ attributions for success and failure.

2.3 Purpose of the present study

The present study attempted to construct and validate a questionnaire of cultural capital through investigating the role of EFL learners’ cultural capital in their attributions for success and failure in learning a foreign language and also their foreign language achievement. Therefore, this research was conducted to find out answers to the following questions:

Q1: What are the reliability and validity of the 12-item cultural capital questionnaire?

Q2: What are the best predictors of cultural capital in foreign language achievement?

Q3: Is there any significant relationship between cultural capital and EFL learners’ attributions?

3. Method

3.1 Participants

A sample of 476 university students, 325 female and 151 male, participated in the present study. They studied English Language and Literature (n = 257, 54.0%), Teaching English as a Foreign Language (n = 149, 31.3%), and English Translation (n = 70, 14.7%) at three universities in Mashhad, a city in north-eastern Iran. The participants’ age ranged from 19 and 29 (M= 21.57, SD= 1.71). They all had passed their language proficiency courses, namely, Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Grammar in their respective majors. No distinction was made between students majoring in English literature, teaching English, or translation and also between evening and day students.

3.2 Instrumentation

3.2.1 Causal Dimension Scale (CDS-II)

Developed by McAuley, Duncan, and Russell (1992), this questionnaire was designed to measure causal attributions for performance. It comprises 12 items measuring four attribution dimensions, namely, locus of causality, stability, personal control, and external control that are scored on a 9-point Likert-scale. Subscales scores can range from 3 to 27, with higher values representing attributions that are more internal, stable, personally controllable, and externally

controllable. The reliability estimates for the four dimensions are as follows: locus of causality, $r = .60$ to $.71$; stability, $r = .66$ to $.68$; external control, $r = .71$ to $.92$; personal control, $r = .72$ to $.90$ (McAuley, Duncan, & Russell, 1992). In the present study, Cronbach Alpha estimated the reliability of the whole items as $.81$.

3.2.2 Language Achievement Attribution Scale (LAAS)

The questionnaire was developed by Hsieh and Schallert (2008) to measure causal attributions for success and failure in language achievement. This self-report instrument comprises eight questions that are scored on a 6-point Likert-scale. It measures six subscales of ability, effort, task difficulty, luck, mood, and teacher. Because each subscale was measured by only one item and because each item in the questionnaire was so different from the other, it does not make sense to measure the internal consistency of this questionnaire.

3.2.3 The newly designed 12-item Cultural Capital Questionnaire (CC-12)

In order to measure the participants' levels of cultural capital, the researcher designed a questionnaire. Since, to the researcher's best knowledge, nobody has designed a questionnaire of cultural capital that takes a comprehensive account of cultural capital indicators, the questionnaire was first constructed, piloted and administered to EFL learners (see Appendix).

3.3 Procedures

To design the questionnaire, the researchers elicited the indicators of cultural capital from a collection of previous studies (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). Joint consultations were held to make the best items out of the previously made checklist and also to revise the items. The questionnaire comprises 12 items. The items are scored according to a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree". The questionnaire was distributed among 476 EFL students from three universities in Mashhad, a city in northeast Iran. The questionnaire was administered to them during class hours and they were asked to fill out the questionnaire.

3.3.1 Data Analysis

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was measured with the Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate. To validate the questionnaire, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used. First, PCA extracted the underlying factors by calculating the eigenvalues of the matrix greater than 1.0. For conducting factor rotation, Varimax (orthogonal rotation) with Kaiser Criterion was used. The result was a rotated component matrix and a transformation matrix. The rotated component matrix indicated the variables loaded on each factor so that the researcher came up with the new factors.

Data were processed with SPSS 16 program. Cultural capital data were matched with the students' academic records in language proficiency courses and also their attributional tendencies. The researcher performed Multiple Linear Regression Analyses with a Stepwise Method to detect the best predictors in foreign language achievement in terms of cultural capital scores.

4. Results

4.1 Reliability and construct validity of the 12-item Cultural Capital Questionnaire (CC-12)

Initially, Cronbach Alpha estimated the reliability of the whole items as 0.70. Next, the Factorability of the intercorrelation matrix was measured by two tests, namely, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The results obtained from the two tests (0.65 , $p < .05$) indicated that the factor model was appropriate (Table 1).

The construct validity of the Cultural Capital Questionnaire was examined through Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). PCA extracted 4 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 which accounted for 59.1% of the variance. Results from the Scree Test showed that a two-factor solution might lead to a better grouping of the items in the questionnaire. The researcher, then, inspected orthogonal rotation. The result of Varimax with Kaiser Normalization was a rotated component matrix. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 2. The results indicated that the two components each consisted of 6 items.

Finally, the researcher analyzed the items comprising each factor and named the two components as *Textual literacy* and *Musical literacy*. Items representing each factor are displayed in Tables 2 and 3, and the validated questionnaire is given in Table 7.

4.2 Correlations between cultural capital and components of learners' attributions

To see whether there is any significant relationship between learners' cultural capital and foreign language attributions, Pearson product-moment correlation was applied to the data. The results indicated that there is a significant positive correlation between cultural capital and ability attributions ($r = 0.327$, $p < 0.01$), effort

attributions ($r = 0.304$, $p < 0.01$), internal attributions ($r = 0.152$, $p < 0.01$), stable attributions ($r = 0.144$, $p < 0.01$), and personal attributions ($r = 0.092$, $p < 0.05$). On the other hand, a negative relationship was found between cultural capital scores and learners' luck ($r = -0.166$, $p < 0.01$) and external attributions ($r = -0.155$, $p < 0.01$) (Table 4).

4.3 Results from bivariate correlations

To examine whether there is any significant correlation between learners' cultural capital and foreign language skills achievement, Pearson product-moment correlation was employed. The results revealed that there is a significant correlation between musical literacy and listening ($r = 0.396$, $p < 0.01$), speaking ($r = 0.379$, $p < 0.01$), reading ($r = 0.145$, $p < 0.01$), and writing ($r = 0.124$, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, significant correlations were found between textual literacy, as another component of cultural capital, and listening ($r = 0.250$, $p < 0.01$), speaking ($r = 0.362$, $p < 0.01$), reading ($r = 0.357$, $p < 0.01$), writing ($r = 0.322$, $p < 0.01$), and grammar ($r = 0.337$, $p < 0.01$) (Table 5).

4.4 Regression coefficients predicting foreign language skills

To further analyze the data, regression analysis was conducted. Table 6 presents the results for language proficiency course grades being regressed on the variables of interest in this study (musical and textual literacy). The results reveal which variables are important in predicting achievement of foreign language skills. The listening skill explained 17% of the total variance, (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.17$, $p < .05$) using a combination of musical literacy and textual literacy. Having high levels of these two types of literacy was the best predictor of high scores in the listening skill. Likewise, the speaking skill had 21% of the total variance, (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.21$, $p < .05$) using a combination of musical literacy and textual literacy. On the other hand, reading, writing, and grammar explained 12% (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.17$, $p < .05$), 10% (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.17$, $p < .05$), and 11% (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.17$, $p < .05$) of the total variance, respectively, with textual literacy as the only variable which entered the regression model. Having high levels of textual literacy was the best predictor of high scores in reading, writing, and grammar. These findings are presented in Table 6.

5. Discussion and conclusions

5.1 Validation of the questionnaire

This study sought to examine, in the first place, the reliability and validity of the 12-item cultural capital questionnaire. The results of this analysis were used to name each factor. *Textual Literacy* is the label for the first factor which consists of 6 items. As it is shown in Appendix A, items 2 and 9 ask learners whether they enjoy reading (general reading and reading literature); item 5 measures learners' knowledge about literature; items 7 and 11 ask learners if they frequently buy/borrow books and also if they have lots of books at home; item 10 refers to learners' parents and if they used to encourage their children to read. The second factor is called *Musical Literacy*, and refers to reading the pitches, rhythms, and also the meaning of music. This factor consists of 6 items. Items 1 and 8 ask learners' if they like to attend symphony concerts and if they enjoy listening to classical music, respectively; Item 4 asks if the learner knows all famous music composers; While items 6 refers to the frequency of learner's visiting museums, theaters, or attending concerts, item 12 asks whether the learner used to take art or music classes outside school; and item 3 measures learners' self-image and asks whether they think they are cultured because they understand music well.

5.2 Application of the questionnaire

5.2.1 Relationship between cultural capital and foreign language attributions

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' cultural capital and their foreign language attributions. From the results of the correlation analyses, cultural capital positively correlated with ability, effort, internal, stable, and personal attributions. In other words, those learners who possessed higher levels of cultural capital attributed their successes and failures in learning a foreign language to more internal, stable, and personal factors. On the other hand, luck and external attributions were negatively correlated with cultural capital. These findings indicate that possession of cultural capital is positively correlated with the extent to which learners feel responsible for the outcome of the tests they take. As other studies have shown, learners' taking responsibility for their success and failure in turn leads to higher levels of achievement (e.g. Hsieh, 2004; Hsieh & Schallert, 2008; Pishghadam & Zabihi, 2011). It is thus recommended that English teachers remind learners that learners are responsible for the successful or unsuccessful outcomes.

5.2.2 Prediction of English language skills achievement

The present study sought to investigate if there was any relationship between Iranian EFL learners' cultural capital and their achievement of foreign language skills. As stated earlier, Bourdieu puts emphasis on the role of family in

initially providing children with cultural capital. According to Bourdieu and Johnson (1993, pp. 21-27), family inheritance is the main factor in determining the extent to which a child has acquired a particular cultural competence. Therefore, it can be fairly said that family plays a significant role in learners' achievement of a foreign language through its taking control of and providing cultural resources (musical and textual) as well as cultural activities that set the scene for learning another language along with the mother tongue.

The results obtained in the current study may be fruitful for understanding better the ways in which parents and teachers can help EFL learners promote their academic performance. With regards to Listening and Speaking, musical literacy was the variable which proved most important in promoting foreign language achievement. This means that those who attend music classes, theatres, and concerts more frequently are more successful in the listening and speaking skills. Nino (2010), likewise, showed that music improved foreign language learners' oral performance. Music fruition is regarded as an important technique in second language classrooms from a theoretical standpoint. Both Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis and Gardner's (1993) theory of Multiple Intelligences encourage the use of music in second language classrooms.

On the other hand, Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Grammar are mostly predicted by students' textual literacy. This finding is quite in line with Bourdieu's emphasis on the important role of school _ where textual literacy is expected to be developed _ as the second source of providing and appropriating cultural capital (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993). English teachers should be familiar with the cultural goods and resources such as different books and dictionaries, multi-purpose audio and visual softwares, and different English language testing services. They should also try to enhance their learners' cultural awareness. To this end, however, teachers should first try to improve their own cultural capital.

Literacy, musical or textual, was found to be a highly significant factor in explaining foreign language achievement. Literacy is regarded as a social practice (McKay & Hornberger, 1996, p. 438) and it is not only achieved by individuals, but also it can be obtained at schools, in families (family literacy), in the workplace, etc. (Kern, 2000, p. 24). Literacy is also related to power. Having recognized this, McKay and Hornberger (1996) suggest that language teachers enhance collaborative literacy practices in language classes, while encouraging learners to gain a critical understanding of texts (p. 440). Furthermore, literacy is related to culture. Since foreign language learners might come from different cultural backgrounds, it is recommended that foreign language teachers become aware of the different kinds and levels of literacy that learners bring with them to the language classroom. Kern (2000) contends that the meaning of literacy has been extended to other areas of topical knowledge so much so that we frequently encounter phrases such as 'science literacy', 'economic literacy', 'computer literacy' and so on. Professionals in language testing have regarded topical knowledge as a potential source of test bias (Bachman and Palmer, 1996). Eliminating topical content from language tests, however, might not always be the best solution. Accordingly, Bachman and Palmer suggest that language test developers should consult with content specialists in determining the extent to which they can include topical content in language tests (pp. 120-127).

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Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test

| KMO and Bartlett's Test | | |
|--|--------------------|-------------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | | .655 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 1.069E3 |
| | df | 66 |
| | Sig. | .000 |

Table 2. Rotated components and their loadings obtained via Principal Component Analysis

| Item | Content summary | C 1 | C 2 |
|-------------|---|-------------|-------------|
| 9 | I enjoy reading (in general). | .724 | -.082 |
| 2 | I enjoy reading literature. | .644 | .076 |
| 7 | I frequently borrow/buy books. | .640 | .051 |
| 10 | As a child, my parents regularly encouraged me to read. | .591 | .136 |
| 11 | We have lots of books at home. | .550 | .139 |
| 5 | I know a lot about literature. | .512 | .397 |
| 4 | I know all famous music composers. | -.162 | .721 |
| 6 | I frequently visit museums, theaters, or attend concerts. | .158 | .642 |
| 12 | I used to take art /music classes outside school. | .183 | .638 |
| 8 | I like to attend symphony concerts. | -.004 | .549 |
| 1 | I enjoy listening to classical music. | .095 | .494 |
| 3 | I understand music well; so I am a cultured person. | .206 | .419 |

*Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Table 3. Two components of CC-12

| Components | Statements | N of items | Percentage |
|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Textual literacy | 9, 2, 7, 10, 11, 5 | 6 | 50 |
| 2. Musical literacy | 4, 6, 12, 8, 1, 3 | 6 | 50 |
| Total | | 12 | 100 |

Table 4. Correlations between students' foreign language attributions (both LAAS and CDS-II) and their cultural capital

| | Cultural Capital |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Ability | 0.327** |
| Effort | 0.304** |
| Task difficulty | -0.027 |
| Mood | -0.023 |
| Luck | -0.166** |
| Teacher | -0.054 |
| Internal locus of causality | 0.152** |
| Stability | 0.144** |
| Personal control | 0.092* |
| External control | -0.155** |

** Shows the existence of significant relationship at the level of 0.01

* Shows the existence of significant relationship at the level of 0.05

Table 5. The results of correlation between components of cultural capital and foreign language skills

| Foreign Language Skills | Musical Literacy |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Listening | .396** |
| Speaking | .379** |
| Reading | .145** |
| Writing | .124** |
| Grammar | .087 |
| Foreign Language Skills | Textual Literacy |
| Listening | .250** |
| Speaking | .362** |
| Reading | .357** |
| Writing | .322** |
| Grammar | .337** |

** Shows the existence of significant relationship at the level of 0.01

Table 6. Multiple regression analyses predicting foreign language achievement

| Predictors | R | R ² | Adjusted R ² | F | P | B |
|---------------------|-------|----------------|-------------------------|--------|------|-------|
| <i>Listening</i> | | | | | | |
| 1. Musical literacy | 0.396 | 0.157 | 0.155 | 88.262 | 0.00 | 0.354 |
| 2. Textual literacy | 0.422 | 0.178 | 0.174 | 51.135 | 0.00 | 0.150 |
| <i>Speaking</i> | | | | | | |
| 1. Musical literacy | 0.379 | 0.144 | 0.142 | 79.318 | 0.00 | 0.301 |
| 2. Textual literacy | 0.463 | 0.214 | 0.211 | 64.376 | 0.00 | 0.277 |
| <i>Reading</i> | | | | | | |
| 1. Textual literacy | 0.357 | 0.128 | 0.126 | 69.373 | 0.00 | 0.357 |
| <i>Writing</i> | | | | | | |
| 1. Textual literacy | 0.322 | 0.104 | 0.102 | 54.354 | 0.00 | 0.322 |
| <i>Grammar</i> | | | | | | |
| 1. Textual literacy | 0.337 | 0.113 | 0.112 | 60.135 | 0.00 | 0.337 |

Table 7. The newly designed cultural capital questionnaire (CC-12)

| No. | Statement | SD | D | N | A | SA |
|-----|---|----|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | I enjoy listening to classical music. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2 | I enjoy reading literature. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | I understand music well; so I am a cultured person. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | I know all famous music composers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | I know a lot about literature. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | I frequently visit museums, theaters, or attend concerts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | I frequently borrow/buy books. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8 | I like to attend symphony concerts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9 | I enjoy reading (in general). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10 | As a child, my parents regularly encouraged me to read. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11 | We have lots of books at home. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12 | I used to take art /music classes outside school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Directions: Please read each statement, and then answer the degree you agree with the each statement. Note that SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neither Agree nor Disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

The Absent Presence: A Study of Percival in *The Waves*

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Abstract

Percival is a character in Woolf's novel *The Waves*, about whom few studies have been made about because throughout the novel he is silent and absent, which makes him unnoticeable. However, in spite of his absence, he is repeatedly present in other six characters' monologues. His absent presence makes his image more mysterious and ambiguous. In a sense, he plays a most important role in the novel. He could be interpreted in different, even contradictory ways.

Keywords: Percival, Absent presence, *The Waves*

The Waves is a classical novel of stream of consciousness by Virginia Woolf. Throughout the novel are the interior monologues of the six characters: Bernard, Neville, Louis, Jinny, Rhoda and Susan. Apart from the six characters, there is another mysterious character, Percival, who is absent, silent, but readers can always feel his presence. He exists in the monologues of the six characters. He is absent, but always present. Why did Woolf create such a character? What is his function in the novel? To some degree he is a more important character than the other six in the novel. He can be interpreted in different ways.

1. Percival: the Lighthouse in the Novel

Most people think *The Waves* is pessimistic, but in fact, we can find a lighthouse in the novel: Percival. He was the friend of the six characters, and soon died in India, and disappeared in life. Unlike the other six characters who give continuous monologues, he is silent, he lets out no voice throughout the novel, so he is absent, but he is present in the voices of the six characters. His absence highlights his presence. He is the lighthouse in the mind of the six characters.

What's the image of Percival? Though he is absent, from the monologues of the six characters, readers can picture him. He seems to be a man with a strong figure who loves life, and is born a leader. Though he hadn't done anything great, his presence always brought hope, courage, love and harmony.

Before Percival went to India, a farewell party was held. It was a long time since the six characters graduated and they lived their own life in different places. To this end they gathered together in London, waiting for their Percival in an inn. They felt as if they would celebrate a festival. Bernard said, 'We have come together, at a particular time, to this particular spot. We are drawn into this communion by some deep, some common emotion. Shall we call it, conveniently, "love"?' (Woolf, 2000, p. 70) It is Percival who unites them together. He symbolizes some atmosphere, some hope, and some beauty. He embodies their ideal. When Percival came in, Neville felt 'My tree flowers. My heart rises. All oppression is relieved. All impediment is removed. The reign of chaos is over. He has imposed order' (Woolf, 2000, p.68). Bernard said, 'There is a red carnation in that vase. A single flower as we sat here waiting, but now a seven-sided flower, many-petalled, red, puce, purple-shaded, stiff with silver-tinted leaves-a whole flower to which every eye bring its own contribution' (Woolf, 2000, p.70) . Then they calmed down and began to recall the past. Everything seemed so beautiful in their retrospection. Blackstone made the comment, 'All of them are united by the presence of Percival' (Blackstone, 1949, p. 172).

Percival represents the ideal life that the six characters long for. He lighted up their life, but soon he died. His death changed their ideal into an entire illusion. In a sense his silence could be interpreted as the absence of ideals in daily life. Learning his death, Neville felt the light of the world was extinguished. Rhoda saw all the negative sides in the world. But Bernard, the voice of the writer felt he was still somewhere. Percival died, but he remained a lighthouse in his friends' mind. His death changed his image into an eternal beauty. The life is cruel, but Percival's absent presence encourages the six characters to face life bravely. In the chaos of the world, the image of Percival expresses the writer's desire for harmony, order and love. Though in this world there are indifference, misunderstanding and

hostility, there should be the light of ideal. Percival is absent physically, but he is present in people's deep mind. Years later when the six friends gathered together again, through their epiphany, readers can feel their desire for friendship and harmony. Percival became an eternal lighthouse in their mind.

2. Percival: the Mirror of the Other Six Characters' Selves

Another dominant theme of *The Waves* is searching for identity. *The Waves* exposes the fact that man and society are in a deformed and unharmonious relationship. With the development of science and technology and the advancement of industrialization, man's values also changed. Each character in the novel felt alone and alienated. The six characters don't know who they are. They are searching for their selves. Then who is Percival? In Percival the six characters saw themselves. Their selves are combined in one. Percival is anyone. He serves as the mirror of their selves.

The monologues of the six characters reveal the modern men's searching for selves. In the modern world, they felt alone. Rhoda said, 'Alone, I often fall down into nothingness. I must push my foot stealthily lest I should fall off the edge of the world into nothingness' (Woolf, 2000, p. 23). In the modern world, they don't know who they are. Rhoda didn't like looking into the looking-glass since her childhood. She said, 'I have no face. Other people have faces' (Woolf, 2000, p.23). Louis often felt he couldn't find his identity, and didn't know where he was. Jinny asked 'Who is he? Who is she?' (Woolf, 2000, p.97). Bernard also asked, 'Who am I?' (Woolf, 2000, p.162) From their monologues, we can see their loss of selves in the modern society.

Under the pressure of the modern life, people can't find the pleasure of life. Their monologues reveal their common feeling: the loss of selves. That's why in *The Waves* the six characters thought they had no "face", which was their identity.

In the novel the six voices hint at six selves. The six selves are separate, but at the same time are supposed to be a single, united one. They stand for six aspects of one person. The six selves are focused on an ideal figure: Percival. As the common friend of the six characters, Percival is an object they admire and worship. He is an important member of the group. However, he kept silent throughout the novel. In spite of his absence, he exists in the other six voices. Though his image can't be revealed in his own monologue, it can be imagined in the other six characters' monologues.

Why does Percival exist in the monologues of the other six characters? In fact, he embodies the selves of the other six. He is absent because he is abstract. He is not a certain person, but anybody. He serves as the mirror of the other six. He combines the selves of the other six into one. The six monologists are just the facets of one. Woolf ever wrote to G. L. Dickinson, 'I did mean that in some way we are the same person, and not separate people. The six characters were supposed to be one' (Woolf, 1978, p. 397). In the novel, Bernard ever said, 'I am not one person; I am many people; I do not altogether know who I am-Jinny, Susan, Neville, Rhoda or Louis; or how to distinguish my life from theirs' (Woolf, 2000, p.156). So in *The Waves* Woolf explored the collective rather than the individual aspects of identity. The six monologists all thought Percival had a stable self, so they all regarded him as their ideal self. 'He does not need a voice, because he lives in immediate, active involvement with the external world' (Apter, 1979, p. 119). He had the typical characteristics of traditional British young man. He loved sports; he had patriotism and heroism; he was willing to go to India to serve his country. His social identity is stable. In the novel his silence is a sharp contrast with the continuous monologues of the other six, which seems to suggest that he is not annoyed by his identity. His stable self was demonstrated in his ability to bring order and harmony to the group. When he appeared, Bernard said, 'There is a red carnation in that vase. A single flower as we sat here waiting, but now a seven-sided flower, many-petalled, red, purple, purple-shaded, stiff with silver-tinted leaves-a whole flower to which every eye bring its own contribution' (Woolf, 2000, p. 70) .

Percival's stable self was the ideal that the other six desired. It highlights the instability of the selves of the other six, which shows people's dilemma of building one's self in the modern world. In fact, Woolf was not praising the traditional self. Though the worship of the six characters toward Percival hints at their longing for the pre-modern living state, the impression that Percival was out of date and absurd was crystal clear. The colour of anti-hero can be found in Percival. He died in India, but not for his country, but in an accident, 'He fell, His horse tripped. He was thrown' (Woolf, 2000, p. 85).

So Percival is the mirror of the other six characters' selves. But the death of Percival threw them into a dilemma of searching for their identity in the modern society, in which they faced the problem of losing their selves.

3. Percival: the Deconstruction of the Image of the Empire

Percival was created by Woolf as a traditional hero: the image of the empire. But he died, which hints at the death of imperialism. In the modern world, this image is out of date. While Woolf was praising the imperialist civilization, she also satirized the stupidity and arrogance of the imperialist rulers.

Percival is the center of the society as well as the center of the six characters. He is the representative of imperialism. In the novel, Percival never “spoke”. He never revealed any consciousness. His image was broken into pieces in the monologues of the six characters. The monologues of the six characters just highlight the absence of Percival, through which Woolf’s intention to deconstruct the image of the British empire can be detected.

As a hero in his friends’ mind, Percival died soon after he got to India, but ironically, he died in an accident, not for the country, so his image of hero was deconstructed. His death signals the fall of the imperialist regime.

Percival’s pointless death shows the absurdity of the image. He is the representative of imperialism, but also the victim to the regime. Bernard said, ‘I should be able to place him in trifling and ridiculous situations, so that he may not feel himself absurd, perched on a great horse. I must be able to say, “Percival, a ridiculous name”’ (Woolf, 2000, p.86). His absurdity and pointless death deconstructed the image of the empire.

4 Percival: the Invisible Shadow, the Inevitable Death

Death is a haunting theme in Woolf’s works. In *The Waves*, death is embodied in the absent figure: Percival. He was silent, he was absent, but he was present in the other six characters’ monologues. He was always present. He exists as an invisible shadow to remind the six others of the inevitable death. Percival’s death intensifies the truth of the inevitability of death. Death, as a contrast with life, is what every mortal being must face.

The German philosopher, Heidegger, thinks the greatest possibility for man is death. He examines death and life on the same level. He thinks that life is life that heads for death. Only when man has a clear understanding of death can he understand the meaning and value of life. Only when man is brave enough to face death can he create the beauty of life in the limited life.

The Waves is a novel exploring death as well as life. It presents the journey of life of the six characters moving from childhood to adulthood, to old age, and to death. In the interludes before each part there are the descriptions of nature. The changes from the sunrise to the sunset in a day symbolize the different stages in life. ‘I am writing to a rhythm and not to a plot’ (Woolf, 1978. p. 204), Woolf stated of *The Waves*. *The Waves* conveys the rhythm of life in synchrony with the cycle of nature and the passage of time. The rise and fall of the waves is just the rhythm of human existence. Death is part of the cycle of birth, life, death and resurrection.

Death is invisible, but it is there. Present in the monologues of the six characters is the absent Percival. He made them aware of the inevitability of death. Rhoda said, ‘Oh, life, how have I dreaded you’ (Woolf, 2000, p.115). Death is combined with life. “Such is the incomprehensible combination,” said Bernard, “such is the complexity of things, that as I descend the staircase I do not know which is sorrow, which joy. My son is born; Percival is dead” (Woolf, 2000, p. 85). Jinny sighed, ‘Life comes, life goes’ (Woolf, 2000, p. 98). Neville regarded the first death he heard about as ‘death among the apple trees’ (Woolf, 2000, p. 12). He realized that ‘But we are doomed, all of us, by the apple trees, by the immitigable tree which we cannot pass’ (Woolf, 2000, p. 12). In face of death, man shouldn’t escape. At the end of the novel, Bernard cried, ‘It is death against whom I ride with my spear couched and my hair flying back like a young man’s, like Percival’s, when he galloped in India. I strike spurs into my horse. Against you I will fling myself, unvanquished and unyielding, O Death!’ (Woolf, 2000, p. 167) He expressed the desire of man to surpass death, which is inevitable.

The death of Percival, the six characters’ loved friend, made them realize the truth: no one can escape death. The vast sea in *The Waves* attached a new meaning to death. Death is not the end of life, but the sublimation of life. Woolf had been searching for the true meaning of death all her life and put it into practice. Finally, she chose to drown herself to illustrate the beauty of death.

5. Conclusion

Percival, an absent character in *The Waves*, is present in his special way. He exists in his friends’ monologues. His absence highlights his presence, and increases the mystery and ambiguity of the image. He could be interpreted in different and even contradictory ways. He is the lighthouse in the novel; he is the mirror of the six characters’ selves; he embodies the deconstruction of the empire; he embodies the inevitable death of man.

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The Construction of Self and the Rejection of the Natives as the Inferior Other: Sadegh Hedayat's *Blind Owl*

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Abstract

Iranian intellectuals including Iranian modern literary writers who were supposed to act as the consciousness and voice of their people fall prey to the imported Western modernity. The influence of these western education and culture rendered them so alienated that pushed them to build a big rift between themselves and the rest of the society. This causes these writers to create an image of the natives that comes to the fore as the most macabre and stereotypical representation of the indigenous people. Although many different studies have been carried out on the *Blind Owl*, it seems that little focus has been cast upon the major reasons of such presentation. This paper explores the text to reveal how the author, by giving credit to himself as an 'I', artist and a painter, struggles to build a rift between himself and the others, the rest of the society, the world of *Rajaleha*, the Rabble. This study, by focusing on the representation of the native as the other, attempts to disclose the orientalist system of representation that the author has employed to portray the majority of the society as the peripheral and finally as the 'Other'.

Keywords: Rajaleh, Lakateh, Ethereal Girl, Other, Self, Colonial Discourse

1. Introduction

Notwithstanding the fact that Iran is having a long and a complicated procedure, its design is structured by the rise and the fall of sequential dynasties - with intervals of chaos and confusion. In the 6th century BC Cyrus the Great established the Persian Empire, which was invaded and demolished in 330 BC by Alexander the Great. In the following centuries, Iran was attacked by the Parthians, the Arabs, the Mongols and different Turkish dynasties.

After the victory and dominance of the Arab in the middle of the 7th century, the ancient Persian religion of Zoroastrianism began to be replaced by Islam. The Seljuk Turks arrived in the 11th century, and the Mongols invaded and overrun Iran under Genghis Khan and his grandson Hulagu Khan in the 13th century and Tamerlane (Timur) in the 14th century. Another Turkish dynasty, the Safavids, brought Iran under their control in the 16th century which was overthrown only by yet another Turkish tribe, the Qajar, in the 18th century. Literacy was fearfully low, something on the order of two or three percent, and substantial portion of the population was pastoral nomads and most of the urban residence were mostly uneducated and extremely traditional and religious.

In 18th-19th centuries Iran falls under the increasing pressure of European nations, particularly the Russian Empire and the Great Britain. According to 1907 treaty Iran was actually divided into the territorial penetration of Russia and Britain (Katem, 2006, p. 201). After the Iran-Russia wars of 1813 and 1828, and the unequal Treaty of Paris (1857), Iran lost its independence (Katem, 2006, p. 227). "The transformation of Iran from an independent and cohesive Asian state into a "buffer state" was mainly due to the colonial penetration and rivalry between Great Britain and Tsarist Russia" (Benab, 2011, p. 1). The presence of the West in Iran and the dispatching of the Iranian students to Europe, especially England and France rendered a huge social and mental transformation not only in the returnees from Europe but also in the social life style. The return of these students from Europe was associated with the emergence of a new trend of European thought and life style Called modernism which was in the opposition of the traditional culture and whatever considered as traditional, including the public religion of people, Islam (Axworthy, 2007). The new Iranian educated people who were carrying the title of *monavarol-feker* "enlightened thinker" began a new era in the history of the country, with no clear notion of what modernity is and how to apply it in a traditional country like Iran. These intellectuals who have at this stage found themselves left behind the European countries began to blame the Arab, Turk and Mongol and the other races as the main cause of their backwardness. Driven by his/

her intellectuality and a very human and natural desire to push forward, s/he is attracted to the culture and civilization which had developed in the West. All due to the superiority of the colonial ideology they began to define the native people as savage, backward, and underdeveloped. Consequently these westerly educated people began to feel that they have been captivated in a society which does not fit them at all and this way they established a big rift between themselves and other people.

2. *Blind Owl*: a Summary

The novel is into two parts which are formally connected by a few passages at the end of part I and at the end of part II. Part I begins when the narrator, a pen-box illustrator, is visited by an uncle from India he has never seen. In order to offer him some refreshments, he goes to bring the jug of wine on the recess when suddenly sees, through the crevice of the wall, the scene of the single and compulsive subject of all his illustrations. She is an extremely beautiful and exotic woman with an unconscious smile on her face and he falls deeply in love with 'the ethereal woman', 'this girl, no, this angle' (Hedayat, 1984, p. 10). He embarks on a journey in search of the ethereal girl. He becomes convinced that she was not of this world, and she would 'wilt at the look of a stranger, an ordinary person' (Hedayat, 1984, p. 11). But upon returning he finds the girl sitting on the doorsteps. The mysterious girl enters his room and lie in his bed. He gently pours a cup of the wine which he inherited from his mother in which there was the poison of nag, the Indian serpent through her locked teeth into her mouth. This leads to the death of the ethereal girl (Nafisi, 2003, pp. 654-655). He dismembered her and buries her in a nearby small town on the site of the ancient city of *Ray*. In the second part of the story ,after smoking a lot of opium, the narrator wakes up in a world which is very close to his real world and he recounts his mental and physical decline following his marriage to a woman who refuses to have sex with him but has countless lovers. He kills her.

3. Binary Opposition

The construction of self fundamentally stems from difference, mostly from rejection of Others. In this case, one postulates a simple binary opposition between self, a pure and original and Others, as inferior and physically and mentally contaminated creatures, as a means of demonstrating the 'I'. Here, the Self is envisaged as undivided, as possessed of an original authenticity that the Others lack (Cole 1995: 1). Self is in fact constructed by difference, contrast and finally rejection or suppressing the Other as the component of Self. This unitary conception of Self also tends to blame any weakness or inferiority within the Self on an Other. The story is built on the basis of binary opposition. Good in the opposite of bad, Islamic society in the opposite of European society, Platonic or better to say pure unpolluted Sassanid love against contemporary, Islamized love, Ethereal girl in the opposite of *Lakateh*, The narrator against the *Rajaleha* , old *Rey* representing Iranian historical glorious era in the opposite of post-Islamized or the contemporary time, to mention just a few. According to Ashcroft (2004, p.23) "binarism comes from 'binary', meaning a combination of two things, a pair, 'two', duality (*OED*). The binary opposition is the most extreme form of difference possible. Such oppositions, each of which represents a binary system, are very common in the cultural construction of reality."

Binarism comes from 'binary', meaning a combination of two things, a pair, 'two', duality (*OED*), this is a widely used term with distinctive meanings in several fields and one that has had particular sets of meanings in post-colonial theory. The binary opposition is the most extreme form of difference possible – sun/moon; man/woman; birth/death; black/white. Such oppositions, each of which represents a binary system, are very common in the cultural construction of reality (Ashcroft, 2004, p. 23).

Binary oppositions are structurally connected with one another, and in colonial discourse there may be a degree of diversity of the one underlying binary – colonizer/colonized – that becomes reemphasised and re-expressed in any particular text in many different ways (Ashcroft et al, 2004, p. 23). The binary opposition is the most extreme form of difference possible through which the system of the cultural construction of reality works. Through binary oppositions as the basic dichotomies which advocated in the West, what Western thought is generally concerned is to see the world in terms of the Westerners against non-European origins, i.e. the Other. This binary system establishes a relation of dominance and justifies "the hierarchical cultural and radical assumptions of European thought" (Royle, 2000, p. 190). The binary system plays a very significant role in "constructing ideological meanings in general and extremely useful in imperial ideology" (Ashcroft et al, 2004, pp. 23).

4. Narrator/ *Rajaleha* oppositions and Self Alienation

Al-e Ahmad (1984, p. 57) asserts that a person who is mentally westoxificated is a person or more precisely an intellectual who has severed his ties with the essence of society, culture, and custom. He is not a bond between antiquity and modernity. He is not a dividing line between the old and the new. He is something unrelated to the past and someone with no understanding of the future. He is not a point on a line, but an imaginary point on a plane or in space----just like that dust particle. Al-e Ahmad's emphasis is on the Westoxicated creature's disinterest in his/her own culture, society, and community, such a creature is not entirely uprooted from his/her community, she/he is not

separated from her/his means of communication and language. She/he is just infatuated and fascinated by an alien culture and society. The more pronounced this infatuation becomes, the more s/he becomes, in Al-e Ahmad's view, alienated from her/his own community.

In the *Blind Owl*, there is a sense of anger dominating the whole story. The narrator feels that the world in which he has been caught is not constructed for a person like him. "For some reason all activity, all happiness on the part of other people made me feel like vomiting. I was aware that my own life was finished and was slowly and painfully guttering out" (Hedayat 1957, p. 60), and immediately asserts that there is no relationship exist between the lives of the people around whom he labelled as fools and him whom he had already identified as an artist, "What earthly reason had I to concern myself with the lives of the fools, the rabble-people who were fit and healthy, ate well, slept well, and copulated well and who had never experienced a particle of my sufferings or felt the wings of death every minute brushing against their faces?" (Hedayat 1957, p. 60). The narrator finds himself in a horrible way decomposing, identifies that he is alive, a living being who has a dreadful life. "I was slowly decomposing while I yet lived. My heart had always been at odds not only with my body but with my mind, and there was absolutely no compatibility between them. I had always been in a state of decomposition and gradual disintegration" (Hedayat 1957, p. 53).

According to Mirabedini (2003, p.791) such an "individual who has a half European characteristic and half native features," in other words composed of two contradictory derives is looking for a truth which he has become acquainted with in Europe, "A thought which I found intolerably painful was this: whereas I felt that I was far removed from all the people whom I saw and among whom I lived, yet at the same time I was related to them by an external similarity which was both remote and close" (Hedayat, 1957, p. 53). Thus when he comes to his native homeland he feels that "everything related to the life-style and the joys of others nauseated him" (Hedayat, 1984, p. 37). This sense of anger will cause to establish impenetrable wall between himself and others. He realises that "a frightful chasm lies between others and him" (Hedayat, 1984, p. 2). He finds himself lonely and everyday this isolation becomes stronger. When he reaches where it is supposed to be the secure space of his self-realization, he faces a bunch of what he calls superstitious gossip and whores and he transcribes all these observations onto the paper and he realises that that there is no more any place for the poetry, his feelings or thoughts. At this time he depicts himself as the self who is enchained in such a trashcan full of worms and dirt that he has no choice but to escape, but there is no loophole. The *Rajalha*, the rabbles have occupied everywhere, they build chains with their polluted hands and place them before the feet of such a rare person (Etehad, 2009, p. 186). This is the mode that the modern education and upbringing have induced in many of Iranian intellectuals, especially in those who had been fascinated by the Western literature, thoughts and customs, and "Sadegh Hedayat was one of them" (Safa, 2003, p. 187, qtd in Etehad).

5. The Negative Pictorial Manifestation of the Natives as the Other

The narrator, the protagonist, who is the inevitable outcome of the cultural and political upheavals and mental and cultural transformation of a society has been afflicted by the western education and culture which clearly manifested in his artistic skill that he has brought with himself from the West, he develops a sense of humiliation toward his own traditions and native people and this makes the narrator to reveal society as distastefully sluggish and inactive filled with people who do not resemble him in thoughts and manners. Thus in order to define and give meaning to himself as an 'I', he creates a discourse mostly oriented from his ideological and Western educational standpoint. As an avant-garde artist who was supposed to push the boundaries of what is accepted as the status quo, traditional literature, religion and traditions of people, Hedayat draws a line from the onset between himself and those who are different from him in thoughts and behaviours.

This Oriental discourse puts face and a mould to the Oriental character [the natives, *rajaleha*, the rabbles, the *Lakateh*, the whore, and all the others]. This way the ideas about it influence the idea of the West and the other. In many ways this notion of the superior West and the inferior East is solidified because the difference between them is intensified by the Orientalist discourse (Said, 1978, p. 42). Discourse is governed by the ruling power; the ruling power determines what is to be narrated and how to narrate an event. In the case of the *Blind Owl*, the narrator of the story appropriates this authority to represent the natives the way he likes. Said (1978, p. 20) argues that an Orientalist writer must first of all locate himself or herself vis-à-vis the Orient. This will later on affect his/her interpretation of the Orient.

One of the famous themes in the Hedayat's works is the description and the judgments that he extends to the people whom he names *rajaleha*, the rabbles. By the word *rajaleha*, he does not mean hooligans, thugs and hoodlum in its ordinary sense, but all the people who in most cases do not believe in the values that they pretend to have been attached. In order to gain success in the life they will not avoid any activities including begging, embezzlement, lying, vulgarity, deception, fashion follower or to be an opportunist. In the *Dark House* (1995), the isolated person

tells the narrator “Only a bunch of thieves, shameless fools and sick people are allowed to live in this environment. Those unfit for thieving or baseness and those not given to flattery are pronounced 'unfit for living!’” (Hedayat, 1995, p. 40). In the story of *Deadlock* (1942), the protagonist has fallen behind of his cheeky and thief colleagues because of his honesty and sincerity. When he returns to his hometown from Tehran, everything appears to him narrow, limited, ordinary and low and “his work pals had pushed their grip further into the abdomen of life...some of them more or less had reached their limited aspirations: their belly had been grown bigger and their sexual passions had been transmitted from their waist down to their jaws, or in the distresses of life, they had focused on the swindling, plundering of their peasantry, cotton, opium and wheat products or their children’s dippers and their old gout” (Hedayat, 1942, pp. 42-43).

In another story named *Gojaste Dej* which according to Homa Katouzian (1993, p. 54) does not belong to Hedayat’s Psycho-fiction stories- we read that “you mean these people?...what controls them is firstly the belly and secondly their sexual passion, with a bundle of anger and bundle of lust and lust which are blindly infiltrated into their ears” (Hedayat, 1932, p. 249). In the *Three Bloods* (1932), we witness some traces of the *rajaleha*, the rabble, in the male cat. When in the spring season, *Nazi-Siyavash’s* female cat- emitted sorrowful moan of love: “Male cats from all around the neighbourhood heard Nazi's moans and came to meet her. After much struggle and many cat fights, eventually, *Nazi* chose the strongest and the most boisterous of the suitors to be her mate. Of prime importance in love making is the animals' special scent. That is why males that are tame and clean do not move their females. While alley cats, cats on the prowl, thieving cats, emaciated cats, stray cats, and famished cats; in general those cats whose hides have retained their primordial scent, attract the females most” (Hedayat, 2000, p. 5).

But in the *Blind Owl*, the description and making judgments on the *rajaleha* is more detailed, much bitter, much clearer and much harsher than any other Hedayat’s works. The point that Hedayat does not mean the hooligans, thugs and hoodlum in the street by the word *rajaleha* is more observable in the novelette. Among these *rajaleha*, who are from every profession and social groups; a trip-peddler, a jurist, a liver-peddler, the chief magistrate, a judge, a trader and a philosopher are some who have relationship with the *Lakateh*, the whore, the narrator’s wife. In one stage, the narrator tries to learn their manners and ethics with the hope to attract the whore, but he says “How could I learn the ways of the rabble anyway? But now I know that she loved them because they were shameless, smelly fools” (Hedayat, 1984, p. 29). He says that not only is he not afraid of the death but also longs for it, but “I was afraid, however, that the particles of my body might blend with those of the rabble, an idea which I could not bear” (Hedayat, 1984, p. 45). He earnestly wished to die but he was frightened that such a thing happens to him: “Sometimes I wished that I had long hands and long sensitive fingers so that I could gather the particles of my body carefully and prevent them from getting mixed with those of the rabble” (Hedayat, 1984, p. 45). The narrator describes these people this way when he talks about what he did to disappear and lose himself and escapes from all these miseries and affliction that enmeshed him “I passed through many streets and distraughtly walked by the rabble who, with greedy faces, were in pursuit of money and lust. In fact, I did not need to see them to know them; one was enough to represent the rest. They were all like one big mouth leading to a wad of guts, terminating in a sexual organ” (Hedayat, 1984, p. 33).

One of the things that like a canker gnaw at the soul of the narrator in solitude and diminish it is this incurable disease. It is because of this disease that he has to be abject, worthless, deprived and isolated and those, the *rajaleha*, because of their shamelessness and haughtiness and their ability to wear different masks to enjoy all the blessings “I had a feeling that this world was not made for me but for a group of pseudo-intellectuals: a group of shameless, diabolical, rude, beggarish mule-drivers who lack insight and wisdom. It was made for those who were created to suit it, those who, like the hungry dog in front of the butcher shop wagging its tail for a bit of offal, are used to flatter the mighty of the earth and of the sky” (Hedayat, 1984, p. 45). Almost the same feelings and ideas will be uttered somewhere else in the story “But for some reason everything related to the life-style and the joys of others nauseated me. What relationship could exist between the lives of the fools and healthy rabble who were well, who slept well, who performed the sexual act well, who had never felt the wings of death on their face every moment--what relationship could exist between them and one like me who has arrived at the end of his rope and who knows that he will pass away gradually and tragically” (Hedayat, 1984, p. 37).

According to Natel Khanlari (2003, p. 235) Hedayat belonged to a passive and immobilized social class which was condemned to surrender before the movement of the lower social classes or to change its manners and method. This social class had come to the end of its evolvement procedure because of superfluous comfort and was deteriorating. For this reason all the characteristics of a demolishing generation was materialised in Hedayat. He obviously witnessed the cancellation of the titles of Qajar period and the old families were condemned to discolouring and deforming in the newly raised social classes and since Hedayat was not able to face this compulsory evolvement, he was involved in a type of timidity and shyness and passivity. He was suspicious to anyone from the low social classes who was working hard to heighten his/her social position and was taking them as the usurpers of the social positions.

He hated all those who worked hard to achieve a better life and he used a particular idiom to refer to them. He used to call the Rajaleh, the rabbles.

This feeling toward his countrymen pushes him toward the verge of losing mental equilibrium. His mental imbalance depicts him as an unusual figure among his native people and excludes him, making him to seem an outsider, merely because he suggests foreign ideas resulted from his half European moods (Fardid, 2003, p. 627). Sadegh Hedayat apparently, because of his fascination toward the western historical traditions, had raised his arm against the oriental traditions but he never succeeded to free himself from the grip of oriental family. Thus there was always a binary opposition lived in him (Fardid, 2003, pp. 627-628). In this sense, he is very much like the Orientalist, who judges the East from the West's viewpoint wherein there is a lack of traditional reform in the Orient. Therefore, the East seems to be, in reference to the aforementioned worthy/unworthy duality, unworthy, according to the narrator. He acts as though he were a member of the colonial class and, yet, his suffering, which results, in part, from his never-ending contemplation of two polar opposites -- the existence or non-existence of metaphysics or the ethereal girl representing the pre-Islamic and glorious time of Sassanid era and the present, post-Islamised conditions embodied in the configuration of his wife, or even tradition represented in the people he names *rajaleh*, religion and modernity-- parallels the suffering of the post-colonial subject who has been exposed to another set of binary opposites: Eastern thought, and its antithesis; Western thought. The narrator cannot find source of comfort in either culture.

6. Conclusion

Under circumstances in which Western-oriented ontological discipline was supporting the Western system many Iranian literary modernists, owing to the 19th- and 20th-century Western literature, began to use a Self and Other view. Using this conceptual framework, they stand themselves apart from their traditional culture and people and judge them as the Other, symbol of Inferiority (Said, 1978, p. 4). These modernist Iranian writers who have been supposed to act as the consciousness of Iranians and the voice of the victimized people of their own time have fallen prey to westoxification.

Said (1978, p. 7) argues European culture is hegemonic and imparts the idea of a superior European identity to the world. The "East" or "Orient" being the entity of the Islamic countries which are viewed as "inferior." Mashallah Ajoudani (2006, pp.115-126) claims that intelligentsia was influenced by the Western European view of the world as the only correct one. This Intelligentsia including Hedayat found themselves developing a sense of dislocating their feeling of place from Iran to Western countries. This confused sense of identity contributes to an emotional and at large conceptual distance between the mimic man and the others and this led him to reject the cultural traditions of his people and with them, any comfort of traditional religious teachings. Thus we can infer that the main reason for the narrator's irrational and to some extent imbalanced behavior lies in his awareness of the fact that he is cut from his roots which signifies the double consciousness, a way of perceiving the world that is divided between two cultures which produces an unstable sense of self, feeling of being caught between cultures and a sense of unhomeliness, therefore he must look for a superior being which can help him to solve his complexes in him. However, these complexes will end in his isolation and alienation from his native culture, traditions and finally his people whom he has already labeled as *Rajaleha*, the rabbles.

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A Quantitative Survey on Iranian English Learners' Attitudes toward Varieties of English: World English or World Englishes?

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Abstract

This empirical study seeks to investigate Iranian English learners' attitudes toward different varieties of English in relation to the perspective of the theory of "World Englishes". Making use of a modification of matched guise technique, 165 English learners were asked to listen to a text read by native speakers of the following accent groups: British, Persian, American, and Arabic. Subjects, then, recorded their attitudes toward each of the readers using a semantic differential scale. Based on the results, the learners considered American accent to be quite superior to the others. They, also, considered people with American accent to be better teachers. These findings reveal the fact that Iranian English learners still believe in the existence of a World English rather than World Englishes.

Keywords: Attitude, Native speaker, Standard English, World Englishes

1. Introduction

English as the language of international communication has for long been, and still is, spreading all over the world, and since any transmission of language brings about transformation (Widdowson, 2003), this spread has resulted in the existence of different varieties of English, each as a consequence of English contact with a certain language, culture and people. The interesting point is that the speakers of these new Englishes who use English to communicate with fellow non-native speakers far outnumber its native speakers (Widdowson, 2003).

The coinage and promotion of the term *World Englishes* is mainly associated with Kachru (1982). The underlying philosophy of Kachruvian approach argues for the "importance of inclusivity and pluricentricity in approaches to linguistics of new varieties of English" (Bolton, 2004, p. 367). In addition, in an attempt to empower new Englishes, this theory calls the labels *native speaker* and *native and standard English* into serious question and denies any special status for them.

As for the context of ELT, the learners all over the world are, today, faced with different varieties of English and naturally develop attitudes toward them. Now, what is the significance of such attitudes to the theory of "World Englishes" and why should they matter?

Timmis (2007) argued that the variety of a target language a learner acquires and prefers to speak in is influenced by his or her attitude towards that variety. In other words, the more positive your attitude is toward a certain variety, the more motivated you get in conforming to it. The problem here, based on the ideology of World Englishes, pops up when such conformity is not in line with your needs and motivations for learning English, i.e., you do your best to learn that variety with all its details simply because it is said to be the native and standard one. Still, a more important problem is that of identity. It follows that when a learner considers a certain variety to be the best or standard one and thus emphasizes on sounding like its native speaker, his or her cultural identity gets at stake.

The present study seeks to investigate Iranian English learners' attitudes toward different varieties of English in relation to the perspective of the theory of "World Englishes".

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Theory of "World Englishes"

According to Bhatt (2001), World Englishes paradigm discusses the global spread of English and the large number of functions it has taken on with increasing range and depth in diverse sociolinguistic settings around the world. This paradigm particularly emphasizes on multilingualism, multicultural identities, multiple norms of use, and bilinguals' creativity. Moreover, having its theoretical and philosophical foundations in liberation linguistics, it severely problematizes the sacred cows of the traditional theoretical and applied linguistics including interference, interlanguage, native speaker, speech community, ideal speaker-hearer, Standard English, and traditional English canon.

Davis (2004), also, defined *World Englishes* as a term used to "legitimate the Englishes spoken in the British non-white colonies" and explained that the ideology behind it denies a special status for the native speakers of metropolitan English varieties and complains about these native speakers' discriminations against users of world Englishes (p. 442).

World Englishes has its philosophical roots in the two dominant schools of thought of the present time, i.e., Postcolonialism and Postmodernism.

Postcolonialism, according to Bressler (2007), emerges from colonialization period in the 19th century when Great Britain was "the largest colonizer and imperial power" in the world (p. 236). But the political, social, economic and ideological domination of England gradually started to disappear by the turn of the century through a process called **decolonization**, which reached its peak in 1950 by the independence of India. It was the birth of postcolonialism as a liberation movement. The aim of postcolonialism is to destabilize the stabilized institutions and in SLA, in particular, decolonizing the colonized ELT is its major concern. Some of its common themes include national identity, universality, resistance, appreciation of differences, and protection of indigenous languages and cultures. Postcolonialism is much similar to deconstructionism and postmodernism in its subjects and concerns.

Postmodernism in philosophy refers to a belief in the death of metanarratives (universal truth or grand theories such as Nazism, Fascism, and Marxism) and claims that no one can ever find the ultimate truth (Pishghadam & Mirzaee, 2008). Contrary to modernism in which man is considered to be the center of the universe and the ideas of "the best" and absoluteness are possible, postmodernism believes in a world with no center, i.e., everything is relative and "the best" and "the perfect" have no place in it. It also moves toward divergence by the appreciation of differences.

There are different models of World Englishes but the one which best suggests the existence of *Englishes*, rather than *one standard native English*, is that of Kachru. His model was first published in 1985 and represents "the types of spread, the patterns of acquisition, and the functional domains in which English is used across cultures and languages" (Widdowson, 2003, p. 34). This model describes the global situation of English in terms of three concentric circles (Bhatt, 2001; Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008; Bolton, 2004; Kachru & Nelson, 1996; Timmis, 2007; Widdowson, 2003): The Inner Circle countries are the traditional bases of English where English is the primary or dominant language and is acquired as the mother tongue. The U.S., Britain, Australia, Canada and New Zealand belong to this circle. The Outer Circle includes countries with long history of colonization, where English has official and institutional functions and is used both as an intra and international language. India, Nigeria and South Africa belong to this circle. And finally, the Expanding Circle comprises countries with increasing number of English speakers in which English is regarded as a foreign language and has no established social role in the community; yet, its functional domains are expanding rapidly. It includes China, Iran, Japan and Korea.

As mentioned earlier, the ideology of World Englishes calls the label *native speaker* into serious question and strongly denies a special status for it. It specially opposes the prevailing view that native speakers are necessarily better at speaking English and hence they would make better English teachers (Jenkins, 2003). Moreover, it argues that since English is used for international communication and is, thus, used among speakers from different nationalities, it simply makes no sense to talk of its non-native speakers. This argument gets even more powerful when one considers the ever increasing situations in which English is used as a lingua franca among its L2 speakers rather than between its L1 and L2 speakers.

Representing this view, Jenkins (2003) listed some arguments against the use of the term *native* and *non-native* speaker of English, including: its assuming monolingualism to be the world's norm while the majority of people are bi- or multilingual, its disregarding the lingua franca function of English, its being offensive for the proficient users of English to be labeled as *non-native*, and more importantly, by proposing a simplistic view of what constitutes error in English language use, its causing problems with the international English testing since it implies an

irrelevant *native* standard reference point against which the users of all other varieties of English should be tested.

Cook (1995), as well, made attempts to empower non-native speakers by proposing his *multi-competence* model (cited in Brown, 2007). According to the main tenet of this model, L2 users are quite superior to monolingual native speakers and, thus, should not be compared to them; but should be considered in their own right. Such superiority lies in the fact that their mind is much more flexible than that of native speaker since they have access simultaneously to two competences rather than one; therefore, they have higher language and culture awareness.

Similarly, Widdowson (2003) strongly denied the native speakers' claim of the ownership of English language and their right to determine how it should be spoken around the world. In his book *Defining Issues in English Language Teaching*, he argued that the custodians of Standard English are not in fact natural native speakers but they are a minority of people, a particular self-elected subset of educated native speakers who have the power to impose this standard variety.

And as for the ownership of English, Widdowson (2003) did not deny the dual character of languages of every variety, i.e., performing communicative as well as communal functions, but asserted that no single community and culture has a right to claim the ownership of English explaining that "the very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it" (p. 43).

In addition, one of the most important achievements of World Englishes in the last three decades has been to challenge the standard language ideology and replacing it by the liberation linguistics ideology (Bolton, 2004; Bhatt, 2001). The standard language ideology, according to Bolton (2004), is the traditional view in English studies which has awarded the American and British English the authority to provide and prescribe the norms of usage in all international English using contexts.

This tension between the prescription of a world standard English and the legitimacy and autonomy of world Englishes calls to mind the double-voicedness of Bakhtin's (1994) centripetal and centrifugal forces. Centripetal forces, as a modernist feature, are those calling for centralizing, homogenizing and convergence, which in the present context, contribute to the conformity to an authoritative and prescriptive standard variety which is believed to be the best. On the other hand, centrifugal forces, as a postmodernist feature, involve decentralizing and divergence and thus appreciate the diverse features and functions of English worldwide.

As pointed out earlier, liberation linguistics severely confronts the traditional Standard English ideology, in an attempt to legitimate and empower the new varieties of English as well as their speakers.

Representing such liberation ideology, Milroy and Milroy (1999) argued that prescribing a standard variety is in fact bestowing prestige to just one variety at the expense of suppressing all the others (cited in Davis, 2006).

Widdowson (2003) argued that the main importance of Standard English lies in a belief in its guaranteeing effective communication and standards of intelligibility. In his view, Standard English, which is usually defined in reference to its grammar and lexis, is primarily a written variety sanctioned for institutional use. Furthermore, he believed that Standard English is a *shibboleth*, marking the right sort of person. He elaborated on this issue arguing that while grammatical conformity, due to the in-built redundancy of language, is not crucial for effective communication, Standard English places much importance on it (rather than on lexis). The reason, according to Widdowson, is that grammar "is so often redundant in communicative transactions that it takes on another significance, namely that of expressing social identity" and so adopts the role of a distinguisher between members of the community and the outsiders (p. 39). The startling fact here is the existence of an implicit obligation of the membership of this community. In other words, you have just two choices: either you become a member of this community and enjoy its privileges including access to the institutions under its control, or, by persisting in your non-standard ways, you are marginalized and your ungrammatical speech and bad-spelt writing are assigned less importance and are not taken seriously.

Trudgill and Hannah's (1994) definition of Standard English is in line with that of Widdowson. Based on this definition, Standard English is usually used in writing, and spoken by educated speakers of English and "refers to grammar and vocabulary (*dialect*) but not to pronunciation (*accent*)" (p. 1, cited in Widdowson, 2003, p. 44).

Furthermore, Halliday (2006) laid stress on the fact that the standard variety has "no intrinsic value" and that it is "just another dialect, but one that happened to be wearing a fancy uniform" (p. 350).

Finally, Widdowson (2003) striped the attitudinal goodness totally away from Standard English by noting the double standards concerning the issue. He elaborated on it explaining that the stability implied by Standard English is in contrast with the dynamic nature of language and that while Standard English calls for conformity, "proficiency only

comes with nonconformity" (p. 42). So you are proficient in English to the extent that you do not conform to Standard English and do not submit to what it dictates to you. In other words, mastery means taking the possession of the language, bending it to your advantage, developing innovations in it, and being able to speak your mind rather than speaking the language.

2.2 Iran's ELT

English Language in Iran is often learned through imitating a particular variety of English and most of the times your proficiency in English is evaluated according to such imitation, i.e., the more you achieve a native-like accent, the more proficient you are considered to be. Among different varieties of English just two are valued in Iran; in other words, it is generally believed that American and British Englishes are the best since they represent Standard English, the one spoken and understood most easily by its native speakers. Furthermore, it seems that having a native-like mastery of either of these two varieties has turned into a criterion for recruitment of English teachers.

The startling fact here is that just a tiny percent of these learners will ever have a chance to communicate with native speakers (Kirkpatrick, 2007). The great majority of others need English either to communicate with fellow non-natives or to be able to read different books and journals in English. So the question which remains to be reflected on is that: What is the use of such great emphasis on, and spending so much time and energy in acquiring these so-called standard varieties of English?

Not only does it demotivate those who fail to do so in the EFL context of Iran, but also it has exploitative effects on the learners who manage acquiring it after great effort. Recent research has shed light on some of such effects on the latter group. From a sociological perspective, Pishghadam and Kamyabi (2008), provided support for the direct link between the tendency and effort of the learners to achieve a native-like accent and their deculturation. Taking the same perspective, Pishghadam and Navari (2009) argued that, regarding the dominant conditions of education in Iran, the contact between two languages does not necessarily lead to cultural enrichment and that one of the languages might suffer cultural derichment, instead. Akhoondpoor (2008), in a similar vein but from a different point of view, discussed the psychological hindering effects of such perfectionism on the learners' performances.

This way of learning English through adopting an exonormative model and imitating it in all its details limits people's creative use of language and makes them turn into a tool for it, that is, what is done through linguistic imperialism. But the case must be the other way round, i.e., English as an international language must be a valuable instrument at disposal of people with different nationalities in order to express their way of thinking and present their culture through it. This view of English is in line with that of Crystal (2003), mentioned in his book *English as a Global Language*, in which he calls for adopting a functional account of English, the one that considers English as a precious tool for people to achieve their goals and the primary means of getting a global presence and being heard by the whole world.

Some countries, in accordance with this view, have already developed their own varieties of English, generally known as New Englishes, through **acculturation** and **indigenization**, i.e., influencing English language by their local cultures and languages (Kirkpatrick, 2007). This way they have developed a kind of nativised English which best suits their context of use, reflects their nationality, and is capable of expressing their own experience and way of thinking. The remarks of the Nigerian writer, Chinua Achebe, best highlights the need for such nonconformity in the form of modification of the international language:

I feel that English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience ... But it will have to be a new English, still in communication with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings. (Achebe, 1975, p. 62, cited in Widdowson, 2003, p.42)

While this is the case with other countries of the world, it seems that most of the Iranian learners and teachers still stick to their beliefs in the existence of Standard English, still consider American and British Englishes superior to other varieties, evaluate and are evaluated based on their native-like mastery of them, and keep on spending a great part of the time and energy, devoted to their learning English, in strict imitation of either of these varieties.

"World Englishes" is a relatively new theory, which has gained its worldwide currency only in the late 20th and early 21st centuries (Bolton, 2004). Having its philosophical roots in postmodernism and postcolonialism, this theory has remained somehow obscure in the modernist educational context of Iran, and as far as the researcher knows, there has been no study conducted in Iran in the field of English teaching and learning concerning "World Englishes". So, due to this paucity of research in the educational context of Iran in this field, this study is aimed at revealing whether the main tenet of World Englishes –the existence of world Englishes rather than a World English –has adherents among English teachers and learners.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants and setting

This study was conducted on 165 participants, who were learners in different English institutes of Mashhad. They consisted of 61 males and 104 females, within the age range of 18 to 30. One of the qualifications needed for the English learners to be chosen as the participants of this study was their level of proficiency, i.e., they needed to be at intermediate or higher levels, since it is believed that at such levels they have already established a sense of what different varieties of English are, formed attitudes toward these varieties and have probably selected one as their own model. The researcher relied on the institutes' placement tests in determining the learners' level of proficiency. The participants were not chosen randomly from a larger population and the two criteria for choosing them were simply accessibility and their tendency to cooperate.

3.2 Instrumentation

The instrument used in this attitude survey was a modification of the matched guise technique.

The matched guise technique –developed at McGill University by Lambert, Hodgeson, Gardner, and Fillenbaum (1960) –as a subjective reaction test is employed to reveal participants' attitudes toward other people's traits based solely on tape-recorded speech of individuals who are bilingual or bidialectal (Anisfeld, Bogo, & Lambert, 1962; and Webster & Kramer, 1968, cited in Alford & Strother, 1990). Participants show their reaction to each characteristic of each speaker by marking an odd-numbered scale. Each segment of the scale is assigned a number (usually 1 to 7) and then averages of each characteristic are calculated.

However, a modification of the matched guise technique –which has also been used by Anisfeld, Bogo, & Lambert (1962); Markel, Eisler, and Reese (1967); Tucker and Lambert (1969); Carranza and Ryan (1975); Ryan and Carranza (1975); Williams, Hewett, Miller, Naremore, & Whitehead, (1976) (all cited in Alford & Strother, 1990) –was used in the present study. In this modification, speakers from different accents speak with their own normal accents and, thus, there is no need to change their voice quality or style in an attempt to distinguish among the various accents. That is why this technique enjoys natural, rather than counterfeit accents with the aim of representing actual stereotypes of the speakers.

The reliability of the questionnaire associating with the matched guise technique was checked by Alford and Strother (1990) using a two-tailed Pearson Product Moment Correlation for reliability ($r = .455$). Its validity was, also, substantiated. In addition, to test for the reliability of the questionnaires in this study a Cronbach's Alpha was, also, calculated for each speaker to determine the degree of consistency in the way participants rated each speaker ($r = .714$ to $.821$).

3.3 Procedure

The data collection was started in January 2009 and took around two months. As stated earlier, a modification of the matched guised technique was utilized in order to reveal the learners' attitudes toward 4 English accents. To this end, the participants listened to a taped text dealing with the culturally neutral topic of making a comment about some TV programs (for the text see appendix A). The text was a relatively short and simple one chosen from an elementary textbook (Collie & Slater, 1995) and was read, in a random order, by four native speakers of the following English accent groups: British, Persian, American, and Arabic. By controlling for the gender, age and voice quality of the speakers –they were all males and about the same age (25, 26, 30, 31) –and, also, for their reading speed, word choice and syntax – by reading the same text –every attempt was made to leave accent as the only variable under consideration in this part. After listening to each speaker, the participants were asked to evaluate personality characteristics of that speaker, using speech style and voice characteristics as cues, by marking their responses on a 7-point semantic differential scale which was adapted from Alford and Strother (1995).

Each participant's reactions to each speaker were recorded in the form of a numerical index for each accent. In the ranking, a score of 1 was the most negative and 7 was the most positive. The index was obtained by summing the ratings for each trait for each speaker (for the scale see appendix B).

4. Results

To determine participants' reactions to the 4 accents, several statistical analyses were utilized including a one-way ANOVA (to determine the significance of difference) plus a Scheffe post hoc test (to spot the locations of difference) for each of the 12 characteristics present in the questionnaire and for the overall rating of each speaker as well.

Table 4.1. reveals a significant difference among the four groups regarding their overall rating.

As evident in table 4.2., in the rating of the characteristics: *very intelligent/not very intelligent, well educated/poorly educated, ambitious/lazy, self-confident/not self-confident, professional/ nonprofessional, good family training/poor family training, a good teacher/not a good teacher*, the American speaker received the highest ranking. The second and third rankings were, successively, accorded to British and Persian speakers. And, the last ranking was assigned to the Arabic speaker.

American > British > Persian > Arabic

This order, however, was different for the other five characteristics. For *gentle/harsh*, for example, participants accorded the highest rating to the American speaker, the second ranking to the British one, the third ranking to the Persian speaker, and the last ranking to the Arabic one.

American > Persian > Arabic > British

As for *trustworthy/untrustworthy*, the highest ranking was assigned to the American speaker, with the Persian and British speakers tying for the second place. The Arabic speaker received the lowest ranking.

American > British & Persian > Arabic

In addition, the highest friendliness ranking was assigned to the American speaker and the second highest ranking to the British speaker, with the Persian and Arabic speakers tying for the last place.

American > British > Persian & Arabic

Furthermore, participants considered the American speaker as the most sincere one, the Persian speaker as the second most sincere, with the British speaker somewhere in the middle (having a sincerity level close to those of both the American and the Persian speaker). They also accorded the lowest sincerity ranking to the Arabic speaker.

American > Persian > Arabic; British > Arabic

Also, participants considered the American speaker as the most patient one, the Arabic speaker as the second most patient one, with the Persian speaker somewhere in the middle (having a patience level close to those of both the American and the Arabic speaker). They also accorded the lowest patience rating to the British speaker.

American > Arabic > British ; Persian > British

Finally, the American speaker (5.476) received the highest overall rating. The British (4.251) and Persian (3.483) speakers were accorded the second and the third overall ratings. And the lowest overall rating was assigned to the Arabic speaker (2.748). Thus, put simply, the participants appreciated the American accent more than the British, the British more than the Persian, and the Persian more than the Arabic one. To state the obvious, the order of this overall ranking corresponds to the most frequent one in the ranking of the twelve formerly mentioned characteristics, namely: American > British > Persian > Arabic

As stated earlier, the results of the questionnaires are highly indicative of the fact that the American English is looked up to and considered quite superior to the other accents of English by Iranian English learners. The main problem with such view is that, as Kirkpatrick (2007) put it, "accents are closely bound up with feelings of personal and group identity" (p. 37); thus, the English learners who aim at acquiring a native accent, due to considering it as the best one, are very likely to be subject to deculturation and loss of local identity (Pishghadam & Kamyabi, 2008).

Here, it is worth stating the interesting question Kachru and Nelson (1996) asked after referring to the same link between accent and identity; "If a typical American has no wish to speak like or be labeled as a British user of English, why should a Nigerian, an Indian, or a Singaporean user feel any differently?" (p. 89); Now, regarding our case, the question is that: Why should an Iranian wish to speak like an American user of English?

Still, a very noteworthy point regarding such great positive attitude of English learners towards American accent and their consequent attempts at acquiring a native accent and sounding native-like is that most of English users in Outer and Expanding circle countries will never need English to communicate with native users (Kachru & Nelson, 1996; Kirkpatrick, 2007; Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008). Iran, as an expanding circle country, is no exception and anyone with few years of experience in teaching English in Iran can easily get the idea that only a tiny percent of Iranian English learners will live or educate in a native English country and have contact with native speakers. So such great efforts and emphasis seem quite absurd.

5. Conclusion

The main result of this study, namely, Iranian English users' belief in American and British Englishes as the best varieties, has an outstanding macro-level ramification. This ramification involves Pishghadam and Mirzaee's (2009) claim that Iran's educational system still lives in the modernist era due to different reasons all emphasizing on

unification such as teaching the same books all over the country and the existence of General Exam, to name a few. It unfortunately seems that their claim is completely true about Iran's ELT, as far as this study is concerned, considering the fact that most of our learners still believe in **a world English** rather than **world Englishes** and that the ideas of "the best" and "the perfect" and the importance of unification have their followers among them.

Also, the detailed descriptive results of the questionnaires clearly illustrated that people with the American accent were considered to be superior to others from different perspectives including psychological, sociological, etc. corresponding to the bipolar adjectives presented in the questionnaires. The possible reasons for such view among Iranian English learners are worthy of attention. The most important reason might be the unique status of the U.S. in the world today, i.e. its being a superpower and dominating the international business and markets, science, information technology, etc. A second possible reason can be the English learners' lack of knowledge about the present situation of English around the world, i.e. its stratification and realization in different varieties through indigenization and the fact that, today, the nonnative speakers of English far outnumber its native ones. Still, a third possible reason can involve the aesthetic aspect, namely, they have a positive view towards it simply because it sounds more beautiful and pleasing to them. Finally, another reason might be that most of our learners are perfectionists, so they consider one of the varieties to be the perfect one and do their best to acquire it.

Whatever the reason, the obvious point is that such way of looking up to a certain variety and longing for being labeled as its native speaker can lead to a faint local identity with a great potential and willingness for adopting its culture.

The most important implication of this study can be making both teachers and learners aware of the fact that there is no best and standard variety of English, i.e., American and British Englishes are two varieties of English just the same as the others with no higher status. As an immediate effect of this awareness they would stop trying to sound native-like. It would also prevent them from placing a very high premium on acquiring and conforming to American or British English. Such prevention, in turn, can have three noteworthy consequences:

First, learners would be relieved of their perfectionism and its psychological hindering effects, including high stress and constant dissatisfaction, on their learning. Second, learners would specify and focus on their needs and motivations in learning English and, based on them; they would either approximate to a certain variety or be satisfied with their own Persian accent. Third, learners would be less likely to be subject to loss of local identity and deculturation.

This study is limited in two noteworthy ways. Firstly, by employing a modification of the matched guise technique in order to utilize natural accents, this study used different speakers and, thus, could not control for the unique "personality cue value" every voice has (Webster & Kramer, 1968, p. 239, cited in Alford & Strother, 1990, p. 486). secondly, this study used learners, only, as its participants. So, further research should be carried out in order to see whether similar results will be obtained when conducting the research on teachers as well.

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Table 4.1 Results of one-way ANOVA for the overall rating of the four accents

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|
| Between Groups | 672.495 | 3 | 224.165 | 319.114 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 460.815 | 656 | .702 | | |
| Total | 1133.310 | 659 | | | |

Table 4.2 Results of Post Hoc Test and one-way ANOVA for the twelve characteristics and overall rating of the four accents

| Characteristics \ Accents | Accents | | | | p level |
|--|----------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
| | American | British | Persian | Arabic | |
| Very intelligent/Not very intelligent | 5.61 | 4.27 | 2.88 | 2.25 | .00 |
| Well educated/ Poorly educated | 5.86 | 4.50 | 3.34 | 2.15 | .00 |
| Ambitious/ Lazy | 5.61 | 4.88 | 2.76 | 1.95 | .00 |
| Self-confident/ Not self-confident | 5.93 | 5.04 | 3.41 | 2.56 | .00 |
| Professional/ Nonprofessional | 5.72 | 4.48 | 2.67 | 1.93 | .00 |
| Good family training/ Poor family training | 5.46 | 4.50 | 3.81 | 3.13 | .00 |
| A good teacher/ Not a good teacher | 5.65 | 4.30 | 2.72 | 1.80 | .00 |
| Gentle/ Harsh | 5.69 | 3.53 | 4.63 | 4.04 | .00 |
| Trustworthy/ Untrustworthy | 5.28 | 4.40* | 3.98* | 3.08 | .00 |
| Sincere/ Insincere | 5.00* | *4.55* | 4.39* | 3.64 | .00 |
| Friendly/ Unfriendly | 5.39 | 3.87 | 3.05* | 2.62* | .00 |
| Patient/ Impatient | 5.05* | 3.27 | *4.74* | 4.26* | .00 |
| Overall rating | 5.47 | 4.25 | 3.48 | 2.74 | .00 |

The stars (***) indicate the pair with no significant difference.

Appendix A

Dear Sir,

I'd like to make a comment about the programs and advertisements we see on TV: there are no positive images of old people at all. Young people on TV have a lot of money, good jobs and wonderful clothes. They travel in fast cars or planes and have exciting lifestyles. But what about the old people we see in programs or ads? They live alone, they are usually poor, they never go anywhere, they never do anything. I think the people who make programs should be more careful. Is that really what our society thinks of older people? Is that really what our young people can hope for in the future? Remember, we'll all be old one day –if we're lucky!

Yours faithfully,

Appendix B

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. You are required to evaluate the personality characteristics of the speakers by marking the part of the scale, which best represents your opinion.
2. There are no right or wrong answers. All answers are equally important.

Teacher 1

I think teacher 1 is/has ...

| | | |
|------------------|---|----------------------|
| Very intelligent | _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ | Not very intelligent |
| Trustworthy | _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ | Untrustworthy |
| Poorly educated | _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ | Well educated |

| | | |
|----------------------|---|----------------------|
| Lazy | ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ | Ambitious |
| Self-confident | ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ | Not self-confident |
| Professional | ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ | Nonprofessional |
| Poor family training | ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : | Good family training |
| Sincere | ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ | Insincere |
| Unfriendly | ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ | Friendly |
| Patient | ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ | Impatient |
| Harsh | ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ | Gentle |
| All in all: | | |
| A good teacher | ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ | Not a good teacher |

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