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Iranian Journal of Language Studies (IJLS) is devoted to all areas of language and linguistics. Its aim is to present work of current interest in all areas of language study. No particular linguistic theories or scientific trends are favored: scientific quality and scholarly standing are the only criteria applied in the selection of papers accepted for publication. *IJLS* publishes papers of any length, if justified, as well as review articles surveying developments in the various fields of language study (including Language Teaching, Language Testing, TESOL, ESP, Pragmatics, Sociolinguistics, (Critical) Discourse Analysis, Curriculum Development, Politeness Research, Classroom Research, Language Policy, and so on). Also, a considerable number of pages in each issue are devoted to critical book reviews. *IJLS* commenced publication 2006 for people involved in language and linguistic studies.

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The Implementation of Process writing: Writing-teacher roles

Ismail Baroudy, Shahid Chamran University, Iran

L1 or L2 writing classrooms are regretfully reported to have been undergoing a frustrating experience in developing student-writers' abilities. This is basically due to the fact that a historic paradigm shift; as that of from product to process writing, has not yet practically occurred in L1/L2 writing pedagogy. In fact, a depressing case as such is readily recognized to be stemming from writing teachers deprived of systematic orientations with the design of such an innovative trend. Writing teachers, to actualize their prospective expectations in this regard, are distinguished to urgently require rich and full acquaintance with process teachers' labeled roles. This study is accordingly conducted to help writing teachers comprehensively conceive and smoothly emulate the indexed roles justifiably allocated for process writing teachers to actualize in the act of teaching writing. Consequently, the teaching/learning writing contexts are expected to successfully celebrate witnessing process oriented teachers sincerely abiding by their process roles and enthusiastically implementing genuine process procedures; thus helping their student-writers to eventually undergo experiencing the skill of writing as a meaning making event.

Keywords: Process Writing; Teacher roles; Writing Roles; EFL Composition; Language Teaching; Teacher Education.

1. Introduction

A paradigm shift in the writing pedagogy is reported to have been recently brought the process theory of writing which capitalizes on successful writing behaviours into bold focus. Writing then is gradually identified as nothing but a process of concurrently thinking and composing, creating and revising. This, in effect, has changed the tone and sphere of first/second language writing arenas.

Formerly, writing teachers were mostly concerned with the final product. Compositions were stipulated to strictly observe accurate grammar, rhetorical patterns, and traditional organization. On the whole, student-

writers were encouraged in vain to honestly emulate copying a typical model of writing.

Admittedly, to facilitate a paradigm shift to occur in first/second language writing classrooms, teachers as well as student-writers are intimately invited to intelligently join this newly emerged community of writers. To this effect, process writing is to be comprehensively described, analyzed and compared at the levels of approach, design and procedure.

Unfortunately, writing classrooms whether of L1 or L2 scheme have not yet been pedagogically exposed to a revolution brought about by the writing tenets of such an innovative movement. This is due to the fact that process writing has not been introduced to its true is still not explicit to audiences at the level of approach, design and procedure. Particularly, innovative schemes need to be treated analytically at the level of design, a level at which an approach can lead to a method and the use of certain teaching activities; as a consequence, theoretical assumptions about language and learning, are advocated. It is, in fact, at this level that learner's role, teacher's role and the role of instructional activities are specifically pinpointed and attended to (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p. 29)

The researcher in this study, accordingly, aims at elaborating on writing teachers' role nucleated in the design of the process approach to writing. Writing teachers, on having their awareness about their labeled process roles adequately promoted, will functionally enable their student-writers to have their ideas realized, their analysis accomplished and their self actualized in the act of writing. Obviously, the findings of an explorative effort as such, will admittedly encourage writing teachers to decisively and non-skeptically embark on a pedagogical exodus despite the vagaries of writing, shifting them smoothly away from product writing to the process paradigm presently seen in vogue.

The present study, accordingly, aims at elaborating on writing teachers' role embedded in the design of the process approach to writing. Writing teachers as well as student-writers, on having them openly oriented and accessed with labeled process roles, will eventually experience the skill of writing and thus have their own ideas practically realized, their analysis accomplished and their self actualized in the act of writing. Obviously, an explorative effort as such will indispensably enable the writing teachers to introduce their

student-writers to the roles specifically allocated to be adopted in process writing. This is justifiably expected to intrinsically motivate them to knowingly submit themselves to an inevitable exodus, despite the vagaries of writing, successfully shifting them from the impediments of product writing to the open-endedness of process writing pedagogy currently in vogue.

2. Process writing: Writing-teacher roles

Teachers of ESL, and EFL, writing are often heard claiming formally introducing themselves as language teachers rather than writing teachers" (Zamel, 1985, p. 86), but the reverse might also be possible. The emphasis in fact in most writing research literature has been on "psychological and social strategies or processes in extended writing, with some consideration of discourse, rhetoric and genre models, but with virtually no consideration of language input and input processing" (Bruton, 2005, p. 15).

But a set of specifications, on having them justifiably extracted from a particular theory of the nature of second language learning, can be inquisitively traced in almost all methods and approaches. This elaborates on how process writing procedural techniques can be readily transferred to be stealthily and effortlessly acquired by student-writers. Unsurprisingly, differences in the instructional specifications reflect implying differences in the theories underlying the methods or approaches of second language teaching and learning. Multiple possibilities can be arranged to have teachers' role within the process framework explicitly projected for functional absorption. Of course, the specifications of such roles can comprehensively acquaint the student-writers with a set of instructions to which they need to cooperatively respond. Student-writers as 'unbenched learners' (Richards and Rodgers, 1988, pp. 100-1) can hone their roles indirectly deriving them from the teachers' systematic classroom instructional behaviours.

The roles specifically allocated for teachers to comply with in directing their second language classrooms can be attentively inspected to infer extrapolating plausible roles which may be analogically assigned to be undertaken by process writing teachers. Communicative Language Teaching, The Silent Way, Community Language Learning and The Natural Approach are seen to transparently mirror reflecting within their designs process writing teachers' role commitments.

All these methods can be gloriously decorated with humanistic label indiscriminately. They view the person at the center of things. They primarily consider the learner and secondarily try to fully observe what is supposed to be learnt. In these person-centered methods and approaches learners are treated as intelligent, sensitive, knowledgeable and experienced beings who are functionally accompanied with a resourceful bio-data which can be found overwhelmingly useful as undergoing the learning process. Teachers who are biased towards the pedagogical implications of such a tendency abide, in consensus, by a set of humanistic principles, documented to have been specifically proposed by Brookes and Grundy (1990, p. 10). These instructional proposals can be worked out to stipulate some of the roles, which can be authentically allotted to process-writing teachers. In process classrooms, the teachers in compliance with their ultimate goal of enabling the student-writers to perform their task diligently try to:

- promote freedom to express self.
- recognize the learner as a resource.
- assure learner freedom from authority.
- value self-expression as intelligent.
- recognize centrality of personal discovery.
- respect individual learning styles.

2.1. Communicative Language Teaching

These roles confidently reflect and illustrate how process student-writers involved in the making of meaning behave within the dimensions of a communicative scheme prospectus. Process writing teachers' roles are well defined and represented in diverse varieties of Communicative Language Teaching Programs. Teachers socializing student-writers into process writing behaviours are accordingly described as facilitators capacitating their student-writers to communicatively express themselves in writing, and to do so, they cooperatively behave with other participants in the classrooms. For instance, when teachers allow student-writers to select their own topics, and since "the process approach extols individual creativity, individual growth and self-realization, thus the teacher's role is that of a 'facilitator' rather than a 'director'" (Bamforth, 1993, p. 94). In the similar vein, Tobin (2001) stresses the point that process-oriented teachers argue for student choice of

topics and forms: the necessity of authentic voice; writing as a messy, organic, recursive form of discovery, growth, and personal expression.
The concept of teacher as mere instructor is rendered inadequate to depict a process writing teacher's overall descriptive functions. In a broad sense, he/she is a facilitator of learning to write and may need to perform in a variety of ways, individually or collectively. Writing teachers are also expected to appear as independent participants in the midst of their writing community circle. These two roles, as a facilitator of learning and as an autonomous participant, cause the process writing teacher to be intimately oriented with more constructive functional roles. Having been typically paralleled with teachers advocating the Communicative Approach, process writing teachers are known to act as facilitators of their own student-writers' functional-notional skill acquisition. They act as advisors globally responding to student-writers' curious questions, act as co-communicators and engage themselves in the communicative activity along with the students (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 131).

2.2. The Silent Way

The Silent Way hides nucleated within itself learning principles consistently matching up with what process writing strongly advocates. Bruner (1966) introduces two traditions of teaching. The first is the 'expository mode' under which pace and styles are determined by teachers as expositors. The second tradition is known as the 'hypothetical mode' based on which teachers and students cooperatively and collaboratively attend to learning requirements. Needless to say, process-writing teachers are seen to abide by the hypothetical mode which inherently treats writing as a creative and problem - solving activity. Process writing teachers supervise student-writers who are not ' bench-bound' (Richards and Rodgers, 1986) attendants, but salient actors involved in discovery learning, aiming at increasing their intellectual potency, adopting an intrinsic attitude to experience their heuristic trials, and efficiently promoting their memory load as well as smooth systematic retrieval (Bruner, 1966, p. 83).

Process writing teachers are not required to submit themselves to their classical commitments: to model, remodel, assist and direct desired student-writer responses to learning, but this outlook does not deny teachers' crucial role in critically attending to student-writers' process of learning. In fact

process writing teachers are required to re-examine and reassess their attitudes and values about the roles they embark on in training student-writers to develop relevant process writing behaviours. Writing teachers in complying with process principles behave as instructors, as observers and as non-deterring or intervening attendants. They give their job description a unique, unrehearsed tone and turn. As process writing teachers, they immerse their student-writers in cooperative-collaborative, group sponsored, peer centered, community oriented activities whereby they try to intentionally keep out of the way letting the creeping-crawling skill mature and develop uncritically and non-defensively in a non-threatening but an encouraging environment. In many cases, there is a further assumption that collaborative peer interaction and student independence should be phased in to replace more teacher-fronted interaction and caretaker dependence (Bruton, 2002). As observers, they non-verbally elicit and shape student-writers text production. Most of the time, they take up a neutral, unbiased mode neither privileged by non-erroneous performance or dispirited by mal-performance. Teachers as non-existent or back-stage participant invisibly monitor student-writers interactions with each other in absentia. They happen to quit their classrooms leaving their student-writers behind free - willed to plausibly struggle with themselves managing their own experimental personal endeavors, to create their own knowledge, to make their own meaning in the real, world.

Process writing teachers perform their roles in the absence of a well-defined, preconceived and strictly prescribed teachers' manual. They themselves are to devise their own self made syllabus collocated with process assignments, accompanied with description, ordered in sequential hierarchy and rationed covering phases or units to be individually or collectively served and manifested within the structural foundation of a writing workshop. The predicament in the process writing curriculum resides with teachers being held responsible for formulating and constructing aid-saturated atmosphere. Student-writers, in such circumstances, are encouragingly spurred to take risks, to adopt adventurous academic personality, to vicariously roam outdoors beyond to the level of competence. Besides, they are expected to fearlessly embark on extemporaneous writing assignments, to streamline their learning styles and strategies, and to adapt themselves to the uncertainties of unexpected products inherently penetrating the true nature of writing.

2.3. Community Language Learning

Process-writing teacher' roles can be explicitly found dissolved not only in the major characteristics but also in the finer minor details of a humanistic oriented approach to language teaching popularized as Community Language Learning. In view of this, process writing teachers role is then seen to fulfill the commitments of a counselor who skillfully understand and supports their student-writers in their cognitive struggle to master the dynamics of process-writing behaviours. This does not imply that these may occur in the absence of teaching. On the contrary, on having recognized how the new process writing experimental involvement can be hazardous to vulnerable novice practitioners, process-writing trainers' meaningfully punctuated task interventions affectively deactivate the unwelcome adverse outcomes. Process-writing teachers are presumably expected to create that kind of writing environment in which student-writers by undergoing gradual inter-hierarchical stages shift from dependency to independency; from total dependence and helplessness to reasonable independence and self assurance, from struggle and confusion to stability and self-reliance.

Community Language Learning model of language education can be extended over to adequately blanket the process-writing enterprise. What this model, if inquisitively detected, emphasizes, is nothing but the facilitation of writing by process to be efficiently realized by some members interacting by the privilege of an interpersonal relationship. Based on such a type of contact, student-writers and instructors come close together collaboratively to facilitate the realization of writing by process. Accordingly, writing by process demonstratively takes place in convenient and coherent contexts whereby student-writers can be analytically and synchronically assessed and rewarded. A supportive community, in fact, sharply lowers the skepticism and anxiety usually caused by those untrodden, unrehearsed educational contexts. Moreover, process writing teachers' presence do not impart threatening implication or exercise an inhibiting restriction, but they are there to roam with their illuminating guidance among the awaiting responsive student-writers rendering their doubts, worries and uncertainties void and non-functional. Student-writers' needs and shortcomings are urgently and decisively met with the empathetic relationship they have unconditionally initiated and started.

The affective policy is extensively imparted and implemented by process writing teachers abiding by the Rogerian school of whole person education in this sense, students are freed from the shackles of attending to local considerations so as to cherish unfettered, global, meaning-driven communication. Process writing is considered an alternative approach in which teachers lay their most emphasis on affection and cognition. Student-writers get rid of their stumbling defenses to attend wisely to the writing situations emerging with teachers creating non- threatening free classroom contexts. In these contexts, by the way, teachers capitalize on writing activities directed towards meaning-making assignments and meaningful interactions.

Process writing is in fact an inner directed, meaning oriented and student centered program. It is strongly biased towards letting a learner-centered mentality dominate and govern the learning/teaching sphere. The superiority of an all-knowing teacher of student-writers appearing foolish in front of the classmates due to uncertainties of raw trials of student-writers competing against those not cooperating with peers, of possibilities to corner and eradicate or alienate student-writers are almost constructively suppressed. The process-writing teacher allows the student-writers to choose the type of topic they find in their interest to write about and to experience language production inductively. During later stages of experiencing with writing as communication, teachers role all of a sudden switch. The student-writer "no longer needs the teachers' encouragement and absolute sense of security to recapitulate the new emerging situation. It is the teacher who needs the understanding and acceptance if he is to continue to give further information" (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, p. 199). The process writing teachers by "physically removing themselves, shift their responsibilities to their student-writers, thus providing a safe environment which in its atmosphere they can freely interact with each other". When student-writers grasp the sense of security in the atmosphere provided, their affective-cognitive energies will be selectively directed and wisely spent on tasks of communication. Consequently "teacher's position becomes somewhat dependent upon the learner. The knower derives a sense of self-worth through request for the knowers' assistance" (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p. 122). Carey (1986, p. 64) reports that the of teachers in later stages develops to find themselves involved in similar "assignments to demonstrate and test the viability of the topics in front of the students sharing the

composing problems and the successes each student was expecting". And, since student-writers are found to be helpful in revising the teachers' drafts, process writing teachers' role come close to fellow writers and move away from being judges and critics. Novice writers inductively find the experts themselves have failure and problems to overcome although their writings by the privilege of knowledge and experience are more developed and polished.

2.4. The Natural Approach

The Natural Approach is not rendered a deviating exception. Similarly, as it is a burning star in the humanistic education cluster, some of the roles adopted by second language teachers observing Nature Approach can be ascribed to, to find them serving in favor of interpreting process writing teachers' role. Process writing teachers in their compliance with teachers' role specified in the Natural Approach direct their educational policies and initiatives toward assisting student-writers to mainly center on meaning, not on form or structure. Process writing teachers as knowers, consciously aware of writing as an experience marked with rewarding errors, do not engage themselves in correcting errors unless they are confronted with meaning blocking agents. Teachers are usually encouraged to be elective with corrections on communicative writing (Ferris, 1999). They are also expected to deal with common points for editing (Muncie 2002). Process writing teachers' doctrine grants momentum to acquisitional activities rather than to learning efforts which in turn encourage student-writers, so as to maintain higher goals attending primarily to meaning.

The momentum process writing teachers' role gains is best realized and manifested in their hard attempts to alleviate the student-writers' affective filter. Of course, this can be realistically fulfilled when they are iron-willed to take risk of experiencing writing in real language that they have in access to be practically exposed in real contexts and to real audiences as teachers or classmates (Chastain, 1988, p. 99). Teachers in process writing, "create interesting, friendly and relaxed classroom atmosphere" (Richards and Rodgers, 1986, p. 138) in which student-writers enjoy the true benefit of low personal anxiety and low classroom tension. This helps them receive more concluding guidance to write with more confidence and to be more reactive to indicative clues of topics readily found in the accessible surroundings. In

sum, Richards and Rodgers (1986, p. 138) aligned with Natural Approach enable readers to specify process writing teachers role as of choosing and orchestrating

> . . . a rich mix of classroom activities involving a variety of group size, content and contexts. The teacher is seen as responsible for collecting materials and designing their use. These materials . . . are based not only on teacher perception but on elicited student needs and interests.

3. Process writing teacher

By and large, the role of the teacher within a process focused classroom in response to the paradigm shift i.e. product to process has been redefined and re-negotiated. Process writing teachers instead of causing and building constraints to student-writers activities to supposedly ensure correct writing, adopted facilitative tendencies and liberal inclinations, and proposed less teacher centered classroom. Moreover, it reflected full responsibility to organize writing experience, exercised strong commitment with facilitating the simulation of successful writing behaviours and showed deep interest in cyclical writing.

Teachers involved in process writing, to introduce their genre identity, monitor their classroom as a setting for real communication and communicative activities in which student-writers are to be enabled to develop cognitive composing strategies. Process writing teachers, in maintaining their roles as investigators, endeavor to concentrate on honestly and genuinely penetrating deep in the particulars of writing processes that are implemented and undergone by student-writers while observing and discussing to identify and marginalize successful styles; and strategies styles employed by hardened student-writers while diligently attending to different aspects of the process writing. In fact, based on Laviosa's (1994:488), "Helping students with planning and drafting is only half of the teacher's task, the other half concerns the teacher's response to a piece of writing".

To conclude, a comprehensive collection of roles privatized and prioritized as to be allotted to teachers in the process writing enterprise can be selectively specified, identified and ordered. Process writing teachers, when witnessed carrying out labeled classroom procedures and activities as concrete role performances, were found that:

1. they control and manage what takes place in the classroom to bring about successful writing behaviours.
2. they promote the development and the use of writing strategies.
3. they commit themselves to instructional procedures observed in the silent way. The Natural Approach, Communicative Language Teaching and Community Language Learning.
4. they adopt and maintain a non-authoritarian presence in the classroom.
5. they move beyond methods and focus on exploring the nature of effective classroom writing.
6. they create the favorable conditions under which learning/ acquisition of the skill of writing can effectively take place.
7. they impart knowledge to their student-writers by a variety of multiple means.
8. they abide by the task-oriented side of teaching writing.
9. they motivate the student writers who are unmotivated and nurture those who are already well motivated via the task of writing by process in a foreign language.
10. they give student writers meaningful, relevant and interesting task to comply with in writing.
11. they maintain discipline to the extent that a flourishing working atmosphere is established.
12. they steadily involve the student-writers in activities that demand intra-student communication and cooperative efforts on their part.
13. they introduce student writers to the concept of self appraisal and self evaluation through reports and discussions.
14. they encourage pride in achievement by allowing student-writers to display their work on classroom walls and noticeboards.
15. they guide the “subject” under consideration and the way in which it is learnt in the classroom.
16. they evaluate and judge whether student writers’ efforts and contributions to the writing process are valid, relevant and correct.

17. they behave as a resource of knowledge about the writing process and how to acquire it.
18. they organize classroom activities, set up learning tasks and assist student-writers in performing these activities.
19. they probe the student writers through close questioning in order to recall previously acquired knowledge back to access.
20. they cope with a new set of social relationships in the class.
21. they instruct less than usual.
22. they keep the writing task clear, simple and straightforward.
23. they teach the convoluted, the cyclical, and the spiral writing process.
24. they analyze and diagnose the writing product.
25. they establish short term and long term goals for each student.
26. they balance classroom activities, some for individuals and some for groups.
27. they develop and assign meaningful assignments.
28. they provide a real audience; an audience other than the teacher.
29. they make student-writers papers available to other student-writers.
30. they help student writers see their own body of work to gradually develop.
31. they provide writing activities which reinforce, listening and speaking skills.
32. they provide heuristics for invention, purpose and audience.
33. they outline the goals clearly for each writing assignment.
34. they distinguish between students who want to be corrected and those who do not.
35. they seek to develop classroom activities in which students can simultaneously communicate through writing while they are engaged in learning language forms.
36. they include in-class writing activities besides writing for homework.
37. they seek to elevate the quality of student writers' written communication by letting students experiment with writing as a means of self expression.

38. they realize that writing involves a sequential and interrelated process of creating and criticizing.
39. they specify a communicative purpose for each piece of writing.
40. they select topics that fit in the student-writers' schemata.
41. they avoid appearing as authoritative director or arbiter.
42. they respond to students' writing.
43. they guide helping student-writers get engaged in thinking process of composing.
44. they incorporate practices of "successful" writers in their syllabus.
45. they balance process and product in their classroom contexts.

4. Student-writer roles/Writing-teacher roles

Unsurprisingly, as it has been previously stressed, learning theories can be tossed upside down to their heads to let counterpart theories crop-up on behalf of teaching. By the same token, learners' roles can be stood bottom up to leak out functional teachers' role to have them readily realized and dramatized in real classroom contexts. Quite expectedly, the teaching-learning communicative dependency can be transparently crystallized when standardized process writers' roles listed as canons are turned round to yield cognate versions to provide a systematic description of process writing teachers' role.

Accordingly, a set of selective statements selectively embodying process student-writers' roles are converted to serve as process writing teachers' roles which can be worked out to pragmatically denote that it is quite essential for process writing teachers:

1. to bring up student writers primarily depending on themselves as initiators.
2. to introduce themselves as facilitators to help student-writers learn to write by process.
3. to coach student writers struggling with challenging ideas in unrehearsed contexts.
4. to habitualize the student writers to take risks with language and to deactivate the adversities by referring to judicial justifications.

5. to inject confidence in what their student-writers evolve as a quality product.
6. to tag their student-writers with the title of teacher knowers who can be matched in pairs assembled in small group collaboration.
7. to advise their student writers not to restrict themselves merely to teacher generated rules and modification of lexis.
8. not to expect their student-writers to write finished products merely to be examined by them.
9. to acculturate their student writers to writing for some actual, experimental reader (e.g. classmates, friends, etc . . .)
10. not to impose writing in response to tests or homework assignment that are to be evaluated by them.
11. to mention the resources where relevant information can be found.
12. to stimulate student-writers to refer to their background knowledge when they undergo the experimentation of creating a text.
13. not to hinder student writers flow of writing by imposing unjustifiable time limitations.
14. to foster writing as a daily activity in student-writers.
15. to encourage student-writers to resort to aids such as dictionary, grammar and the like.
16. to expect student writers experience writing in compliance with a specified discourse community.
17. to orient student writers with “process” “making meaning” “invention” “heuristics” and “successive drafts” as essential requirements if process writing is required to be accomplished.
18. to treat the four skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing integratively, as interrelated communicating vessels.
19. to familiarize their student writers with the rhetorical structure of the second language.
20. to motivate student-writers to respond positively to writing assignments.
21. to attract student-writers to reflect on what they produce as a text.

22. to allow student-writers to write as often as possible.
23. to trigger student-writers will to deliberately involve themselves in writing activities.
24. to instigate student writers to master the syntax and lexicon of second language in order to gain control of the language.
25. to enable student-writers to develop insight into their own writing styles.
26. to stress inductive reasoning.
27. to encourage student writers to take their chances, appearing foolish to communicate by using the means at their disposal to convey meaning.
28. to reflect on student-writers' learning to write strategies and preferences which might assist them in becoming more effective writers.
29. to promulgate the links existing between the task and its rationale.
30. to supervise student-writers find their own way.
31. to leave student-writers with learning how to learn writing dimension.
32. to show student writers how knowledge about language can be organized.
33. to introduce student writers to the subject that they will develop and to prepare the necessary background by the time they undertake their writing task.
34. to raise student writers' awareness so as to help them discover to themselves their own strength and weakness.
35. to enhance student writers endeavors at exploring and developing a personal approach to writing.
36. to familiarize student-writers with how to develop self directed learning as a writing habit.
37. to socialize student writers with procedures to be followed so as to come up with generalizations, and to work out decisive conclusions.

38. to inform student-writers to involve themselves in joint accomplishment.
39. to play multiple varying roles.
40. to develop characteristic interaction patterns with the student-writers as partners to convey meaning.
41. to remind student writers how errors can be made to work positive didactic functions.
42. to make student writers depend on their linguistic knowledge and knowledge of their first language.
43. to provoke student writers to stress learning chunks of language as wholes and formalized routines to help themselves perform writing beyond their average competence.
44. to vary their teaching style conforming themselves to the formality of the situation they are involved in.
45. to conceptualize how student writers manage information by strategies, such as attending selectively to associating, categorizing, pattern learning and inferencing.

5. Conclusion

The paradigm shift from product to process on abiding by the requirements of a trendy design may provide the possibility to be concretely actualized in the second/foreign language settings. In fact, on specifying the labeled roles of instructional activities, the roles of process student-writers as well As the roles of process writing-teachers, such the historic exodus to process writing may be authentically and genuinely observed in the development of successful writing behaviors. Now that labeled process writing-teachers are explicitly specified, the writing-teachers can implement them helping student-writers readily assimilate the change and enter for accomplishing its immediate requirements. They can discover by writing what they do know and eventually accept the idea of dynamically practicing the writing skill as a meaning-making event. In sum, process writing cannot be successfully harnessed and enhanced unless the components of a proper design in which the writing-teachers' exclusive roles are well pinpointed and clearly disclosed for real implementation.

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All that glitters is not gold: Curriculum alignment and improving students' test scores

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Due to the centralized educational system in Iran, high school principals have directed English teachers to raise their students' achievement test scores so that they will look good on their school report card. Test scores provide the only benchmark against which the students' progress at school can be measured. Although according to the regulations teachers have to add the oral and written exam scores, and record their combination divided by two on the final report card, they usually rate their students' oral ability based on their performance on the written exam. In this study the report card average score of 47 students in grades one, two, and three at the Iranian senior high school in Kuala Lumpur was compared with that of the newly developed oral and written exam. The report card average score of the three classes was 16.37 out of 20 in comparison to the recent average score of 11.58 out of 20 which is based on the combination of the scores gained from the newly developed oral and written exam. The difference between the report card average and the recent exam average was 4.79 scores, which seems to be due to the exclusion of the oral exam scores by some teachers. The information gained from the focus group interview revealed that most teachers rated their students based on their written performance and neglected the oral exams. This may in part reflect a problem with the instruction in which the teachers teach to the test.

Keywords: Curriculum alignment; Test score improvement; EFL classroom; Language testing; Backwash effect.

1. Introduction

The term "curriculum alignment" is usually associated with positive washback. Curriculum alignment implies that the curriculum is modified according to test results in order to improve the quality of education

(Andrews, 1994; Linn, 1983; Madaus, 1988; Shepard, 1990, 1991, and 1993). English (1992) defines curriculum alignment as the relationship between the curriculum content and the assessment tools or the relationship between what is taught and what is tested.

Due to the centralized educational system in Iran, high school principals have directed English teachers to raise their students' achievement test scores so that they will look good on their school report card. Test scores provide the only benchmark against which the students' progress at school can be measured. This paper reports that, although according to the regulations teachers have to add the oral and written exam scores, and record their combination divided by two on the final report card, they usually rate their students' oral ability based on their performance on the written exam. The paper will reflect a problem with the instruction in which the teachers teach to the test.

2. Background

As Brown (2002, p. 14) states: "Washback becomes negative when there is a mismatch between the content (e.g., the material/ abilities being taught) and the test". In fact, much time of the class is always spent on materials that appear on the test. Sometimes, students like and prefer to learn English communicatively but the test they have to undergo is multiple-choice and discrete-point. Therefore, they have to focus on smaller parts of language at the expense of integrated skills. Since there is no correlation between test and curriculum objectives, this washback effect of the test on teaching and learning is negative.

The underlying theme of curriculum alignment is teacher involvement and attention to students' needs and diversity. Curriculum alignment, an extremely controversial issue due to concerns of its effectiveness, has had its supporters as well as critics. Some researchers (Wraga, 1999; Strong, Silver & Perini, 2001) maintain that curriculum becomes ineffective when it is aligned to invalid or biased assessments. Glatthorn (1999), on the other hand, argues that it can be an effective means of helping classroom teachers enable students to perform well on high-stakes tests if it is used in good professionalism.

Accountability is a means by which individuals take responsibility for their actions to assure others that there are some safeguards in place to encourage

good practices and to prevent bad practices or abuses. Wraga (1999) considers proper curriculum alignment as an effective tool for managing teachers. English (1992) also believes that accountability involves an estimate of the adherence of what is taught to what was supposed to be taught.

Teaching to the test, in its extreme form, means cheating or giving students actual questions from a secure version of a test. Commonly, it means direct preparation for a particular test. For example, teachers teach their students how to fill in answer sheets and focus their instruction on limited skills and exercises most likely to appear on the test (Kober, 2002).

As Vallette (1994) pointed out, washback is particularly strong in situations where the students' performance on a test affects their future careers and lives. In such cases, teachers often feel obliged to teach for the test, especially if their effectiveness as a teacher is in part evaluated by their students' performance. Many people think that holding teachers accountable for students' achievement will result in better education. They assume that the best data about students' improvement come from achievement tests. Although such scores are undoubtedly useful for accountability purposes, educators recognize that they have some limitations.

Many English teachers presuppose that teaching to the test is an acceptable practice, whereas there is much documentation to indicate that it is not. Although alignment of curriculum to the broad objectives of achievement tests is logical, improving students' test scores doesn't mean that their capabilities to use the language orally have improved. Because raising the test score is so often the single most important indicator of school improvement, teaching comes to resemble testing more and more. Schools send messages to their teachers about the importance of test-curriculum alignment and teachers design instruction with such alignment in mind. These effects are evident in Iranian high schools. Unfortunately, only test score improvements are taken to signal school improvement in Iran. Test-curriculum alignment and teaching to the test have influenced the meaning of scores.

The focus on educational accountability has increased pressure to raise test scores in Iranian high schools. To see: 1) what criteria English teachers use to evaluate their students' achievement, 2) to what extent the students' report

card scores indicate their achievement of the oral activities in the textbook, and 3) to what extent teachers teach and test towards the final test format, this study compared the English language scores of the Iranian senior high school students who had registered for the educational year 2006-2007 at the Iranian high school in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia with their performance on a face to face oral exam. Based on the scores from their performance on the newly developed written and oral tests, on the one hand, and their previous report card scores, on the other hand, six students were purposively selected for the focus group interview. Before proceeding to the research method, a brief description of the Iranian educational system, English education at high schools in Iran, and Iranian schools abroad is provided in the following text to help the reader understand the research context.

3. Research Context

Iran's educational structure is in operation with the following duration and age ranges:

	Level	Duration	Age
1)	Primary school	5 years	6-11
2)	Junior high school	3 years	11-13
3)	Senior high school	3 years	13-16
4)	Pre-university	1 year	16-17
5)	University (BA)	4 years	18-21

The school system is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education**.** In addition to schools, this Ministry also has responsibility for some teacher training and some technical institutes.

Students in grade three at junior and senior high schools will not graduate or be promoted unless they pass a test at the provincial or national level. From time to time the exam for the first and second grade students is held at the provincial or national level. Teachers are being held accountable for ensuring that their students meet academic standards and pass the tests. Principals are being held accountable for raising average test scores each year at the school, district, and provincial levels. Schools with rising test scores are often praised and receive rewards, while those with falling scores are severely criticized. In such a pressure-cooker environment, many teachers and principals feel they have to use all legitimate means to improve student' test scores.

In Iran, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) and is practiced within a context-restricted environment, in which the determiners of language learning phenomenon depend on classroom activities, determined by the textbook and classroom teacher. English teaching starts from the first grade of grade of junior high school. All high schools follow the curriculum standards. The Ministry of Education compiles, develops and publishes textbooks and teaching materials, for nationwide public and private high schools inside and outside the country. Most high school English teachers implement the grammar translation teaching method in their classrooms to meet the expectations of the national curriculum and exams whose format and structure are prescribed by the Ministry of Education.

The Iranian schools around the world have been established by the Islamic Republic of Iran so that Iranian children living abroad will be encouraged to follow their studies at Iranian schools. These schools are usually less populated than the schools inside the country. Although the teaching and learning situation is different from one country to another, the Iranian educational system, rules, standards and textbooks are prescribed by the Ministry of education for Iranian high schools abroad, too. The Ministry of Education sends specialized and efficient education manpower to these schools.

4. METHOD

4.1 Sample and Location of the Study

"It is not always possible to use probability sampling in educational research. Instead, a researcher can use non-probability sampling. In non-probability sampling, the researcher selects individuals because they are available, convenient, and represent some characteristic the investigator seeks to study" (Creswell, 2005, p. 149). In this study, all high school students who were studying at the Iranian high school in Kuala Lumpur in 2006-2007 were studied. There were 47 students at the senior high school level, 17 students in grade one, 16 students in grade two, and 14 students in grade three. They came from different parts of Iran. They were, therefore, a microcosm of the whole population, that is, they represented Iranian senior high school student population.

As to the sampling procedure for the focus group interview, based on the scores from their performance on the newly developed written and oral tests, on the one hand, and their previous report card scores, on the other hand, six students were purposively selected. Two students, whose oral and written scores had the most difference and their report card scores were more than the combination of the newly developed written and oral tests, were chosen from each class. Three of the selected students were boys and three of them were girls, that is, one boy and one girl were selected from each class. The participants were volunteers and willing to discuss the topic without force.

Krueger (1994) suggests four to five participants in each focus group interview because small groups supply more opportunity for participants to share ideas and provide for interaction among interviewees. Creswell (2005) suggests four to six participants and believes that "Focus groups are advantageous when the interaction among interviewees will likely yield the best information and when interviewees are similar to and cooperative with each other" (p.215). The group size should be small enough to allow each participant to share insights, but large enough to provide diversity of information. In this study, a group of six participants was interviewed.

4.2. Materials and instrument

Three of the current English Language Teaching textbooks *English Book 1, 2, and 3* (Birjandi, 2006, 2005, and 2003) that are locally designed to cater for and respond to the English language needs of Iranian students in grade one, two and three at senior high schools were taken to serve as the corpus of the present study. Three achievement tests based on the content of the textbooks were used to measure students' written performance. The one-on-one oral exam was also based on the content of the textbooks as recommended by the Ministry of Education (See Appendix A).

Before conducting the semi-structured focus group interview, an interview guide was developed (See Appendix C) to direct the conversation toward the desired topics and issues. It helped the researcher know what to ask about, in what sequence, and how to pose his questions.

The semi-structured focus group interview was employed in this study to obtain rich information to help interpret the meaning of the data which were collected from the students' scores on the report card and the newly developed oral and written exam. The questions for the focus group

interview were developed based upon the recommendations from Krueger (1994). Two high school students helped pilot the focus group interview guide in order to see whether the questions and the process on the guide were appropriate. Based upon the result of the pilot test, the final focus group interview guide was developed.

4.3. Procedures

This research was done in two phases. In the first phase, three written achievement tests which had already been developed and validated based on the regulations and circulations of the Iranian Ministry of Education were used to measure students' written performance in grade 1, 2 and 3 at the Iranian senior high school in Kuala Lumpur in the beginning of the Iranian 2006-2007 school year. Students' performance was measured through a group-administered test. The students in the 3 classes were tested orally one by one and assessed by three raters. The written and oral exam included items based on the recommendations and guidelines circulated by the Ministry of Education (See Appendix A).

During the oral test administration, which took approximately 5 minutes for each student, the examiner asked the student a series of questions in English that were part of the testing materials. The student's reply was compared to a suggested answer and scored on the answer sheet as either correct or incorrect. The total score was used to assign students to an instructional level for conversation classes, but could also be expressed as a grade equivalent to be used for this study.

Promotion through the Iranian education system is based on middle- and end-of-term examinations. At schools, system of grading is based on a 0-20 scale. An average scale of at least 10 is required for promotion. Grading for the English subject is based on a 0-40 scale divided by 2 in which the outcome is the same as grading in the other subjects. So what appears on the students' report card is their score out of 20 (5 scores from the oral test + 15 scores from the written test). The third grade students' final exam scores is recorded only based on their written exam performance.

A comparison of the scores from the students' report card which is the combination of their oral and written exams rated by their previous teachers and the scores from the two newly administered oral and written tests was made through. The score of each student in grade one, two, and three on each

exam has been tabulated in tables 1, 2, and 3 (See Appendix B). After determining the average of each grade, the average of the whole students' scores in the three grades was also computed, tabulated, and compared as follows.

Table 4.
Comparison of the average score of each grade on the written and oral test

	MEANS			
Grade	Report Card (out of 20)	Written (out of 30)	Oral (out of 10)	Written+Oral (out of 20)
1	17.29	25.60	5.07	15.33
2	17.18	26.77	5.85	16.31
3	14.64	22.12	4.08	13.10
Total	49.11	74.49	15	34.74
Mean	16.37	24.83	5	14.91
SD	1.49	2.41	0.88	1.64

In the second phase, based on the scores from their performance on the newly developed written and oral tests, on the one hand, and their previous report card scores, on the other hand, six students were selected purposively for a focus group interview. Two students, whose oral and written scores had the most difference and their report card scores were more than the combination of the newly developed written and oral tests, were chosen from each class.

The following suggestions and recommendations which were made by Krueger (1994), Ary, et al. (2002), and Creswell (2005) were followed to gather data through the interview.

1) A quiet, suitable place was located for conducting the interview.
2) Consent was obtained from all of the participants before the interviews.
3) A focus group discussion guide, including the questioning route, moderator's guide, and discussion outline, will be developed in advance to provide the direction for group discussion.
4) The moderator took the keynotes and the assistant moderator took the detailed notes throughout the discussion, including notes on participants' body language.
5) All of the interview session was tape recorded in order to avoid

missing the interviewees' comments.

6) The participants were thanked in a courteous manner after concluding the interview.

The note-based content analysis was used to analyze the focus group interview. The raw data for the note-based content analysis relied primarily on 1) filed notes which were based on observations and comments in the interview, 2) a debriefing session, and 3) summary comments at the conclusion of each interview. The use of tape was primarily to verify specific quotes and to translate the oral summary at the conclusion of the interview. The analysis was based upon the systematic note-based analysis adapted from Krueger (1994) with some modifications.

After the interview, the draft report for each interview was sent to each of the interviewed students to check whether the content was valid. A peer expert with a background in research was asked to review the frequency of counting and data interpretation in order to check the researcher's accuracy in this analysis.

5. Results and Discussion

Table 4 displays the average scores of students in grade one, two, and three. The performance of students on the written tests is much better than their performance in the oral exam. The report card average score of 47 students in the three classes was 16.37 out of 20 in comparison to their recent average score of 11.58 out of 20 which is based on the combination of the scores gained from the newly developed oral and written exam. The difference between the report card average and the recent exam average was 4.79 scores. In fact, this reduction is because of the addition of the oral exam score and then dividing the sum of the written and oral exam scores by two.

The fact that scores on the written tests are much higher than oral scores seems to be logical because it implies that the teachers rated their students based on their written performance and neglected or didn't hold any oral exams. Although according to the regulations they have to add the oral and written exam scores, and record their combination divided by two on the final report card, they rate their students' oral ability based on their performance on the written exam.

As it can be seen in tables 1, 2, 3 (See Appendix B), and 4, it is clear that the oral skills of students are considerably less developed than their written skills. The average of the oral exams in all grades is less than the written exams. The combination of the recent oral and written exam scores is less than the report card scores which is supposed to be the combination of previous written and oral exam scores. The tables indicate that if the oral exam scores are neglected and students are rated based on their performance on the written test, there will be little difference between the previous and recent marks. But if the combination of the recent oral and written exam scores is compared with the previous exam scores, the recent scores in all cases, due to the oral exam, are less than the previous ones.

As a result, the low rates in the oral exam may in part reflect a problem with the instruction in which the teacher teaches to the test. The oral parts of the textbooks are not tested at the provincial or national level. That is why teachers narrow down the content of the textbooks to what shows up on the test. "The only reasonable, direct inference you can make from a test score is the degree to which a student knows the content that the test samples" (Mehrens, 1984, p. 10). Students' lack of ability to use the language orally indicates that test-curriculum alignment and teaching to the test are distorting instruction in Iran.

Out of the six students who took part in the focus group interview, four of them stated that they were not tested orally, one of them said that he had been tested orally but only her written exam score was reported on the report card, and one of them stated that she was tested orally and her report card score was a combination of the written and oral exam.

Three students said that their teachers skipped the oral activities in the book and asked the students to learn them only for the written exam. Three of the interviewed students stated that they just repeated oral activities after their teachers but their teachers didn't put much emphasis on them in comparison to the writing and reading exercises.

All of the interviewed students believed that they were weak at using oral activities of the textbook and their report card scores could be considered only to indicate their written performance. Only one of them stated that there was an oral exam, the score of which was added to the written exam score

and the combination of the two divided by two was reported on the report card.

A girl student (M. A.) commented that she agreed with her teacher to teach to the test because her parents didn't care about learning and only the exam score was important for them. She said:

> Within two or three years we are supposed to sit for the university entrance exam which is only held in a written form and affects our future career. Our parents expect us to pass the exam, so we expect our teacher to teach to the test.

Another student (N. M.) said:

> Our teachers and we know that it's very important to improve our oral skills but the final evaluation system at the provincial or national level makes us spend more time on those parts of the book that are most likely to show up on the final exam.

Two of the students commented that their written performance on the exams at the provincial and national level was supposed to be the main benchmark to evaluate their achievement and their teachers' success in teaching. They believed that teachers should not be blamed for teaching to the test because they were doing the right thing to protect themselves and their students against the external pressures, such as parents, principals, etc.

Depending on how it is done, teaching to the test can be either productive or counterproductive. It can alter the interpretation of test scores because it involves teaching specific content. Therefore, the direct inferences that can be reasonably drawn from test scores are weak and general in nature, and inaccurate if instruction is limited to the actual objectives sampled in the test or, worse yet, to the actual questions on the test. The temptation exists to teach too closely to the test and teachers are pressured to do so. In fact, the outcome is high scores on a paper and pencil test at the expense of listening and speaking abilities.

The ultimate purpose of any test is to improve teaching and learning. Some forms of test preparation are very far from this ideal, while others move closer toward it. As a general guideline, a test preparation practice is inappropriate if it raises test scores without also improving students' mastery

of the broader subject being tested. Higher test scores do not necessarily mean more learning.

6. Conclusion

As the results show, it seems that English teachers neglect the oral exam and rate their students based on their performance on the written exam. Because they are not accountable for the oral exam and students are not tested orally at the provincial or national level, they don't pay much attention to it. They narrow down the content of the textbooks to what shows up on the test. In a nutshell, they do so because of the washback effect of the test.

Teaching to the test stifles creativity and encourages cheating. Schools that don't do well on tests forfeit thousands of Iranian Rials in reward money. One indicator of a teacher's overall evaluation is based on test scores, a significant motivator for teaching to the test. This measure is one of main factors in evaluating teachers which will force them to spend inordinate amounts of time teaching to the test and teaching test-taking skills.

In Iran, school principals and teachers can pay a heavy price if they do not forge a strong link between what is taught in classrooms and what is tested at the provincial or national level. Doing well on the provincial or national tests can mean generous cash rewards.

Instead of using test results to penalize schools, tests should become stronger tools for improving schools. Teaching to the test is exactly the right thing to do as long as the test is measuring what students are supposed to learn.

Chances are the teachers and principals are honest people who would not use dishonest tactics to raise scores on tests. But when the stakes are raised on testing, the incentives to cheat grow much larger. Cheating is inexcusable. This is an area where the Ministry of Education needs to be extremely vigilant.

When inappropriate or questionable forms of teaching to the test do occur, it’s usually the teachers who are blamed. The real fault for inappropriate forms of “teaching to the test” lies not so much with teachers, but with policymakers who have created accountability systems centered on higher test scores, with little regard for how these scores are attained.

Policymakers and education officials must recognize that they can't keep demanding higher test scores without also paying attention to how their demands affect teaching and learning, in both positive and negative ways. They have a responsibility to help prevent bad or questionable forms of teaching to the test and encourage good practices. They should 1) provide teachers with various kinds of support to help them improve classroom teaching, 2) make sure that provincial and national tests are valid, fair, reliable, and well aligned with standards and curriculum, 3) revise testing systems to include a variety of item formats that measure both basic and more advanced knowledge and skills, 4) design accountability systems that reward good teaching and encourage attention to all important standards and subjects, and use other means to assess progress in standards and subjects not covered by tests, 5) provide teachers with professional development in effective ways to help students master the content in standards, 6) strengthen the handling of testing issues in teachers' pre-service education and professional development, 7) provide students with the extra time and attention they may need to master the academic knowledge and skills contained in standards, which may entail more intensive instruction during the school day, or time after school or during the summer, 8) systematically monitor the intended and unintended effects of testing and accountability, 9) watch out for possible score inflation by tracking trends in tests, questioning miraculous gains in teacher- made tests, and comparing test scores with scores on other assessments and measures of progress.

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Appendix A

The written and oral exam included items based on the following recommendations and guidelines circulated by the Ministry of Education.

First and Second Grade Guidelines

I .Final written exam (30 scores) which includes:

1. Spelling	
One or two missing letters in 12 words used in sentences will be completed by the student	3 Scores
2. Vocabulary which includes:	
Fill in the banks with the words given.	4 scores
There is one extra word. (8 sentences and 9 words)	
Fill in the blanks with your own knowledge. (2 sentences)	1 score
Choose the best answer. (4 multiple-choice questions)	2 scores
3. Reading and sentence comprehension	
Read the text and answer the following questions. (Completion,	4. scores
Multiple choice, True/ False, Wh-questions, Yes/ No questions)	
The following sentence implies that or according to the sentence . . .	3 scores
The above structure is followed by multiple choice questions	
4. Structure	
1. Multiple choice items.	2 scores
2. Put the scrambled words in order.	2 scores
3. Complete the incomplete sentences.	2 scores
4. Look at the picture and answer the questions.	2 scores
5. Language functions	
Complete the incomplete dialogs. (From the textbook)	3 scores
6. Pronunciation	
1. Look at the example and put the words under the right columns.	1 score
2. Which word is different?	

II. Final oral exam (10 scores) which includes:

1. Reading

1. Fast reading	1 score
2. Pronunciation and stress	1 score
3. Fluency	2 scores
4. Comprehension	2 scores

2. Retelling and summarizing the reading text

The student will summarize the text after reading	1.5 scores

3. Language functions

The student will act out the dialogs and conversations in language functions section	1.5 scores

4. Pronunciation

The student will pronounce the words which are in the pronunciation section	1 score

Total: 40 scores (30 scores for written test +10 scores for oral test)

Third Grade Guidelines

III. Final written exam (40 scores) which includes:

1. Spelling

One or two missing letters in 12 words used in sentences will be completed by the student	4 Scores

2. Vocabulary which includes:

Fill in the banks with the words given. There is one extra word. (8 sentences and 9 words)	4 scores
Fill in the blanks with your own knowledge. (3 sentences)	3 score
Choose the best answer. (6 multiple-choice questions)	3 scores

3. Reading and sentence comprehension

Read the text and answer the following questions. (Completion, Multiple choice, True/ False, Wh-questions, Yes/ No questions)	4. scores
The following sentence implies that or according to the sentence….	4 scores

The above structure is followed by multiple choice questions
Cloze passage 3 scores

4. Structure
1. Multiple choice items. 3 scores
2. Put the scrambled words in order. 2 scores
3. Complete the incomplete sentences. 2 scores
4. Look at the picture and answer the questions. 2 scores

5. Language functions
Complete the incomplete dialogs. (From the textbook) 4 scores

6. Pronunciation
1. Look at the example and put the words under the right columns. 2 score
2. Which word is different?
Total: 40 scores

Appendix B

Table 1.
The scores of the students in grade one at the Iranian senior high school in Kuala Lumpur

Student	Report Card	Written	Oral	Written+Oral
1	19	27	5.5	16.25
2	20	29.25	6.25	17.75
3	16.5	22.5	4	13.25
4	18.25	25.75	5.25	15.5
5	20	30	9	19.5
6	13.5	20	2.5	11.25
7	14	21	3	12
8	14.75	21	3	12
9	17	25.5	3.5	14.5
10	16.25	22.75	3.75	13.25
11	16	23	3	13
12	19.5	30	9	19.5
13	20	30	9	19.5
14	15.25	24.5	3.5	14
15	18.75	28.5	5.5	17
16	19.5	30	6.5	18.25
17	15.75	24.5	4	14.25
Total	294	435.25	86.25	26.75
Average	17.29	25.60	5.07	15.33
Std	2.22	3.55	2.21	2.81

Table 2.
The scores of the students in grade two at the Iranian senior high school in Kuala Lumpur

Student	Report Card	Written	Oral	Written+Oral
1	15	25.5	4	14.75
2	19	30	7	18.5
3.	12.75	19.25	3.25	11.25
4	20	30	10	20
5	17.5	28	5.5	16.75
6	20	29.5	8	18.75

7	19	30	8	19
8	16.25	25	5	15
9	14.25	20.75	3.75	12.25
10	18	27.5	6	16.25
11	18.5	29	6	17.5
12	15.75	26.5	4	15.25
13	17	27	4.5	16.75
14	13.5	20.75	3.25	12
15	19	29.5	7	18.25
16	19.5	30	7.5	18.75
Total	275	428.35	92.75	261
Average	17.18	26.76	5.79	16.31
Std	2.35	3.62	1.98	2.69

Table 3.

The scores of the students in grade three at the Iranian senior high school in Kuala Lumpur

Student	Report Card	Written	Oral	Written+Oral
1	18.25	28.75	7.25	18
2	18	27	6	16.5
3.	15.5	23	3.5	13.25
4	15	23	3.5	13.25
5	12.25	20	3	11.5
6	10.75	17	2.5	9.75
7	20	30	7.5	18.75
8	11	16.75	2.75	9.75
9	17.5	24.5	4	14.25
10	12	20	2.5	11.25
11	11.75	17.5	2.5	10
12	19.5	28	7	17.5
13	13	20.5	3	11.75
14	10.5	13.75	2.25	8
Total	205	309.68	57.25	183.5
Average	14.64	22.12	4.08	13.10
Std	3.45	5.03	1.95	3.44

Appendix C
Focus Group Discussion Guide

I. Introduction: Welcome and introduce names.
II. Have the participated students complete the "Participation Information Form" with observed background information.
III. Students' opinion about high school English teachers' assessment.
   1. What were your previous teacher's criteria for measuring your achievement? Probing questions: such as 1) written, 2) oral, 3) weight of each part.
   2. To what extent do you think your report card score indicate your achievement of the oral activities in the textbook?
   3. To what extent do you think your teacher taught and tested you towards the final test format?
IV. Summary and conclusion
   1. Is there any other idea/point that you would like to comment or share with us?
V. Appreciations

Learning English through short stories

Ashraf Haji Maibodi

Today EFL students comprise a great part of the college population. In order to attain their academic goals, these students need to improve their second language proficiency in the four basic skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. Teachers of college level EFL students are faced daily with maximizing students' progress in these skills and at the same time, with keeping students interested and motivated in their lessons. How we as teachers use and feel about the language has a significant effect upon our students' abilities to learn. Language experience takes advantage of students' interests and knowledge and facilitates the comprehension of the language within the context and also acts as a facilitator of language acquisition. To study the positive 'effects of the narrative text genre over a non-narrative (expository) text genre in reading comprehension' at the intermediate level of language acquisition, a study was conducted at The Islamic Azad University, Maybod Branch (Yazd). About 200 students from two levels of language proficiency participated in this study (freshmen and sophomores). Drawing upon the importance of text choice and studying literature in SLA the results of the study showed that the narrative text genre and language proficiency level were influencing factors in not only improving the participants reading comprehension but also somehow helped the students to acquire native like competence necessary for communication.

Keywords: Genre: Narrative; Expository; Schema Theory; Text Analysis

1. Introduction

The study of a foreign language, like that of most other disciplines is both a progressive experience and a progressive acquisition of a skill. And the progress made in a language when properly taught will not only have positive values but will also lay a foundation upon which further progress can be built.

Progress is relative to the emphasis given to the instructional program and to the interests and aptitude of the learner.

Stern (1983) argues that in the twentieth century the concept of learning as it is understood today, has been greatly influenced by the psychological concept of the learning process, which includes not only the learning of skills or the acquisition of knowledge, it also refers to learning to learn and learning to think; the modification of attitudes, the acquisition of interests, social values or social roles and even changes in personality (p. 18).

Learning theory provides the foundation for linguistic theory and language acquisition theory. As researchers learn more about learning and theorists revise previous theories, linguists alter their views of language and language educators change their perspectives on language, learning and teaching (Chastain, 1988).

Reading is one of the four skills of learning that a student has to master in learning the language. It is a basic and a complementary skill in language learning. Reading requires the reader to focus attention on the reading materials and integrate previously acquired knowledge and skills to comprehend what someone else has written. Chastain (1988) claims that sometimes erroneously called a passive skill because the reader does not produce messages in the same sense as a speaker or writer. Reading nevertheless, requires mental processing for communication to occur. Reading is a receptive skill in that the reader is receiving a message from a writer. Also, referred to as a decoding skill, the terminology implies the idea of language as a code, one which must be deciphered to arrive at the meaning of the message.

One of the recent approaches to reading in EFL/ESL is the 'Interactive Model', proposed by Eskey (1988). In this model 'interaction' between the reader and the text, and the other is the interaction between *lower* and *higher* levels of reading process. Fluent reading results from the simultaneous interaction and operation of these two skills. *Lower level* skills, are known as identification skills such as, recognizing words and sentences necessary for decoding and extracting explicit information. *Higher level* skills require more cognitive effort including reading between the lines to find the implicit information and understanding the writer's point of view and making interpretations. Studies developed in the field of reading reveal that reading

is a more complex process in which the reader combines the textual information with his/her background knowledge and skills to recreate the writer's intended meaning. Perfetti (1984) defines reading as "thinking guided through print".

Traditional approaches to reading describe comprehension, as a matter of simply extracting the meaning of words as isolated concepts. Reading to improve pronunciation, practice grammatical forms and study vocabulary do not constitute reading at all because by definition, reading involves comprehension. When readers do not comprehend, they are not reading. Today foreign languages are learnt by a number of students who will never have the opportunity of conversing with native speakers, but who will have access to the literature and periodicals or scientific and technical journals, written in the language they are learning.

Language students need large amounts of comprehensible input, and reading materials provide the most readily available source. Stephen Krashen (1982), argues that the primary purpose of beginning-level L2 courses is to provide students with interesting and comprehensible language input in a low anxiety setting, i.e. texts that are based on a narrative genre that does not focus the syllabus on grammatical structures or thematically organized vocabulary but on simple yet powerful medium that provides students input: interesting and comprehensible input. He suggests that L2 is most successfully acquired when conditions are similar to those present in L1 acquisition: when the focus of instruction is on meaning rather than on form.

Readers rely on their prior knowledge and world experience when trying to comprehend a text. The organized knowledge that is accessed during reading is referred to as schema (plural schemata). Since reading by definition signifies comprehension, the phrase 'reading process' implies an active cognitive system operating on printed material to arrive at an understanding of the message. Readers make use of their schema when they can relate what they already know about a topic, to facts and ideas appearing in a text. The richer the schema is for a given topic the better the reader will understand the topic.

Understanding of a text is constrained by the perceptions of the topic. The reading process, therefore, involves identification of the text genre, formal structure and topic, all of which activate schemata and allow readers to

comprehend the text. Some students' apparent reading problems may be problems of insufficient background knowledge (Carrell, 1988b). Where, this is thought to be topic related it has been suggested that 'narrow reading' within the students' area of knowledge or interest may improve the situation. Evidence shows that good and poor readers do not always use their schemata appropriately or are even unaware of whether the information they are reading is consistent with their existing knowledge. Also it is seen that students who do not spontaneously use schemata as they read will engage them if given explicit instructions prior to reading (Bamford, 1997). Grellet, states that proficient readers do not concentrate on sentences and words. Instead they start with global understanding and then work toward comprehension of detailed aspects of the reading (cited in Chastain, 1981).

Teachers who understand that reading is a strategic process should establish environments that provide opportunities for students to not only learn the language but also learn about language while they are using it for real purposes. To initiate and sustain interaction in the classroom is the teacher's responsibility most of the time, so the teacher's performance is as important as the learner for a complemented interactive process (Brown, 1994; Nunan, 1995; Todd, 1997).

1.1. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to highlight the effects of a narrative text genre over a non-narrative (expository) text genre. Since reading is a meaning gathering activity, sophisticated readers do not read every word, but they comprehend the meaning of a passage as a whole. Therefore, they look for the gist of what they are reading. Two main purposes are involved and the primary purpose of this study is to contribute to the development of a 'student's' perspective, that is, teaching the student to develop a particular attitude and to activate the student's knowledge through recall/review what is known about the topic. And a global way of thinking about the art of reading in particular and language in general like training the students to consider a text in its entirety, identifying the type of text or information, weaning students away from the tendency to translate the text word for word, rather to identify main idea(s), understanding titles, order or sequence of information and verify predictions. And also to check their own understanding, monitor their own reading comprehension, summarize the

major ideas, distinguish relevant from irrelevant ideas, to paraphrase the text they have learnt, expand on new ideas and words, integrate new understandings and prior knowledge, "in some ways parallel to normal speaking, reading and writing" (Nagy, 1988).

1.2. Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions motivated the study:

Q1: Is there any significant difference in reading comprehension of narrative text genres between freshmen and sophomore EFL students?

Q2: Is there any significant difference in reading comprehension of non-narrative (expository) text genre between freshmen and sophomore EFL students?

Q3: Is there any interaction between the freshmen and sophomore EFL students' performance for the two narrative and non-narrative (expository) text genres?

The null hypotheses of the study states that:

There is no significant difference between students' reading comprehension of narrative and non-narrative texts especially in the intermediate stages of language learning.

2. Review of Related Literature

Reading is a complex process that combines the use of skills to arrive at comprehension. Readers in an EFL situation need reading materials in the form of textbooks that will not only build, but will also strengthen beginning reading skills, such as word analysis, structural analysis, dictionary use, making inferences and learning the meaning of words from the context.

Short stories at the intermediate stages of language learning could be beneficial since literature has the quality of being universal and short stories will allow the teacher to deal with human problems. Very often class discussions will make a student to think, to do away with misconceptions that he has gained and will enhance an international feeling of understanding many misunderstood concepts and may even perhaps help gain some new perspective on them. Students voice their feelings about many issues and are earnestly look for the information that could promote a better understanding

of the world in which we as human beings live in. Moreover, since he is drawing from his own experiences, the problem of not having knowledge about the subject, as might occur on a topic about pollution or even nuclear explosion, does not come up. Furthermore, because he is expressing his feelings about an issue he will get involved in the topic which he tends to see as important and will like to spend a great deal of time on it. It is quite natural for human nature to communicate through narration a sequence of actions that could be interesting and sometimes motivating too.

2.1 An Integrated Approach to Literature in ESL/EFL

Stern believes that, literature offers potential benefits of a high order for English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL). Linguistically, literature can help students master the vocabulary and grammar of the language as well as activate the four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. (cited in Celce-Murcia 1991).

In recent years, many scholars and educators have acknowledged the academic, intellectual, cultural and linguistic benefits of the study of literature. Micheal Long in his paper supports this idea by saying that, "Both literature and language involve the development of a feeling for language, of responses to texts—in the broadest sense of the word that is used both in written and spoken discourses" (cited in Brumfit and Carter, 1986, p. 42).

Widdowson (1975) says that literature should be viewed as discourse. The student's aim should be to learn how the language system, the structures and also the vocabulary and concepts of English are normally used in communication (p. 80). The world created in the work of literature is the foreign world, and literature is a way of assimilating the knowledge of this foreign world, and of the view of reality which its native speakers take for granted when communicating with each other (Rivers, 1981).

Literature is a vehicle for learning the differences between language varieties. It not only introduces to the reader the different styles and registers found in different varieties of English which authors adopt according to text and purpose but also the correct form of language in discourse and it illustrates a particular register embedded within a social context and thereby, provides a basis for determining why a particular form is used. Scholars believe that the language used in literature is authentic, real

language in context, to which we respond directly and which if selected appropriately can be an important motivation for study and also can lead on naturally to an examination of the language. Literature also fosters an increase in reading proficiency, and in this way contributes to academic and occupational activities. Students' authentic responses to the literary tradition will both assist the development of appropriate syllabuses, through carefully graded sequence of texts.

2.3. Text Genre: Narrative vs. Expository

Text genre is a factor related to reading comprehension: a text genre is a type of written or spoken discourse and texts are classified on the basis of the intent of the communication. Broadly speaking, genre research aims to group texts according to type, and to identify and describe features which texts of a particular genre have in common. Text genres are expressed in linear and non-linear forms, and are narrative, expository or the two. They can be informative, entertaining and persuasive, depending on the intent of the author and the goal of the reader. The narrative text is known for having a literary or aesthetic purpose. They tell about a sequence of events in a chronological order. Fictional stories, novels and dramas are generally thought to fall within this genre. The purpose of expository text is to describe events or objects to illustrate, explain or persuade (Just & Carpenter, 1987b). Examples include technical textbooks, encyclopedias, newspaper articles and health promotional materials. Understanding a text is constrained by perceptions of the topic. An informative text provides a point of reference to be used to check for understanding.

Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress define genres as 'typical forms of texts which link kinds of producer, consumer, topic, medium, manner and occasion', adding that they 'control the behavior of producers of such texts, and the expectations of potential consumers' (Hodge & Kress, 1988, p. 7). Genres can be seen as constituting a kind of tacit contract between authors and readers, a kind of shorthand serving to increase the 'efficiency' of communication. They may even function as a means of preventing a text from dissolving into 'individualism and incomprehensibility' (Gledhill, 1985, p. 63).

Any text requires what is sometimes called 'cultural capital' on the part of its audience to make sense of it. Generic knowledge is one of the competencies required (Allen, 1989). Like most of our everyday knowledge, genre

knowledge is typically tacit and would be difficult for most readers to articulate as any kind of detailed and coherent framework. Clearly one needs to encounter sufficient examples of a genre in order to recognize shared features as being characteristic of it. As for reading within genres, some argue that knowledge of genre conventions leads to passive consumption of generic texts; others argue that making sense of texts within genres is an active process of constructing meaning (Knight, 1994). Studies conducted by Buckingham (1993) show that readers of a particular genre appeared to have a broader repertoire of terms and that the genre was being used as an unspoken rationale for moving from one topic to the next.

The definition of the term genre varies somewhat between different writers, but most follow Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993) in relating the concept of genre to communicative events or acts. In such approaches, genres are defined not in terms of language, but by features which could be described as external to the text itself. These include areas such as text purpose, writer/reader relationships and the medium of communication (e.g. stories, newspapers articles, letters, etc.). These external characteristics naturally have internal implications such as the type of syntax, lexical choice, organization, layout, and many other linguistic features.

Genre however, need not be literary. It has been seen that genres can be found in all texts. It has been stated that expository texts are less familiar, less predictable and less "considerate" than a narrative text (Gordon, 1992), although there is a strong debate on the issue (Alexander, 1997; Gordon, 1992). Alexander (1997) suggests that expository text, when well written can provide emotional and cognitive interest, while many others, most notably like Rosenblatt (1994), disagree. Alexander (1997) likens this comparison of expository to narrative text as "finding oneself through the content" in expository text, versus Rosenblatt's notion of "losing oneself" in narrative text (p. 86). No doubt, reader variables such as age, interest, motivation and culture influence reading comprehension in all genres.

Genre provides an important frame of reference which helps readers to identify, select and interpret texts. Beginning reading instruction has been focused on the use of narrative text on the assumption that stories are easier to comprehend because of their predictable structure. This assumption is so deeply ingrained that almost all of the available programs for beginning

reading instruction are based on story text because students will find it easier, to process stories than exposition. A genre-focused course, at least at the intermediate level necessitates that the students are taught to be more aware of the concept of genre and the way it affects and increase their ability to differentiate their language and text structure through the use of a greater linguistic range.

In a series of small-scale studies, Kamil and his collaborators (1994) have shown that students checked out a significantly greater number of story books, compared to information books, from the school library. Approximately 80% of the teachers used predominantly narrative materials because they felt that expository materials would be "too hard" for the students.

2.4. Schema Theory

The technical definition of the word 'schema' in text linguistics and discourse analysis is the underlying structure which accounts for the organization of a text or discourse. Different kinds of texts and discourse e.g. stories, description letters, reports and poems to name a few are distinguished by the ways in which the topic, propositions and other information are linked together to form a unit. This underlying structure is known as the 'schema' or 'macro structure'.

Schema theory is based on the belief that "every act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world as well" (Anderson et al. in Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983, p. 73). Readers develop a coherent interpretation of text through the interactive process of "combining textual information with the information a reader brings to a text" (Widdowson in Grabe, 1986, p. 56).

Schema theory envisions an information-processing model of the mind in which knowledge is stored in related units that can be recalled and activated to operate on incoming information (Anderson, 1984). This theory assumes that readers use a process of semantic constructivity to create meaning from a written or spoken text, which itself has no meaning (Perkins, 1983). According to this theory meaning does not reside in the written material. Instead the reader recreates the author's intended message based on the interaction that takes place in his head between the text and his background

knowledge (Adams, 1983; Bernhardt, 1984; Carrell, 1984a, 1984b; Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983; Perkins, 1983).

One of the major areas of research that is connected to the issue of prediction in reading is that of schema building as it relates to one's ability to interpret text meaningfully. Chastain (1988) states the authors of *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines the noun 'process' as a "system of operation in the production of something." Three words with significance for second language learning occur in this definition: system, operation and production. The word 'operations' implies that a process consists of activities. These activities are systematized, and the systematized activities result in a product. Since reading by definition signifies comprehension, the phrase 'reading process' implies an active cognitive system operating on printed material to arrive at an understanding of the message. During the writing process, the writer's goal is to activate background and linguistic knowledge to create meaning. Now the reader's task is to activate background and linguistic knowledge to recreate the writer's intended meaning.

Rumelhart (1977) contends that "schemata" are 'packets' or 'units of knowledge' that represent our belief about 'objects, situations, events, sequences of events, actions and sequences of actions' (p. 34). Readers' mental stores are termed "schemata" (Bartlett in Cook, 1997) and are divided (Carrell, 1983a) into two main types: "content schemata" are background knowledge about the cultural orientation or content of a passage and "formal schemata" define reader expectations about how pieces of textual information will relate to each other and in what order details will appear (Carrell, 1987). In the process of reading comprehension, a text entails drawing information from both the message and the internal schemata until sets are reconciled as a single schema or message (Anderson et al. in Hudson, 1982). The reading process, involves identification of genre, formal structure and topic, all of which activate schemata and allow readers to comprehend the text (Swales, 1990). Where this is not the case some disruption of comprehension may occur. In fact, it is likely that "there will never be a total coincidence of schemas between writer and reader" (Wallace, 1992) such that coherence is the property of individual readers.

Yet, there is evidence that good and poor readers do not always use schemata appropriately or are unaware of whether the information they are reading is consistent with their existing knowledge. Also, there is evidence that students who do not spontaneously use schemata as they read will engage them if given explicit instructions prior to reading.

2.5. Textual Information and the EFL Reader/Learner

Reading is often the chief goal of learners in countries where English is taught as a foreign language. Attention to academic reading or reading-for-the-purpose-of-learning, therefore, has come to be one of the most important methodological topics in the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages. The main function of language instruction is to enable students to learn academic subject content, typically through reading textbooks and similar materials. In modern classrooms, the teachers' and learners' attention is centered as much on the skills for deriving meaning from texts as it is on the meaning which resides in those texts. The field of ESL/EFL recognizes that learners need to have control of basic patterns of the language in order to learn new subject content.

The most obvious and most common form of material support for language instruction comes through text books and teaching beginners is considered by many to be the most challenging level of language instruction. Textbooks evoke a variety of emotions in their users. No teacher is entirely satisfied with the text used, yet very few manage to teach without one. Especially, in EFL classes where the students have a limited exposure to the language, their proficiency growth is apparent in a matter of a few weeks, since the ultimate goal of all learning a language is to be able to comprehend and produce it in unrehearsed situations which demands both receptive and productive creativity, and the selection of an appropriate textbook becomes a crucial process.

An important criterion for text selection for a beginning graduate program is that the texts somehow translated into the student's L1 would be comprehensible. There must be a good match between features and content of the text and the needs and competencies of the learner (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). If the author provides too much information there is a risk for the learner to become disinterested. If there is not enough information given to scaffold and fill in the blanks, the learner may make incorrect inferences,

become frustrated and comprehension may suffer (Adams & Bruce, 1982; Bovair & Kieras, 1991; Gordon, 1992; Norris & Phillips, 1994).

The pleasure that many learners experience when reading a whole text is an important factor to consider, since ideally, it creates the motivation to read more. Reading comprehension begins with the author (Adams & Bruce, 1982). Because texts are never completely explicit, the reader must rely on preexisting schemata to provide plausible interpretations. The author must anticipate the prior knowledge that the learner will bring to the text, and based on that knowledge he must fill in gaps, correct misinformation, and add new information so that the learner can grasp the intended meaning of the text (Just & Carpenter, 1987a).

When faced with unfamiliar topics, some students may overcompensate for absent schemata by reading in a slow, text bound manner while other students may overcompensate by wild guessing (Carrell, 1988a). For learners reading at the limits of their linguistic abilities, "If the topic is outside of their experience or base of knowledge, they are adrift on an unknown sea" (Aebersold and Field, 1997). Both strategies will inevitably result in comprehension difficulties. Research by Johnson (in Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983) suggested a text on a familiar topic is better recalled than a similar text on an unfamiliar topic. Swales (1990), believes that this and other research, "supports the common sense expectancies that when the content and form are familiar the texts will be relatively accessible."

Although our understanding of the nature of the reading critically influences the instructional practices which teachers provide, there is far more to reading than its psycholinguistic aspect alone. As with all literacy uses, there is a significant cultural side as well, that is central in second and foreign classrooms. Since learners in an EFL/ESL context come to the learning situation with their own beliefs and cultural values that reflect their own native patterns and introduce textbooks that will allow the EFL learner to get acquainted with the new culture as well as helping them to live in harmony with their own native born culture. The new words, phrases and cultural aspects of the second language culture is normally presented through simple short stories that will motivate the young readers to analyze ideas and thoughts without getting biased. When learners/readers are made aware of the significant sub-cultural differences that exist among disciplines it will

make the academic reading and learning easier to cope with. The language differences written in particular formats and the specialized vocabulary used to present information could make the learning process tiring if the student is totally unaware of the text genre that he is reading. As already mentioned, in the beginning stages of academic reading, the process has to be motivating so that people learn to read by reading and that good readers are people who read a lot (Smith, 1978b).

Most foreign language reading specialists view reading as interactive. The reader interacts with the text to create meaning as the reader's mental processes work together at different levels (Bernhardt, 1986; Carrell, Devine & Eskey, 1988; Rumelhart, 1977). The level of reader comprehension of the text is determined by how well the reader variables (interest level in the text, purpose for reading the text, knowledge of the topic, foreign language abilities, awareness of the reading process, and level of willingness to take risks) interact with the text variables like text type, structure, syntax and vocabulary (Hosenfeld, 1979).

There are also many other factors involved in selecting an appropriate EFL textbook. They are interest, exploitability, readability which includes lexical knowledge, background knowledge, syntactic appropriateness, organization, discourse phenomena and length, also the topic, political appropriateness, cultural suitability, and appearance of the textbook as far as the lay out, type size and font is considered as being important.

Rivers (1981) puts forward some suggestions that could be effective for evaluating a textbook before it is selected for a reading (pp. 475-482).

a. Appropriateness for local situation: Purposes of the course in relation to content of textbook; age and abilities of students; length and intensity of course.
b. Appropriateness for the teacher and students: Method and techniques; supplementary aids; teacher's manual and students' workbook; convenience.
c. Language and ideational content
d. Linguistic coverage and organization
e. Types of activities
f. Practical considerations
g. Enjoyment index (for students and teachers)

Textbooks may then be compared, category by category, and an overall rating established for each. Teachers who remain alert professionally, evaluating carefully in the light of practical experience what they have heard and read, and contributing their own insights to the fund of professional knowledge, remain vital and interesting in the classroom even after years of teaching the same subject. The eclectic teacher knows that each class is different. (Rivers, 1981).

2.6. Effective Reading Strategies in EFL Classroom

Researchers in first language acquisition have contributed much to the understanding of how the reading process develops. First language research has found that readers' purposes and approaches to texts differ not only by text, but by the individual reader. Second language researchers have drawn upon this information and have found similarities between the reading strategies of first and second language readers.

At the intermediate stage, Brown (2001) argues some 'automatic' processing has taken hold and as phrases, sentences, structures and rules are practiced they increase in number, forcing the mental process to automatize. At this stage of learning, techniques can increase in complexity in terms of length, grammar and discourses now characterizes reading material as students read paragraphs and short simple stories and are gradually learning to apply skimming and scanning skills. The EFL teacher can encourage students to be efficient readers by introducing effective strategies when reading in a second language. The learner no doubt, brings with him strategies which have a purpose, full of procedures to facilitate deeper and better understanding (Alexander & Jettson, 2000). For example, pointing out the differences between a fairy tale and a newspaper articles helps the reader to recognize the different text types and to prepare for the uncomplicated ending that typically characterizes a fairy tale. On other hand, the same reader would need to prepare very differently to read a newspaper article about the technicalities involved in a disarmament treaty. In this case, if the reader is aware of the genre he will also see that the vocabulary would be very specialized and the sentence structure more complicated.

When teachers of second language reading recognize that each reader brings to the reading process a unique set of past experiences, emotional and mental processes, level of cognitive development and interest level in the topic, they

also recognize that not all teaching strategies will be effective for all students. Dubin & Bycina (1991), argue that academic reading is a cover term for a variety of strategies that bring together advanced study skills, vocabulary building and even writing activities such as note-taking, summarizing and underlining. Teaching a L2 classroom is totally different from teaching native born students (cited in Celce-Murcia, 1991).

The efficient teacher can divide his reading into three parts so as to enable the EFL reader to understand what he is reading. For example, the eclectic teacher will introduce "pre-reading" activities to a particular text, elicit or provide appropriate background knowledge, and activate necessary schemata. Previewing a text with the students should arouse their interest and help them approach the text in a more meaningful and purposeful manner as the discussions will compel them to think about the situation or points raised in the text. The pre-reading phase helps students define selection criteria for the central theme of story or the major argument of an essay. Pre-reading activities include: discussing author or text type, brainstorming, reviewing familiar stories, considering illustrations and titles, skimming and scanning (for structure main points and future directions).

"While reading" exercises help students develop reading strategies, improve their control of the second language, and decode problematic text passages. Some timely explanations will help the student comprehend the writer's intention and also to make inferences while the text is being read. No doubt, this strategy could be difficult to handle since different students need different strategies. But the teacher can help the student by guiding the student to make use of those strategies and offer concrete exercises in the form of activity sheets. The teacher can help the student to identify the different techniques of writing employed by the author and also pinpoint the effects of guessing the meaning of words from the context. The teacher can consider syntax and sentence structure by noting grammatical functions of unknown words, make a reference to the type of writing by pointing out the transitional expressions used by the writer to emphasize changes of thought expressions, analyzing reference words, predicting text content and gradually introduce to the students the idea of using the dictionary effectively.

"Post reading" exercises first check students' comprehension and then lead students to a deeper analysis of the text, when warranted. Because the goals

of most real world reading are not to memorize the author's point of view or to summarize text content, but rather to see into another mind, or to mesh new information into what one already knows, second language reading must go beyond detail-eliciting comprehension drills to help students recognize that different strategies are appropriate with different text types. For example, scanning is appropriate strategy to use with newspaper advertisements whereas predicting and following text cohesion are effective strategies to use with short stories. By discussing in groups what they have understood, students focus on information they did not comprehend correctly.

Rivers (1981) believes that ability to read in another language with direct comprehension and with fluency should be cultivated in progressive stages, and practiced at first with carefully selected material which students can read with ease and enjoyment. She further argues that rushing students too soon into reading material beyond their present capacity for fluent comprehension with occasional contextual guessing will destroy the students' confidence and the student will gradually loose all interest to read further. If they are forced to read complicated material in the language too early in the course, they find themselves adrift in a flood of words and expressions they may never before have encountered. The choice of textbooks within a suitable genre is more applicable because they will reinforce the notion that texts should be attacked in meaningful chunks, rather than word by word. However, too often foreign and second language reading instruction has simply been used as a vehicle through which to teach structure and lexis of the language rather than the skill of reading (Celce-Murcia, 1991).

Since communication in the second language is an important factor the student must be continually provided with opportunities to read material in an active interchange of communication while their books remain closed.

3. METHOD

According to the hypothesis of this study, it is believed that the introduction of a narrative text genre in the form of simple short stories could be more effective than a non-narrative (expository) text genre on reading comprehension especially in the intermediate stages of language learning.

To examine the above research question the following corresponding null hypothesis was formulated:

There is no significant difference between students' reading comprehension of narrative and non-narrative texts especially in the intermediate stages of language learning.

To investigate the hypothesis the following experiment was designed.

3.1. Subjects

200 female, adult, Persian speaking university undergraduates, majoring in English Translation at The Islamic Azad University of Maybod (Yazd), voluntarily participated in this study. These students were all studying English as a foreign language, their ages ranged between 20 to 22 years. There were two groups of students: group A, were sophomores in their first semester, and group B was freshmen in their fourth semester.

3.2. Instrument

In each group that is, group A and B there were 100 students. To determine the proficiency level of the participants an OPT (Oxford Placement Test) with about 100 questions on grammar and written structures was administered as a pre-test. Based on the scoring standards of the OPT, the students were assigned to the aforementioned groups. Therefore, in each group there were about 60 students.

In addition to the OPT (Oxford Placement Test) which was administered as a pre-test to establish the proficiency level of the two groups of students, the material or rather the text that was used for instruction for students of group A, (sophomores) who were undertaking 4 credits in "Reading Comprehension" was "Discovering Fiction" by Judith Kay and Rosemary Gelshenen, Student Book 1, Cambridge University Press, and students of group B in the fourth semester who were studying "Simple Prose" 2 credits by Dr. Abbas Ali Rezai and Helen Ouliaeinia, SAMT Publication. The whole spring semester was devoted to teaching the lessons whereby the students were given instructions and directions to comprehend the texts they were studying. No special treatment was given to any of the groups. At the end of the teaching period that lasted for nearly 12-14 weeks, a TOEFL post-test was

given to cover the research question regarding the effect of a narrative text genre over a non-narrative genre in reading comprehension.

3.3. Procedures

After the OPT pre-test was administered, both groups were taught by the researcher herself. The students were taught according to the standards set down by the university syllabus. No special treatment was given to any of the groups.

Students of group A, the sophomores, undertaking "Reading Comprehension" were taught the book "Discovering Fiction" by Judith Kay and Rosemary Gelshenen. Since the book by itself is a collection of simple short stories the students evidently did not have any trouble in understanding some phrases that portrayed some cultural differences. If there were any such differences a quick reference was made to their native culture and as a result of which many culture bound idiomatic expressions were easily understood by the students. Once in three weeks a few short passages based on expository genres were given to the students at this level but no teaching as such took place.

The lessons in the book itself were divided into three parts; each had a pre-reading activity, to generate interest in the story and stimulate discussion and activate students' prior knowledge. A visual representation of the story in the form of an illustration depicting the central moment in the story was also presented. A story preview, the story and finally after reading activities in the form of questions based on understanding the story, vocabulary comprehension where the words in the story was given in a context and sharing ideas in which the students had to put forward their ideas of what they had learnt or felt about the story. Before the actual reading, students read the story preview for each story in which certain words related to the story in question was given in bold type which was afterwards used in a short vocabulary fill-in-the-blanks exercises. Based on the story preview the students made predictions as to the outcome of the story. In each story a brief discussion of a literary term just to familiarize the student with the type of story and help the student to understand literature and learn to read more attentively was introduced. An author's biography introduced in the text could be interesting for the student to learn about who the person was, who has written the story, the period in which he or she lived and what were their

interests. No doubt the students did have some trouble in trying to make references and inferences and understanding some phrases in the story at the beginning of the course. The whole book itself was divided under different topics like "Childhood Memories", "The Unexpected", "Traveling through Time", "Turning Points", and "Men and Women". From each section two or three stories were chosen to suit the interests of the students. Before each section started a preliminary introduction in few words was given to the students so as to prepare them for the stories that they would come across. The first two summaries collected and corrected by the instructor helped and guided the students in understanding the story.

Every story had a few exercises in 'reading between the lines' in the form of multiple choice questions and for each answer the students were encouraged to defend their choice. At the end of each reading session that was for about four hours a week, students were asked to write a brief summary of the story they had read and understood. For this course, an additional self-study text (as prescribed by the syllabus), was introduced. An abridged version of about 1800 to 2000 words of "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens was given for further study.

For students of group B undertaking 2 units of "Simple Prose" the preface to the text itself states quite clearly that it is not just a book on reading but deals with different genres so as to enhance students' lingual skills of reading, speaking, writing and listening. The book is classified into three parts: Man, Animals and Further Readings. No particular order was followed for teaching the lessons. As already mentioned different topics based on different genres were selected and before each session started a briefing was given regarding the techniques used by the writer. In addition, notes on what is simple prose, style, techniques of writing and the elements of short story that was prepared by the instructor was given to the students as a self-study material for their final exams at the end of the semester.

Each unit had been divided into five sections: words to watch, understanding the writer's ideas, building up vocabulary, understanding the writer's techniques and finally writing projects. Since the text was treated as a reading text for these students who were "English Translation" undergraduates therefore, comprehension was one of the main focuses of the study. And this was achieved through analyzing ideas in the section devoted

mostly to 'Building up Vocabulary' where the students had to either rewrite or expand on those phrases selected from the text. This was a writing project and the main aim was both, to control comprehension and language at this level of learning. There was no particular focus on vocabulary for both the groups only the idea of 'denotation and connotation' was pointed out from time to time if the text in question ever needed such an explanation. The freshmen, no doubt had no difficulty as far as this part was concerned. In some cases where the text was not a narrative, the students did have some trouble in gathering ideas in the form of short summaries. In addition to the text prescribed for this level the students were also given a fiction—"Oliver Twist" by Charles Dickens, an abridged version, for self study and the students' comprehension of certain metaphorical statements or other expressions was tested.

About ten lessons were covered for both groups and before the end of the semester a TOEFL post test in the form of 30 reference questions and one short narrative text and another expository text was given to control both the processing time and proficiency level of the 60 students chosen for the study. Those scores that fell within one standard deviation above and below the mean were taken as final samples for further study. Therefore, 30 students were chosen from each group. Another TOEFL post test was administered particularly for these 30 students in each group. They were given 2 narrative passages and 2 expository passages and processing time and reading comprehension was the main focus of this test.

4. Results

After instructions and class work a final TOEFL reading comprehension post test was conducted to control both processing time and reading comprehension of 30 students from each group. For the post test 2 narrative samples and 2 expository samples were given to the students. The students processing time for both the text genres were controlled. The post test lasted for 60 minutes and students were all asked to start their test exactly at the same time and then they were asked to record the exact time that they had spent for processing each text. On an average out of 30 minutes that was allotted by the researcher for each text, the processing time for the narrative text, on an average was between 12-15 minutes, and the expository texts took much more time. Especially, for the sophomores the processing time was

about 25-30 minutes for the expository text because they were quite unfamiliar with certain words and references. The main problem was vocabulary. The final scores of both groups were calculated separately.

In order to achieve accuracy as far as effectiveness of text genre was concerned a 2x2 factorial design was conducted to determine reading comprehension of both the texts. That is, a comparison was made between the scores achieved by the students in both levels of learning for narrative and expository texts. There were 14 questions in the narrative text and 17 questions in the expository text.

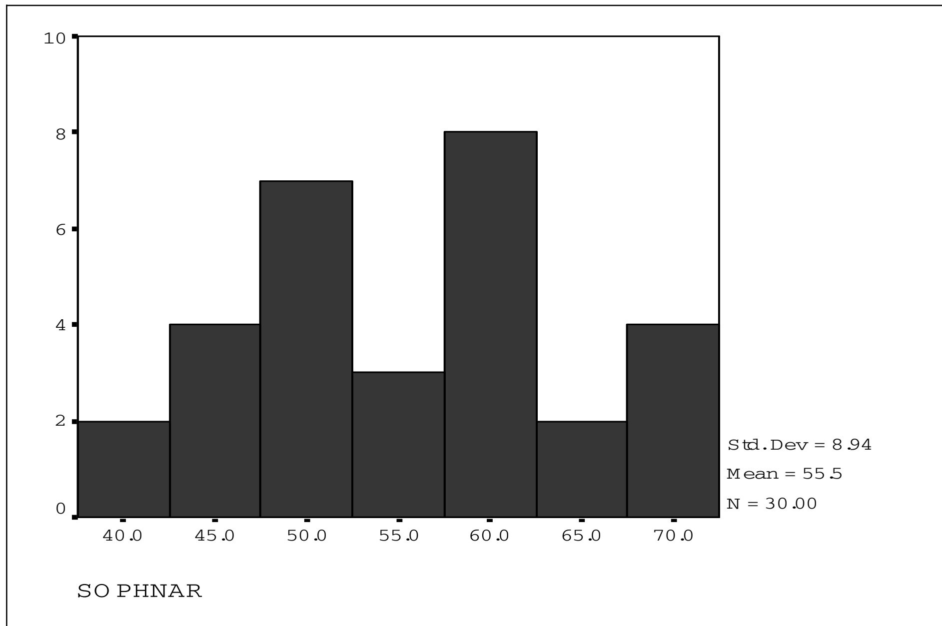
The descriptive statistics of the post test of the two groups is as follows:

Table 1
Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Included		Excluded		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sophomores*METHOD	60	100	00	00	60	100
Freshmen*METHOD	60	100	00	00	60	100

Table 2
Report

METHOD		Sophomores	Freshmen
Expository	Mean	60.0000	61.6667
	N	30	30
	Std. Deviation	8.30455	7.23179
	Sum	1800.00	1850.00
Narrative	Mean	55.5000	57.6667
	N	30	30
	Std. Deviation	8.93945	9.25997
	Sum	1665.00	1730.00
Total	Mean	57.7500	59.6667
	N	60	60
	Std. Deviation	8.85021	8.48062
	Sum	3465.00	3580.00



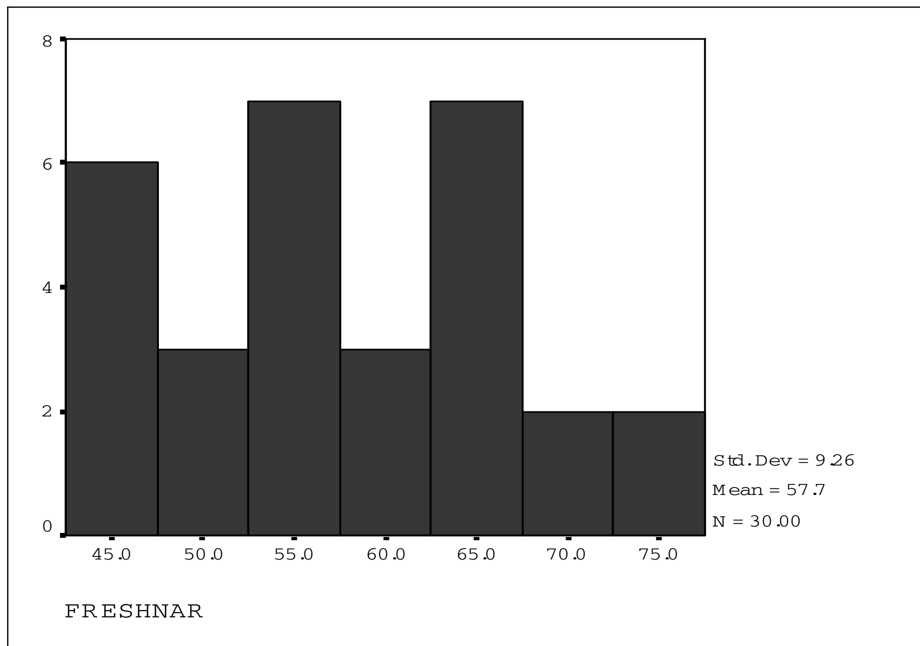
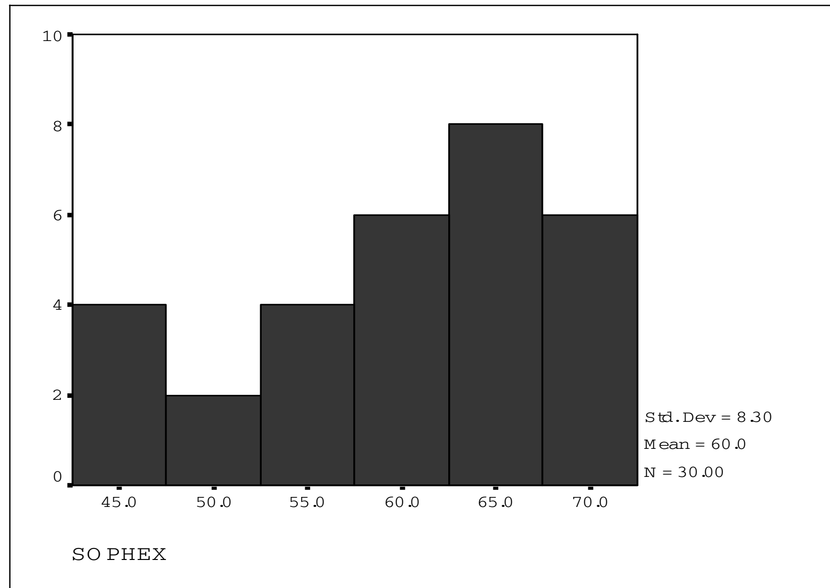


Figure 1: Demonstrates sophomores' and freshmen's performance in narrative texts and that the freshmen show a better performance in reading narrative texts.



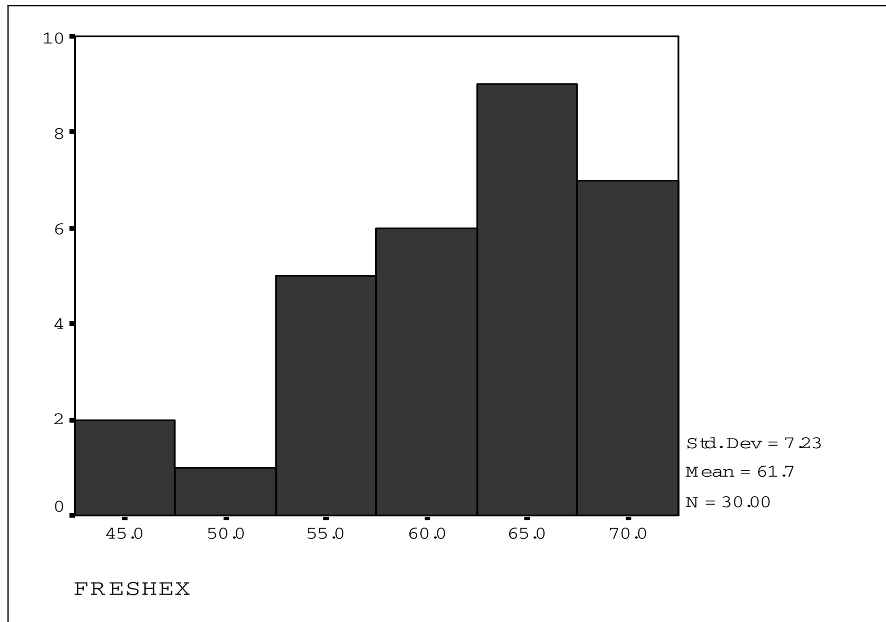


Figure 2: Demonstrates the performance of sophomores and freshmen in non-narrative (expository) texts and we see that the freshmen outperformed the sophomores.

Table 3
Multivariate Tests(c)

Effect	Value		F	df	Sig.
METHOD	Pillai's Trace	.991	28.490	4.000	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.010	262.673(a)	4.000	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	103.305	1446.275	4.000	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	103.305	2995.834(b)	2.000	.000

a Exact statistic
b The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.
c Design: METHOD

Table 4
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	De Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean ^{2}	F	Sig.
Model	Sophomores	200407.50(a)	2	100203.75	1346.10	.000
	Freshmen	213846.66(b)	2	106923.33	1549.09	.000
Method	Sophomores	200407.50	2	100203.75	1346.10	.000
	Freshmen	213846.66	2	106923.33	1549.09	.000
Error	Sophomores	4317.50	58	74.440		
	Freshmen	4003.33	58	69.023		
Total	Sophomores	204725.00	60			
	Freshmen	217850.00	60			

a R Squared = .979 (Adjusted R Squared = .978)
b R Squared = .982 (Adjusted R Squared = .981)

HO1: The null hypothesis claims that there is no significant difference in reading comprehension of narrative text genres between freshmen and sophomores EFL students.

In order to see the probable effect of the treatment, Table 3 provides the scores that were statistically analyzed. The results show that there is a significant difference between the means of these two groups of EFL students. The data was further subjected to statistical analysis which showed that the freshmen outperformed the sophomores in reading comprehension of narrative and non-narrative (expository) text genres. Therefore, we

successfully reject our first hypothesis because we see that there is a significant difference in reading comprehension of narrative texts.

HO2: There is no significant difference in reading comprehension of non-narrative (expository) text genre between freshmen and sophomore EFL students.

The results for rejecting our second hypotheses were again statistically analyzed to see the level of performance in non-narrative text genre. It was observed there was a significant difference in the performance of the two groups.

HO3: There is no interaction between the freshmen and sophomore EFL students' performance for the two narrative and non-narrative (expository) text genres.

Finally, it was noted that we can not reject the third hypothesis, because there is no interaction between EFL sophomores and freshmen's performance in reading comprehension of narrative and non-narrative or expository text genres.

5. Conclusion

Understanding and comprehending information from a text is a complex process that is impacted by what the learner brings to the reading event and also by what the text provides the learner. To enhance the reading comprehension skill, the learner must have the ability to understand the meaning of individual words and phrases on a local or word-to-word and sentence-to-sentence level and on a global level or constructing meaning from the text as 'a whole'. This interacts with the prior knowledge, interest and motivations that the learner brings to the task of reading. Since, in general people forget the actual language but remember the message, they will definitely like something that will not only be informative and entertaining but also persuasive. Also learner variables such as age, interest, motivation and culture influence reading comprehension in all genres, there must be a good match between features and content of the text and the needs and competence of the learner.

The results of this study show that the narrative text genre is more effective than an expository genre especially during the beginning stages of language learning. Although the freshmen outperformed the sophomores in processing and comprehension, the results obtained by the sophomores for comprehending the narrative genre was more encouraging.

Today theorists' energies have been directed to bring these perspectives into the language curriculum through new curriculum designs, through new materials, teaching techniques and testing with a communicative orientation. Since the focus of our study was to find out the effect of text genre on reading comprehension especially in the intermediate stages of learning therefore, we are interested in learning tasks involving problem solving, simulation or role playing. Concrete practical situations should be presented to the learner that offer natural options of language use which reproduce the kinds of choices that occur in spontaneous communication. Teaching literature is an arid business unless there is a response, and even negative responses can create interesting classroom situations. The studies of literature through language will no doubt extend linguistic knowledge by giving evidence of extensive and subtle vocabulary use and complex syntax.

A major theme in the theoretical framework put forward by Bruner (1966) is that learning is an active process in which the learners construct ideas or concepts based upon their current/past knowledge. The learner selects and transforms information, constructs hypotheses, and makes decisions, relying on a cognitive structure to do so. Cognitive structure i.e., schema, mental modes provides meaning and organization to experiences and allows the individual to "go beyond the information given".

Bruner (1966) states that a theory of instruction should address four major aspects:

a. Predisposition towards learning.
b. The ways in which a body of knowledge can be structured so that it can be most readily grasped by the learner.
c. The most effective sequences in which to present material
d. The nature and pacing of rewards and punishments.

Good methods for structuring knowledge should result in simplifying, and generating new propositions, and increasing the manipulation of information.

The rationale behind comprehension based methodologies was in building all areas of language competence, including vocabulary, grammatical accuracy and reading and writing ability. These methods moved teachers away from the grammatical syllabus with its drill and practice and turned their attention to thematically organized curricula, with lessons centered on topics such as family, hobbies and students' personal interests. In this study, the focus was directed toward language input and class activities driven exclusively by the telling of captivating, understandable stories. Students were exposed to the narrative genre in the form of very simple short stories that did not present complicated culture bound expressions and terminologies and as a result of which they came across a wide variety of vocabulary and structure. Language was recycled naturally as different versions of the stories and related stories offered students multiple opportunities to encounter the target language. Eventually, as students were able to produce language spontaneously, they began to write and tell their own stories.

The swing of the pendulum has recently shifted towards empowering students and language learners are no longer regarded as passive recipients of instruction, rather they are deemed active participants in the process of language learning. The demands of the changing world impose on learners the need to take increasing responsibility for their learning and to exercise more control. A main goal of modern approaches to language teaching is to enhance student autonomy and control over the language learning process.

From the perspective of language curriculum development, choice of teaching is but one phase within a system of interrelated curriculum development activities, and materials, and learning activities is usually made within the context of language program, design and development.

As Richards & Rogers believe, questions of immediate concern will focus on who the learners are, what their current level of language proficiency is, what sort of communicative needs they have, the circumstances in which they will be using English in the future, and so on. Answers to such questions must be made before the program objectives can be established and before choice of syllabus, method, teaching materials can be made. Such questions provide the basis for language curriculum development (1986)

In this study we found that reading comprehension is an interactive process that involves the reader, author and the text knowledge. Very often the

concept of 'intertextuality' where "all texts contain traces of other texts and frequently they cannot be readily interpreted or at least fully appreciated without reference to other texts" (Wallace, 1992) is highly recommended. Allusions and cultural references are misunderstood if the reader is unaware of the actual reference that is made. For example, an article on the death of Princess Diana by Roxanne Roberts refers to Diana as "the face that launched a thousand tabloids" alluding to the line about the beauty of Helen of Troy from Marlowe's Faust (1588): "Is this the face that launched a thousand ships?" If the reader is unaware of these allusions he is quite lost when comprehension breaks down. It is therefore vital for non-native readers to try to accomplish as much reading as possible as possible in order to try to capture some of what native readers carry to a text: both schemata and textual memory.

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The Effect of Blogging on Language Learners' Improvement in Social Interactions and Writing Proficiency

Abbas Ali Rezaee
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Weblog, as a new opportunity for people to express their thoughts using Internet facilities, is gaining universal impetus among scholars and educators. In the process of blogging, learners become involved in commenting and reflecting on diverse topics and ideas. This opportunity paves the way for learners of English as a foreign language to improve their writing proficiency. The main questions generated from this study are intertwined with the students' social interaction in class community and foreign weblogs. There are 60 participates in the present study who took part in the class community weblog, Cyberdiscovery, conducted at the Medical School of the University of Tehran. The data was collected by the researchers in a period of one academic year while observing the class community weblog using several means including observation, questionnaire, interview and IELTS writing proficiency test. This study verifies that blogging is a meaningful medium which can improve the students' social interaction towards the class community weblog and also promote creativity in writing.

Keywords: Blogging; Communication; Information Technology; Social Interaction; Weblog; World Wide Web; Writing Proficiency

1. Introduction

As of late, the Internet has earned an enormous value for researchers and educators as a powerful research and communications tool bringing about immense changes in the way students find, manage, and use information. Blogging is a process in which bloggers become involved in commenting and reflecting on each others' ideas and opinions. Blogging which, to some extent, resembles "journal writing" is where the learners can express their feelings and receive comments (Peyton & Staton, 2000).

Blogging is a practice which requires a weblog author to be connected to processes, discourses and communities. A large spectrum of research has been conducted regarding the effect of blogging (Johnson, 2004) which indicates the remarkably positive impact of weblogs on the students' critical and creative thinking, their analytical writing skills, and their intellectual confidence and independence. Fiedler (2003) defines weblogs as a reflective conversational tool for self-organized learning, which best captures the constructivist spirit used for fostering autonomous, self-directed learning approaches.

In the Educational realm weblogs are redefining the way students and teachers use the internet, particularly in second and foreign language education. In fast-growing numbers, educators throughout the world are finding just how powerful this new interactive internet, in particular blogging, can be (Oravec, 2002). This study focuses on TEfU classes (teaching English for understanding) conducted at the Medical School of the University of Tehran. It employs Blogging as a more conventional focus on writing. The weblog conducted in this study is a class community weblog where both students and the teacher are involved in the blogging process.

2. Review of the Related Literature

In this computerized world where everything has come too be related to the World Wide Web (WWW), the vast use of computers can play a significant role in first and second language teaching/learning. As WWW continues to grow at an exponential rate, the number of educational institutions that are using the web as a means of delivering a wide variety of educational and training courses is becoming widespread (Jones and Gower, 1997). Numerous studies have been conducted regarding the use of technology and its effect on EFL/ESL learners. The studies conducted by Lee (1997) and Osuna and Meskill (1998) state that the use of internet resources is a meaningful way to integrate language and culture and provide opportunities to learn about the target culture. The findings of these studies confirm the web as a suitable tool for increasing linguistic and cultural knowledge as well as motivation. Computers can help stimulate new ways of thinking and analyzing problems. It also leads to an enhancement in learning, creativity, productivity, and communication. Just as schools depend on pencils, dictionaries, textbooks and workbooks in traditional classrooms, teachers and administrators as well as students should come to rely on computers as a modern learning tool.

Blogs are a phenomenon helping to create a more interconnected, socially aware global community. Blogging is an excellent way to practice as learners are required to challenge to write about interesting topics to keep readers' constant improvement (Williams, 2004). Blogs have proven to serve as an instrument for organizing information, articulating, developing and sharing ideas (Mortensen & Walker, 2002). The rapid growth of Weblogs is mainly due to the numerous benefits integrated in it. Among advantages, weblogging tools are developed with the intention of easy web-publishing and are flexible enough to be used in a variety of ways. One of the main features of weblogs as publishing tools includes its ease of use, where the author can publish his/her thoughts in the web without using any programming code.

An educational blog can be considered as an additional communication channel between teachers and learners through which they can communicate by means of a different media. Tonthong, (2001) refers to educational blog as a searchable archive of notes and handouts. The Edlog which is known as live journal (Blood 2000) has the same advantageous that journal writing has in addition to other beneficial features related to the online nature of it. Educational blogs encourage students to conduct substantial research on the web, while it allows them to receive immediate feedback directly into their written texts from the instructor and other students (Du & Wagner, 2005).

Several papers have appeared in the literature (Duber, 2002, Campbell 2003, Godwin-Jones 2003, Johnson 2004, and Dieu 2004) stressing on the possible uses of weblogs for language learning. Fiedler (2003) defines weblogs as a reflective conversational tool for self-organized learning, which best portrays the constructivist essence with which the tool can be used for fostering autonomous, self-directed learning approaches. In addition, the authentic nature of writing with weblogs motivates the students to share their feelings with their fellow bloggers. The union of social networking and blogging creates a social semantic web (Downes 2004), where content and identity are grouped together. In a microcosmic way, Blogging may indeed offer a glimpse of the direction in which internet communication is moving and evolving towards. Thus, the use of weblogs can be viewed as outstanding opportunity for EFL learners. Foreign language learners can have the chance to communicate with people either inside or outside the classroom in a meaningful way.

3. Purpose and Significance of the Study

The present study is an attempt to bring about awareness and understanding to teachers and curriculum makers regarding the utilization of weblogs on improving the learners' knowledge of language in an authentic setting in general. In this regard, special focus is put on writing in particular allowing the teachers to integrate technology into their schedule. This could ultimately lead to a point where educators and teachers make use of computers in their EFL classes in order not to only improve the students' writing but also other language skills.

4. Research Questions

The current study attempts to elucidate and address the following questions which investigate the contribution of weblogs in an EFL context.

1. How do students socialize in their interactions in cyberspace while blogging?
2. Is there any difference between the IELTS writing proficiency results of students who were involved in the class community weblog and students who participated in journal writing and those who took part in traditional writing classes?

5. METHOD

The main purpose of the following research was to illustrate how students at the Medical School of the University of Tehran responded to participation in a class community weblog, compared with conventional writing in English classes. The study included a naturalistic inquiry into the inclusion of blogging in TEfU classes and its impact on the learning and writing improvements of the students involved. The learners' participation in a community weblog was examined in a real educational context and thickly described through inductive analysis of multiple and holistically viewed data revealing how the learners experienced change. The participants in this study were 160 students, at the Medical School of the University of Tehran, 60 of whom participated in the class community weblog.

The students attending these classes were involved in the online interaction of blogging in the class community blogs. The students were told that they were to be engaged in blogging which was used as an alternate for journal writing. The educational blog (Edlog) used in this study is named

Cyberdiscovery, which is a combination of class blog and community blog through which the teacher and the students work together to keep the class community blog striving. In this class, students were to comment on the postings on various topics and issues ranging from personal ones like their goals and ambitions in life to more technical topics related to their field of study. One of the imperative factors in having a class community weblog was related to the students' comments which varied depending on the student and the topic with the minimum of at least one paragraph written in word processing and varied five to six paragraphs. The data in this study was collected through four different procedures: observations, questionnaires, interviews, and IELTS writing proficiency test that were all later applied to a triangulated data analysis and one was evaluated quantitatively. The teaching for understanding (TfU) model has an ongoing assessment as it is a methodology for checking students' understanding performances. This is conducted with a model known as the FLU (Features and Levels of Understanding) Model. In this model, the students' understanding performances are grounded in a framework of understanding in which students follow any of these steps to move towards the knowledge they are acquiring.

6. Results

During the completion of this study, conducted in the course of one academic year, various questions emerged for the researchers, some of which were represented as research questions in the current study. Several themes were also established subsequent to analyzing the student's comments including the students' social interactions in the weblog sphere prevalent in the process of blogging, and the creativity which evolved in the students' writing while blogging. In the following sections the two themes of social interaction and the creativity in writing will be placed in the FLU model in order to arrive at a criterion for analysis. The students' primary and final levels of understanding will also be sketched within the three criteria.

6.1. Social Interaction Theme

6.1.1. Primary Levels

As it can be observed in the above figure, 56% of the students were marked as naïve in the knowledge dimension while 21% were marked as novice due to their lack of experience in blogging and the lack of social interaction.

Nevertheless, 23% of the students were shown to be in the range of apprentice and master due to their prior experience in chatting or blogging in the computer sphere. In the 'methods' dimension, the students were marked as 62% naïve and 34% novice since they lacked the proficiency to validate and build knowledge in this domain. Hardly were any students classified in the apprentice or master section of the FLU model.

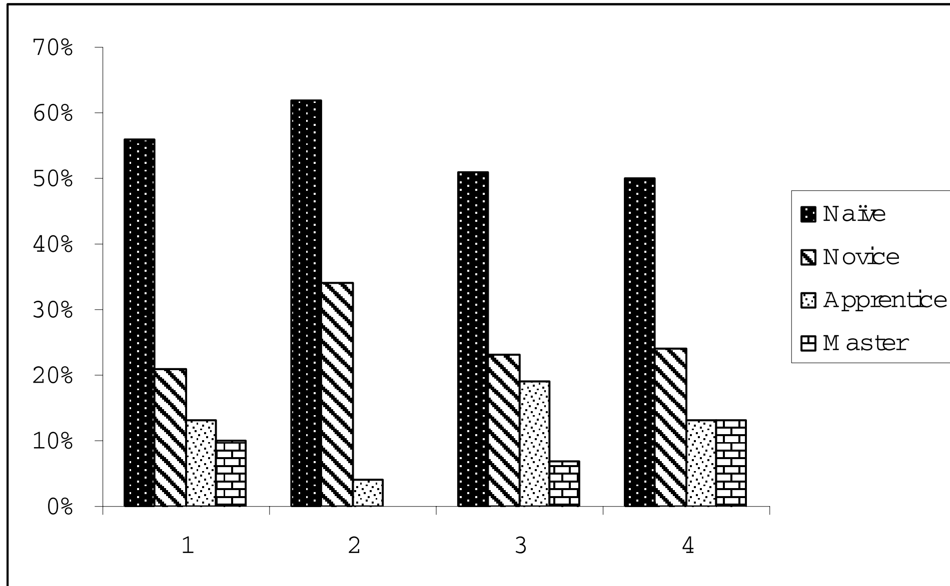

Figure 1. Students' primary levels of understanding performance in social interaction.

Regarding the purpose section, 51% of the students were naïve and 23% novice. The number of students in the apprentice section which amounted to 19% of the students while 7% were at the master level is believed to have been caused by the students' lack of awareness regarding the purpose of interaction in the process of blogging and their inability to use their knowledge for other purposes and domain. The next phase deals with the forms dimension and demonstrate the students' social interaction in their visual and literal performances. In the 'forms' dimension, 50% of the students were classified as naïve and 24% as novice while the remaining 26% of the students were categorized as apprentice and master since the students' previous writing experiences did not have much understanding performance.

6.1.2. Final Levels

As it can be seen in the following figure, the students improved in their understanding performance of interaction in weblogs. The four dimensions of the FLU model which consists of knowledge, method, purpose and forms are displayed as 1, 2, 3, and 4. At the beginning stage of the blogging process, the majority of the students were marked as naïve but after engaging in social interactions through blogging, only 1% of the students remained Naïve in the knowledge domain and 62% were marked as apprentice due to the improvement in their knowledge of blogging. The remaining 29% were rated as master, which can be accredited to the interactive nature of weblogs and the students' ability to transform their intuitive beliefs.

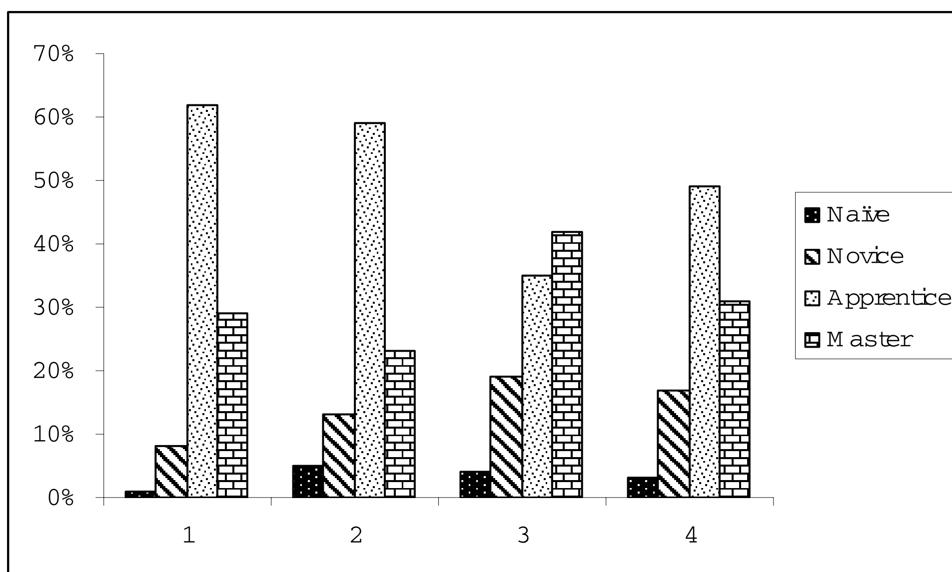

Figure 2. Students' levels of understanding performance based on their knowledge of social interaction.

This can be perceived in their interaction in blogging while in the beginning stage of their blogging experience they considered blogs as a place to publish their homework and the assignments set by their teacher. However, by the end of the term their perception of blogging varied considerably, because the majority of the students viewed blogging as an opportunity to interact with their peers and publish their thoughts. Blogging also presented the opportunity for introverted students who did not interact and participate in

class discussion to show their true abilities and interact with others without the fear of being recognized.

The students were evaluated as predominantly naïve in the methods dimension at the beginning of the semester. However, as the semester proceeded toward an end, the progress in the students' performances increased to 59% apprentice and 23% master in the method dimension, with 13% still remaining in the novice level and 5% in the naïve level. This significant improvement is as a consequence of the students building new modes of interactions. In the purpose dimension, a similar distribution is visible with only 4% of the students staying at the naive level and 13% in the novice level. The remaining 35% of the students were assessed as apprentice and 42 % were ranked at the master level. This progress can be related to the students' understanding of the purpose of social interaction in blogging and their interaction in foreign weblogs and their ability to find novel uses of blogging. The final section which is devoted to the forms dimension witnessed major improvements, with 49% of the students rising to the apprentice level and 31% measured as master. Such a change is probably because the students used various ways to improve their blogging by utilizing different genres and symbol systems.

6.2. Creativity Theme

6.2.1. Primary Levels

Most Students involved in Cyberdiscovery had a presupposition of what writing meant based on their previous experience in their high school composition. The four facets of the FLU model which consist of knowledge, method, purpose and forms are represented as 1, to 4, respectively. As indicated in figure 3, in the beginning stage the students were ranked at 52% naïve and 22% novice due to their previous knowledge of writing and how they identified creativity in it. Among the participants, 18% were assessed as apprentice and 8% master in the knowledge domain which was accredited to their cultural background that allowed them to used literacy in a creative sense which was observed in the beginning stage of journal writing and blogging. In the methods dimension, the students were shown to be 68% naïve and 28% novice since there was a considerable lack in criteria for analyzing their writing entries. In the purpose dimension the students' overall level of understanding was ranked 68% naïve and 24% novice while in the forms dimension of the FLU model 43% of the students were assessed

as being naive while 25% were ranked as novice in their performance understanding of creativity in writing.

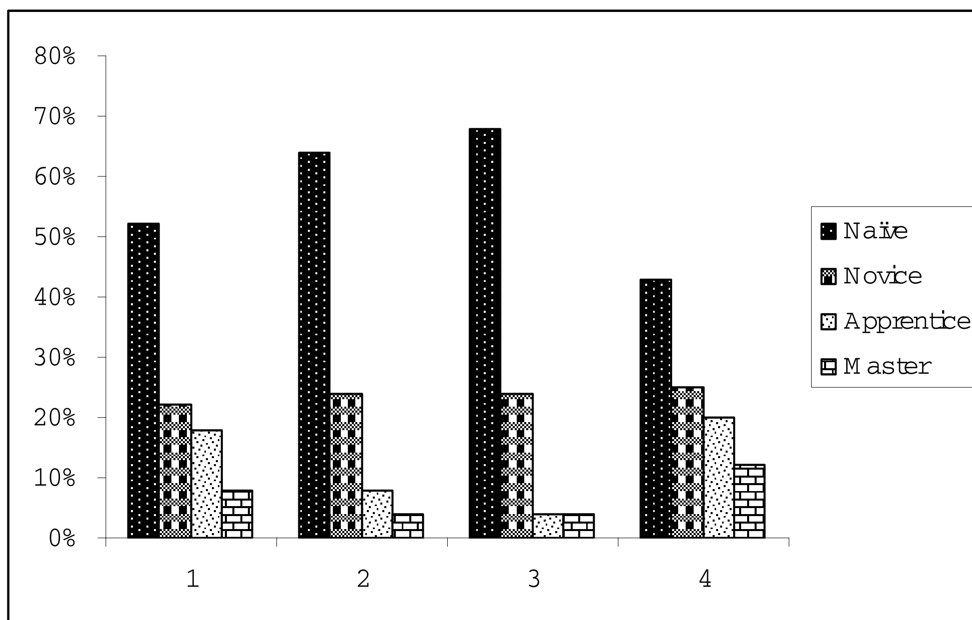

Figure 3. Students Primary Levels of Understanding Performances in Creativity.

6.2.2. Final Levels

At the end of the term, the students overall perception of writing had changed. As illustrated in figure 4 the four dimension of the FLU model were correspondingly represented as 1, 2, 3 and 4. The students' understanding of the knowledge dimension of creativity in writing improved noticeably from 52% naïve at the beginning of the term to 68% apprentice and 28% master at the end of the term while only 12% were placed at the novice and naive level. This reveals that the students moved from descriptive writing to a more personal, critical, and creative writing which was to some extend revealed by their use of second person singular instead of first person singular. In the methods dimension the students improved once again from a predominantly naïve and novice understanding at the beginning of the term to 54% apprentice and 18% master at the end of the term while 3% stayed at the naïve level. In this dimension, the students; improvement was based on the criteria set generally on writing by building new genres, contents and

different methods of argument. At the start of the term the students were assessed as mostly naïve and novice in the purpose dimension, whereas at the end of the term the students' understanding in the purpose dimension improved to 46% master and 45% apprentice with only 5% assessed as novice and 3% remaining at the naïve level which was visible students analysis of themselves and their other bloggers. The students had managed to use their creativity of writing in other environments such as in foreign weblogs, certain class writing activities, as evidences for their ongoing improvement. Finally in the forms dimension, the students were assessed as different from the beginning of the term where they were ranked as 45% apprentice and 46% master that was prevalent in their use of different styles and genres in their blogging.

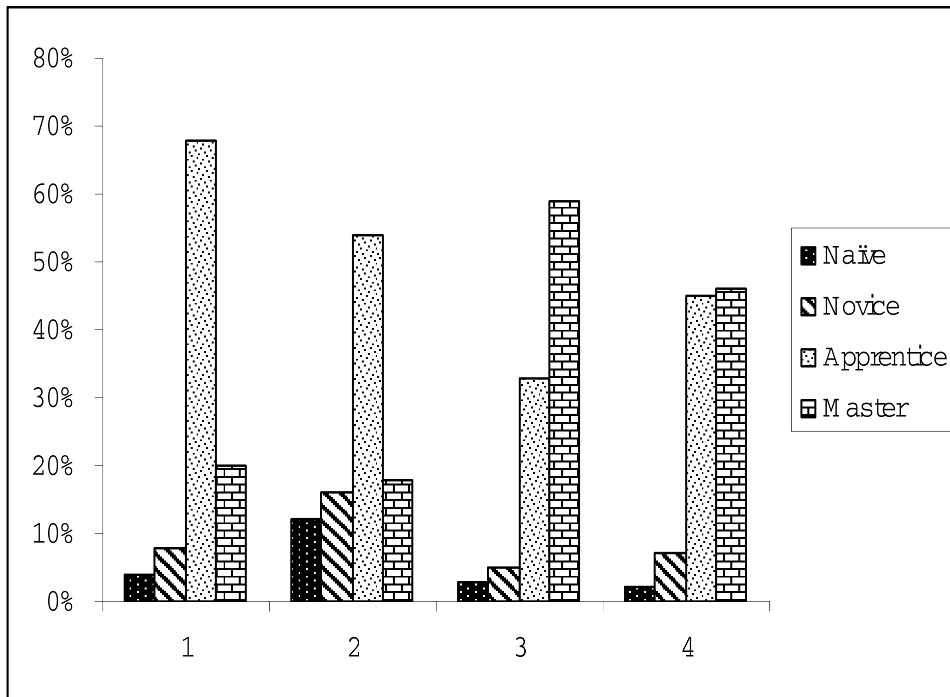

Figure 4. Students' final level of understanding in creativity.

As the students moved towards a more complex understanding of creativity in writing they learned about new ways for improving creativity like making use of different fonts and capitalizing the text in order to interact creatively with peers in Cyberdiscovery and in the class.

6.3. IELTS Writing Proficiency Analysis

In the IELTS writing proficiency test, three groups of 50 students were involved. The first group, who took part in the IELTS writing test, was involved in the TEfU program, where the main theme was teaching English for understanding. This group as the main focus of this study participated in the class community weblog as a means to enhance their writing proficiency. The second group was also involved in the TEfU program who were involve in journal writing where the students expressed themselves and the teacher commented on their journals regularly in order to create a reciprocal dialog.

Table 1
ANOVA Results

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Between Groups	**14686.893**	**2**	**7343.447**	**148.580**	**.000**
Within Groups	**7265.380**	**147**	**49.424**		
Total	**21952.273**	**149**			

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), indicated in the following table (Table 1), reveal that there is a significant difference between the performances of the three groups, i.e., those who received traditional instruction, those who were involved in journal writing, those who were engaged in blogging, in the IELTS are significantly different.

Table 2
Multiple Comparisons

I) Name	(J) Name	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
1.00	**2.00**	**13.54000(*)**	**1.40605**	**.000**
	3.00	**24.18000(*)**	**1.40605**	**.000**
2.00	**1.00**	**-13.54000(*)**	**1.40605**	**.000**
	3.00	**10.64000(*)**	**1.40605**	**.000**
3.00	**1.00**	**-24.18000(*)**	**1.40605**	**.000**
	2.00	**-10.64000(*)**	**1.40605**	**.000**

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table 2 shows how all the groups vary from each other by comparing the mean of their scores in multiple group analysis. The score zero indicates that the groups’ scores are significantly different in all analyses.

Nevertheless, the analyses of the IELTS writing proficiency scores obtained by the three groups demonstrate that the blogging group indicated as “1.00” in the above table has the highest scores in the IELTS writing proficiency test.

7. Discussion

In response to the first question, the Features and Levels of Understanding Framework was employed to explore how medical students socialize in their interactions in cyberspace while blogging journals. Due to the nature of weblogs, the interaction among students and teachers was recorded as relatively high, in view of the fact that in the class community weblog students not only interacted with other students and gave feedback on each other's comments but also interacted with their teacher to justify their positions and beliefs (Richardson, 2003). In order to confirm the results obtained from students’ social interaction in blogging, several interview questions related to the issue of the students’ social interaction in the class community weblog were also analyzed.

As to the second research question, the results from this study showed that the mean score of the class which participated in the class community weblog is higher than the mean score of the class who took part in journal writing and also significantly higher than the results obtained from students taking part in traditional writing classes. The procedure also revealed that the result of the IELTS test is significantly different among the three groups (the mean square for between-group was 7343.447 and for within-group 49.424), which places the class using weblogs in the first position, obtaining the highest score, and the journal writing class and traditional writing class, respectively in second and third place. The results reveal that the students involved in the class community weblog were not only more successful by using this tool as a means to learn English and be empowered but also were able enhance their writing ability (Du and Wagne, 2005). The weblog not only enjoys the advantages of journal writing but its lively and online discourse also affect many other aspects of the students' learning (Martindale and Wiley, 2004).

6. Conclusion

This study followed a theme manifesting learner experiences in the cyber world over the period of one academic year. Consequently, it can provide researchers and educationalists with ample evidence regarding the

advantages this particular method of teaching English and writing offers along with probable drawbacks and challenges, adjunct to it. Evidently, the need for further research is not denied; indeed more research needs to be conducted regarding weblogs as educative and learning tools. An enhanced understanding of the nature and patterns of communication that occur within weblog communities should be the aim of future research in this realm.

Undoubtedly, getting learners involved critically in the learning process by presenting them with the opportunity to publish their own postings through either individual weblogs or a community weblog can prove to be constructive for future research. Another, significant outcome of this study is related to the effects of making learning public, instead of confined within a protected community of learners. Thus, nurturing the questions of what types of learning is most appropriate for this entirely public realm and what forms are better carried out in a more closed environment. Similar studies can touch upon what the ethical implications of allowing university students to place themselves in an exposed environment can mean for the educational system, the syllabus, and most important of all the students. Further research can ensure how a teacher can employ the best structure for community learning weblog classrooms to ensure that the needs of all participants are met, especially for those with a strong preference for a face to face interaction. Finally, it would be valuable for other practitioners to present similar qualitative or quantitative case studies for everyone to get a more comprehensible picture of how learners experience and respond to the course structures that educators create, employ, and facilitate.

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A cognitively-based exploration of language-switching (L-S) in the writing performance of Iranian EFL learners

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This study sought to investigate the patterns of and possible reasons for Language-Switching (L-S) behavior of Iranian EFL learners engaged in L2 composing task. The findings revealed that the subjects needed to switch to their L1 in order to: 1) generate ideas, 2) search for L2 equivalent, 3) revise and correct errors, 4) plan the task, 5) establish the coherence of ideas, and 6) confirm lexical meaning. The results also demonstrated the participants switched to their L1 for the following reasons: 1) Linguistic deficiency, 2) Overload of memory and 3) Ease with native language. The results indicate that encoding certain non-linguistic feelings or experiential mental images is cognitively demanding and would need to be accessed via L1_ the stronger language of a bilingual person.

Keywords: Language switching; Bilingualism; Reasons for L-S; L2-composing context

1. Introduction

Research on the cognitive processes of composing tasks has pointed to the recursive nature of writing both in L1 and L2 (Tribble, 1996; Friedlander, 1990; Cumming, 1990, Raimes, 1987; Wang and Wen, 2002; Woodall, 2002). This view demonstrates that writers get involved in the reciprocating moves to meet the composing requirements, indicating the dynamic nature of the writing processes in which various elements come into interaction with one another in a cyclical manner to generate a text (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987). The recursiveness of the writing processes can be closely associated with de Beaugrande's (1984) principles for text generation, namely, 'look-back' versus 'look-ahead'. While 'look-back' principle accounts for the cognitive activities continually modifying the positions already adopted, the 'look-ahead' principle seeks to decide on the appropriacy of the subsequent parts of the text.

The cyclical interplay of subprocesses in L1 is believed to be the writer's inevitable attempts to discover the new ideas, plans, goals, etc., a

phenomenon best known as backtracking (Manchon et al, 2000; de Beaugrande, 1984; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1986). Likewise, L2 writing capitalizes on the same, but a two-tier backtracking process in the sense that L2 writer, in addition to the regular back and forth movements along a continuum of reorganizing, reconceptualizing, or reconfiguring his attempts in L2, has L1 repository at his disposal and quite often resorts to the available resources through either L1 or L2 while composing in L2. This is because the growing text in L2 can impose some demands on L2 writer as it competes with the writer's knowledge stored in the long-term memory. Thus the long – term memory, which primarily and predominantly houses L1 resources, is needed to help L2 writers integrate their available knowledge into the text. As a kind and also a subsidiary process of backtracking, the L1 use in the L2 composing context is known as language switching (L-S), or non-instructed use of L1 during L2 producing processes (Woodall, 2002), which is believed to occur privately and subvocally (Vygotsky, 1978).

In fact, L2 writing is a complex skill involving the recruitment and coordination of both L1 and L2 linguistic subskills such as retrieval of structures, grammar rules, vocabulary, and use of cognitive resources which govern the linguistic operations, including planning, and replanning activities. Cognitive resources are believed to be of higher order nature predominantly originating in L1 which function to impose order on L2 (Heredia, 1997; Qi, 1998).

Since L-S is taken to be the consistent and salient feature distinguishing L1 from L2 writing processes and also as one of the most common and frequently used cognitive behaviors in the mental activities of almost all bilinguals engaged in L2 composing tasks (Cumming, 1990; Woodall, 2000; Wang & Wen, 2002), the present study finds it necessary to study the subject further as an attempt to cast light on the nature of L2 writing through the analysis of L-S.

2. Literature Review

Qi (1998) identifies two separate research trends in the realm of bilingualism as related to language-switching in the context of composing. The first trend refers to the studies on the memory structure of bilingual lexicon (see Hummel, 1993, for a review). The point revolves mainly around the lexical issue of compound bilingualism versus coordinate bilingualism (Ervin &

Osgood, 1954; Romaine, 1989) or interdependence (Kolers, 1965) versus independence (Tulving & Colotla, 1970).

Regarding Compound bilingualism or interdependence view, Qi (1998) asserts "there is a common storage system of word meaning in a bilingual's mind, that is, each word and its translation equivalent is represented similarly…Coordinate or independence view, however, argues that a bilingual has a distinct lexical representation which could be retrieved via each language"(p. 48). At the same time, in the domain of bilingual memory research, a new perspective of bilingual performance has been proposed and researched (Chen & Leung, 1989). Researchers working within this perspective all agree that in conceptual memory representations of word meanings are the same in all languages, whereas in lexical memory the representations of word forms are language specific. Qi (1998) also presents the same idea in the following way: "In lexical form memory, each member of a pair of translation equivalents is differently represented, while in conceptual memory the two are represented in a single shared representation" (p. 416).

Moreover, a "developmental hypothesis" (De Groot & Hoeks,1995) suggests that L2 learners' understanding and producing L2 words develop through the associated representations of L1 word-form but the connection between the representation of L2 word-form and the conceptual memory of L1-L2 words develop through further L2 practice. With the improvement of L2 proficiency, the word association links at the lexical representation level will gradually pass into disuse.

The other identified trend has shown an increased interest in the influence of L1 on the acquisition of L2 (Kaplan, 1966; Chelala, 1982; Gass & Selinker, 1983; Kellerman & Sharwood Smith, 1986). Much of the second trend has focused on the way L1 may delay or affect the quality of learning L2. For example, Chelala (1982) identified 10 unsuccessful strategies employed by two women, and concluded that using L1 to compose in the L2 was in the case of these 2 women somewhat more counterproductive than productive. Kaplan (1966) compared writing samples in English from speakers of Arabic, Romance, and Oriental languages and claimed that each group displays rhetorical characteristics expressing its native discourse "logic" not acceptable in the standard English writing, emphasizing that L2 writer is at the mercy of L1 resources.

The third trend has attempted to account for the role of L1 in the cognitive processes underlying L2 composing. This new perspective has shifted attention from one of L1 debilitating effect to that of L1 facilitating role in the learning of L2. Most evidence available in this category has demonstrated that L1 plays a positive role in almost all the subcategories of the field of L2 composing, including L1 knowledge transfer (Friedlander, 1987, 1990); planning skills (Jones & Tetroe, 1987); heuristic research in thinking for production (Cumming, 1989, 1990); revising (Hall, 1990); translation (Uzawa, 1996, 1997); problem-solving (Tamamaki, 1993); and the effects of L1 composing expertise on the quality of L2 texts (Cumming, 1989). All these studies have strongly pointed out the significance of L-S in composing L2.

Following the third trend, different researchers have considered the influence of different variables on the use of L-S. For example, Jones and Tetroe (1987) found that *L2 proficiency* constrained the amount of writers' planning while composing in the L2. In line with this research finding, more recent studies have suggested that L2 proficiency influence the amount of L1 use and the variability of L2 writing performance.

Qi (1998) in an attempt to identify the factors influencing L-S behavior, found that the participant, a highly proficient Chinese-English bilingual writer, frequently switched to her L1 when she needed to 1) initiate a thinking episode, 2) facilitate the development of a thought, 3) verify lexical choices, and 4) avoid overloading her working memory. Qi claimed that high knowledge demands increased the overall amount of L-S in the participant's writing processes, leading to a better performance.

More recently, Wang (2003) studied the relationship between L2 proficiency and L-S. The analysis of the results suggested that "L2 proficiency determines the writer's approaches to and qualities of thinking while composing in L2." (p. 18) He further recommended that "more research need to be done to show clearly whether L-S findings resulted from L2 proficiency or L1 writing expertise." (p. 18)

Another variable examined by some of the researchers of L-S is *task difficulty*. Jones and Tetroe (1987) in a study of L-S found that, although L1 use was evident in all of the protocols they collected, there was much less L1 use for easier tasks. This suggests that L-S may have been affected by task difficulty. Woodall (2002) found that task difficulty itself contributed to the duration,

but not frequency, of L-S. For the more difficult task, students tended to use their L1s for longer period of time. However, not all the studies on this variable support the above-mentioned findings, as among the three intermediate EFL writers in Manchon et al.'s study (2000), one used more L1 in the argumentative mode than in the narrative mode whereas two used more L1 in the narrative mode than in the argumentative mode. With these results, it is difficult to assess the effect of writing tasks on the L1 use involved. Further research is needed to address the question of how writing tasks affect the use of L1 in the L2 composing processes.

In another study, Woodall (2002) has specifically investigated the effect of *language family* as a variable on the amount and duration of L-S in L2 composing processes, and came up with the conclusion that:

> The duration of L-S appears to have been affected by a significant interaction of L2 proficiency and language family. The intermediate-level non-cognate learners tended to use their L1s more than four times longer than their advanced learner counterparts did. This was not true for cognate learners; in this group, the advanced students used their L1s nearly twice as did their intermediate-level counterparts (p. 10).

Though L2 writing researchers, as shown above, have confirmed and identified the role mother tongue plays in writing in a second language, the findings tend to be as yet partial and limited to few languages. Therefore, the present study is an attempt to expand our current understanding of L-S in L2 writing, focusing specifically on the subjects whose L1 is Farsi.

3. Aims of the Study

The present study focuses on the cognitive aspects of L1 use in the composing processes of intermediate EFL learning, and attempts first to identify and classify the patterns of L-S behavior, and second to find the reasons for L-S in L2 writing as expressed by the selected informants. The choice of these issues to be explored in the present study was based on the consideration of the following points:

First, there is a need for systematic investigation into the L-S behavior in general and Iranian L-S behavior in particular, given the fact that the subject has not been touched in our domestic EFL context.

Second, much of the previous research has been quantitative in nature, not clearly elaborating on the quality and implications of L-S in L2 writing.

Third, previous studies dealt with the effects of such variables as task difficulty, level of proficiency and language group on the amount and duration of L-S, however, there seems to be no study dealing with the causal factors that have potential to influence L-S behavior.

4. METHOD

The present study was designed as a descriptive and exploratory project employing qualitative analyses to provide answers to the research questions.

4.1. Participants

Participants in this study comprised eighty EFL students, both male and female, aged between 19 to 23 who were junior students of English literature and translation at Sheikh Bahaei University, Isfahan, Iran. They had to sign up for an advanced writing course (i.e., Essay writing) having passed the prerequisite courses including "Grammar 1 and 2", and "Paragraph Writing". Thus, they were expected to know the basic rules of grammar, different structures in English, and the way an essay is organized.

The reason for selecting these students was that they had passed the introductory courses in learning English and had developed the necessary skills for the L2 writing and therefore they were ready to pass the "advanced writing" course.

Then to select a homogeneous intermediate group, the participants were tested on the OPT (Oxford Placement Test). In order to control the students' homogeneity in the experiment, the researcher announced that there would be a standard test (i.e., the OPT) which would determine their level of English proficiency. After the administration of the test, then the examinees' answer sheets were all marked. Fifty participants including 19 males and 31 females were ranked as intermediate level students using OPT criteria. Fifteen male and fifteen female students were then randomly included in the main part of the study. The reasons for not including the all 50 participants in the main part of the study were time limitation, difficult conditions imposed by think-aloud procedure in collecting data, and to benefit from randomization in order for the data to be more representative and valid.

4.2. Instrumentation

4.2.1. English proficiency test

In order to determine the students' level of proficiency and to select students at intermediate level of language proficiency, the OPT was used in this study. The OPT was selected to serve the discriminatory purpose for this research, since it demands the fulfillment of language preliminaries such as grammar on the part of the students. Another reason was the fact that the OPT could provide predetermined indices of placement.

4.2.2. Composing task

To collect L-S data for the analysis, the participants were asked to think-aloud while composing an argumentative writing task. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) describe composing as a cognitive process of knowledge production. The argumentative writing task was considered as the composing activity in this study, because it is cognitively demanding and entails thinking processes for knowledge production that involves problem-solving before producing the procedure or the result. That is, this mode of writing is more likely to involve the transformation of knowledge rather that a memory search that simply recalls the answer. This is implied in Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) "knowledge-telling" and "knowledge-transforming" model. In their view this mode demands high-level knowledge involving more abstract structural elements in thinking, such as goal setting, direction, and problem analysis.

To minimize the variability due to the topic knowledge, the writing task tapped into the participants' own personal background and into their opinion about a widely-discussed social issue. The topic for the argument was about the students' views on *University Entrance Exam in Iran*. The following prompt was written for this task: "UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAM IN IRAN: WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT AND CHALLENGING?"

The participants were required to write an essay within 40 minutes. The time limit was set for all the participants in order for the data to be more comparable.

4.3.Procedure

This study drew on a multi-method data collection procedure in order to increase the reliability of the data. To this end, the think-aloud data was preceded by a warm-up session and supplemented by two other phases of

data collection, namely, retrospection and unstructured interview. This research, therefore, exploited four phases of data collection which are presented below:

Phase1: Warm-up session. To ensure that each individual would feel comfortable thinking aloud, the researcher held a warm-up session for every participant individually prior to the actual data collection. The warm-up session helped the participants familiarize themselves with the data collection procedure. After describing the think-aloud procedure, the researcher introduced a tentative topic as a practice to the participant. The prompt was: "Why do you learn English?" Making sure that the participant had got familiar with the procedure and had been ready to do the main task, the researcher moved to the next phase of the data collection

Phase 2: Think-aloud protocol. The thirty writing sessions were conducted over the course of one month. Each participant wrote individually in a classroom. They were provided with paper and pen, and the session was scheduled at their convenience. In order to gain insights into what goes on in the participants' mind while writing, they were asked to produce think-aloud protocols. In other words, they were asked to compose on a certain topic and to say aloud whatever came into their thought as they wrote (Jones & Tetroe, 1987).

Phase 3: Retrospection. According to Tomlinson (1984), retrospection as a method of data collection, refers to the act of thinking about the performed task and stating whatever comes to mind. In the present study, the third phase in collecting the data was retrospection on the part of the participants, which was conducted immediately after the writing task and think-aloud. Each participant and the researcher reviewed together the entire audio-recorded think-aloud protocols that person had produced while writing.

In this phase every student was asked to elaborate on the details about the composing process and everything they remembered. For instance, when there was a case of language-switching, they were asked to explain the reasons why they switched between the two languages or if they paused for more than 5 seconds they were asked to recall what they were thinking about.

Phase 4: Unstructured interview. The third phase in the data collection was an unstructured interview in which the participants were asked to explain the

ways they planned and developed their compositions and their reasons for making any change in them as well as the possible reasons they had when switching to their L1. This method was used to reconfirm and supplement the data obtained in phase three.

5. Data Analysis

The observed protocols provided the data for the analysis. This study adopted Woodall's (2002) model of analysis which defined language switching "as any spontaneous use of the L1 while being engaged in the L2 writing process. A switch started with an utterance in L1 and ended with the next utterance in the L2." (p. 7). Therefore, the data were meticulously read and analyzed for the L-S occurrences. The parts identified as L-S were coded and extracted for further analysis.

In order to find answer to the first research question (patterns of L-S to be detected in the EFL learners' L2 compositions), all the L-S cases were identified and then classified into possible categories. Categories were labeled depending on the similarity or differences which could permit the convergence or divergence of the themes. Then, in order to find the general tendency (Zarei, 2002), the categories were hierarchically arranged in terms of their frequency.

In order to find answer to the second question (possible reasons for using L1 during L2 composing), the reasons expressed for every L-S case were analyzed and categorized on the basis of their similarities and differences, and then were ranked in terms of frequencies in order to find a general disposition.

It must be noted that the data were analyzed and reviewed again after a lapse of two months in order to get rid of the subjectivity of analysis and interpretation. The agreement rate for the two analyses was found to be 95 percent. And the remaining 5 percent was realigned and full agreement was achieved.

6. Results and Findings

6.1. Categories of L-S

In the categorization of L-S behavior, this study concentrated on identifying the immediate concerns that the participants held and expressed during the composing processes (e.g., concerns about ideas, organization, language and

task requirement), and then attempted to categorize the L-S cases according to the concerns the participants themselves addressed. In fact, attempts were made to find out recurrent themes or pool of meanings within the subjects' language switches.

A close analysis of the data revealed six categories of L-S behavior which, of course, need to be confirmed or investigated in future research studies. Following is an elaboration on the recognized categories which are presented in the order of high to low frequency of occurrence (table 1). It should be noted that the total number of L-S occurrences was 1519 within the 7535 words produced by the participants.

Table1.
Categories of L-S

No.	*Category*	*f*	%
1	Generating Idea (GI)	500	32.9
2	Searching for L2 Equivalence (SLE)	399	26.2
3	Revising and Correcting (RC)	305	20.07
4	Planning (P)	135	8.88
5	Establishing the Coherence of Ideas (ECI)	127	8.36
6	Confirming Lexical Meaning (CLM)	53	3.48
Total		1519	100

6.1.1. Generating Ideas (GI)

The participants in this study demonstrated the use of L1 to present a meaning to continue a line of thought before switching to L2; that is, the writers' main goal was to generate ideas through thinking in L1. In fact, they showed that they initiated their thought mental image, either linguistic or non-linguistic, and later converted that into the linguistic message in writing using an encoding process. This is what Bruner (1990) has called "Meaning Readiness". One must search for appropriate linguistic signs to represent such meaning readiness, via either L1 or L2, before the meaning could be verbalized. This study showed that L2 writers relied on L1 to have the initiation into the process of writing.

> Example: "Morattaban ye eede ya ye ehsas nesbat be mozoo'
> miomad tooye zehnamman sari' baraye inke yadam nare ba farsi

> baraye khodam bayan mikadam ghabl az inke bekham be engelisi fekr konam." (Participant, from interview)
>
> Translation: [An idea or a feeling about the topic occurred to my mind so often. I quickly repeated it in my mind in Persian in order not to forget it and then I thought about its English equivalent.]

In fact, the participants switched quickly to L1 whenever an idea could be more easily expressed. As we can see in the example, the above switch resulted from the participant's need to use a language that could articulate his idea most efficiently.

Following is another example of L-S for the purpose of generating an idea from the think-aloud protocol:

> Example: "Khob alan chi begam. Alan bayad ye dalil biaram ta nazaram sabet konam. Khob chi begam. Chi begam. Chi bagam baraye bad boodane raveshe arzyabi dar Konkoor. Ahha, raveshe arzyabie fe'li baes mish eke bacheha roo biarand be yadgiriye raveshhaye test zani bejaye inke amigh mataleb ra yad begirand.
>
> Translation*:* [Well, What should I say now? Now I should support my idea by a reason. Well, what should I say? What should I say to support the idea that the present method of testing in Konkoor [Entrance Exam] is not effective? OK, the present method makes the learners learn the techniques of test taking instead of learning deeply the content of their materials.]

Out of 1519 cases of L-S behavior, 500 cases (32.9%) fall in this category.

6.1.2. Searching for L2 Equivalent (SLE)

Searching for the L2 equivalent is another recognized L-S category which is described and exemplified in this part. The participants in this study exploited three approaches to switching to their L1 to search for L2 lexical items. The first two approaches were also identified by Wang (2003):

> 1) The first one is reviewing of "a group of synonyms in L1 and retrieving equivalent word in their L2." (Wang, 2003, p. 13) The following example clarifies the point:

Example: "In order to "arzyabi kardan chi mishe. Arzyabi kardan umm, umm, sanjidan, umm, test Kardan, ahha, (L-S)" testing."

Translation: [What is the equivalent of "Arzyabi kardan" umm, umm, sanjidan, umm, test Kardan, ahha “testing”.]

2) The second one is "switching to L1 for assessing and making a choice appropriate to contextual features." (Wang. 2003. P. 13). Following is an example:

Example: "Elements, components, constituent. Umm "Kodoomashoon baraye inje monesebe? Component ke fekr nakonam bekhore be inja. Constituent ham baraye zabanshenasi bood. Inja bishtar element mikhore. Are (L-S)" elements of testing"

Translation: [Which one is suitable here? I don’t think the word "component" fits here. The word "constituent" also was for the issues related to linguistics. Ok, here "element" is suitable.]

3) The third one is rewording or paraphrasing in L1 what they wanted to write in L2 until finding an appropriate word. Following is an example:

Example: "Melake khoob, melake khoob, umm, chi mishe, chi mishe, umm, me'yar, melak, ye vasileii ke bahash besanjim, ye melak, ye asl, ahha. (L-S) Principle"

Translation: [What is the equivalent of "melak", "me'yar", means of assessment, a "melak", an "asl"; Ok, principle.]

It is, however, evident that switching to L1 for lexical searching in a literal way might result in the use of inappropriate word in the written output, as shown in the previous example. This category included 399 cases (26.2%) of L-S.

6.1.3. Revising and Correcting (RC)

Revising and correcting were two writing processes in which the writer went back in the produced text and made any change s/he felt necessary. Revising and correcting cases in the participants' performance happened so often. Such cases of L-S were observed to be of two types: revising and correcting

structures and revising and correcting spellings. Following are some examples for each type.

> *Structure.* Example: "Each of the students want to enter "want es mikhast ya na? are mikhad yadame each age fael bood fe'l mofrad miamad. (L-S)"
>
> Translation: [Does “want” need "s"? Ok, it needs "s". I remember that if "each" was subject of a sentence, then the subject is considered as singular.]
>
> *Spelling.* Example: "In the present curcamstences ee emlaye cercemstenca eshteba neveshtam bayad avazesh konam, khob are injooriye…. (L-S)"
>
> Translation: [the spelling is not correct. I should correct it. Well, ok it is….]

The quantitative analysis of the data showed that the participants switched to their L1 in 305 cases (20.07%) to revise and correct structures and spellings, i.e., 284 times (18.82%) for revising structures and 19 times (1.25%) for revising spelling.

6.1.4. Planning (P)

Planning as one of the processes involved in any composition, may be defined as the way the writer is going to organize his or her ideas in the text. In any composition, organizing, planning and re-planning take the writer's considerable amount of time before s/he commences the actual act of composing. The analysis of the data showed that the participants switched to their L1 when planning the composition. Following are examples of L-S behavior for the purpose of planning:

> Example: "University entrance exam, why is it so important and challenging? Khob, avval bayad che kar konam? Avval bayad ye moghadame benevisam, bad begam in ravesh too iran khoob nist bad barash dalil biaram, do ta paragraph baraye dalil va ye parageraph ham baraye natije giri. (L-S)"
>
> Translation: [What should I do first? I should first write an introduction. Next I state that this method is not good in Iran, and then I support it by some evidence. Two paragraphs for reasons and one for conclusion.]

Based on what the participants recalled during the retrospection phase of the data collection, they always switched to their L1 when organizing and planning information in their mind. 135 cases (8.88%) of L-S were related to the participants' planning and organizing of the ideas.

6.1.5. Establishing the Coherence of Ideas (ECI)

Whenever the participants doubted whether their current written statements were semantically related to each other or not they switched to their L1 to check and establish the semantic coherence of ideas within or between paragraphs. The following is an example of a participant's retrospection:

> Example: "Har moghe' shak mikardem ke aya dalayelam rabti be mozoo' dare ya na bar migashtam be farsi va eedeha va dalayel ra be farsi baraye khodam tekrar mikardam ta rabeteye mnteghieshan ra peyda konam. Dar toole neveshtane in maghale morattaban zehnam baraye mortabet boodane eedeha be farsi barmigasht."
>
> Translation: [Whenever I doubted the logical relationship between my reasons and the topic of essay, I switched to Farsi and repeated them in my mind to find a logical relation among them. My mind switched to Farsi so often in this composition to check the relationship between reasons and ideas.]

127 cases (8.36%) of L-S fell in this category.

6.1.6. Confirming Lexical Meaning (CLM)

Another category of L-S and of course the last one in terms of the frequency of L-S occurrence was "lexical meaning confirmation". The participants in this study acknowledged their L2 word selections by checking the appropriacy of its equivalent in L1 in order to be positive about their suitability. Following is an example from think-aloud protocol:

> Example: "In order to divide … "taghsim kardan (L-S)", divide "taghsim kardan (L-S)" the university seats…"

When the participant who produced the above statement was asked to state the reason why she switched to L1 after producing the L2 word, she answered:

> Example: "Mikhastam motmaen besham ke “divide” ya'ni taghsim kardan. Vaghti moadele farsisha migam, bishtar hesse etminan mikonam"
>
> Translation: [I wanted to be sure that the meaning of "divide" is "taghsim kardan".]

The data in this category supports Cumming's findings (1990) that cross-linguistic problem-solving is an effective means of verifying linguistic choices. It also supports Qi's finding (1998) that conceptual knowledge is shared across languages and can be accessed via either L1 or L2. 53 cases (3.48%) of L-S were categorized as CLM.

6.2. Reasons for L-S Behavior

As mentioned in the previous part, the third and the fourth phases of the data collection were mainly aimed at finding reasons for L-S occurrence, which were expressed in the participants' retrospections immediately after finishing the writing task and also in their unstructured interviews. In these two phases the reason for every case of L-S was sought and then matched up with the think-aloud protocols. Finally the stated reasons were categorized, and ranked in terms of their frequency (See table 2). The reasons are presented below:

6.2.1. Linguistic Deficiency (LD)

One reason mentioned by the participants was the lack of enough English proficiency. They said that they resorted to Persian to compensate for deficiencies in English proficiency, as one of them maintained in the interview phase:

> Example: "har moghe' kalame ya sakhtari ra balad naboodam, barmigashtam be farsi tekrar mikardam bebinam mitoonambe engilisi besazamesh"
>
> Translation: [Whenever I did not know a word or a structure, I switched to Farsi and repeated it to see if I was able to construct the English equivalent.]

The same reasons were repeated by almost all the participants. In fact, participants resorted to their L1 through direct translation in order to compensate for their lack of linguistic knowledge. This could have helped the participants overcome the difficulties they were confronted with when

composing. This seems to correspond to Roca de Larios's findings (1999) which suggests that L2 proficiency determines the focus of concerns of strategy use in L2 composing. Linguistic deficiency was the reason for 567 cases (37.3%) of L-S.

6.2.2. Overload of Memory (OM)

The data collected in the retrospection and interview sessions showed that the participants switched to their L1 in anticipation of the load of the task which would exceed the capacity of their memory. They switched to their L1 because they would find it stronger, to process the information in order to lessen the load to which the use of a weaker language might otherwise add. Some extracted examples are as follows:

> Example: "This approach to evaluation and selection of the students for university may have some consequences, the officials are not aware of. It also has some positive points as well "khob chi shod? Bayad yeki yeki basteshoon bedam, avvalish chi bood?" (L-S)" (Think-aloud porotocol)
>
> Translation*:* [Well, What happened? I should develop them one by one. What was the first one?]

As the above participant confirmed in the retrospection, the reason for the above-mentioned switch was the complexity of the information he predicted would be involved in the subsequent processing. This may contribute to what Qi (1998) described as the reversion to the L1 as compensation for working memory limitation. Totally, 435 cases (28.6%) of L-S behavior were accounted for in this way.

6.2.3. Ease with the Native Language (ENL)

Another reason expressed by almost all the participants in this study was the feeling of comfort they had with their L1. They often switched to L1 in which an idea could be most comfortably expressed. The participants mentioned that they could articulate their ideas in L1 more efficiently, expressively, and with the least possible interruption in the process of thought development.

When the participants were asked to mention why they felt comfortable with their L1, they surprisingly laughed and said: "it is evident. It is our native language. We live with Persian" (Translation). One of the participants in the interview stated:

> Example: "tamoome tajrobehaye ma dar zendegi be farsi boode. Tammome mafahim be farsi darooni shodan. Tamoome ravabete manteghi va ma'naee be farsi dar zehnemen shekl gereftan. Be alave, tamoome mabahes shenide shode dar morede onvane maghale be farsi boode. Banabarin mafhoom avval farsi miad tooye zehnemoon bad ma tarjomash mikonim be engelisi"
>
> Translation: [All of our experience has been in Persian. We have internalized all the concepts in Persian. All the logical and semantic relations have been formed in Persian. In addition, all the discussions and issues related to the topic of the essay which we have confronted, have been in Persian. Therefore, concepts come to our mind in Persian and then we translate it into English.]

The participant's above statements refer to what Friedlander (1990) has called the topic knowledge factor which he believes is a determinant of the quality and quantity of L-S. Based on the data, comfort of the native language was the reason for 345 cases (22.7%) of L-S.

6.2.4. No Reason

When asked to mention the reason for their L-S behaviors, the participants did not know in 172 cases (11.3%) why they switched to their L1. They laughed and said: "I don't know."

Table 2.
Categories of reasons

No.	*Reason Categories*	*f*	**%**
1	Linguistic Deficiency (LD)	567	37.3
2	Overload of Memory (OM)	435	28.6
3	Ease with the Native Lang. (ENL)	345	22.7
4	No Reason (NR)	172	11.3
Total		1519	100

7. Discussions

7.1. L-S Categories

Generally, the results of this study suggest that L2 writing is a bilingual process. That is, L2 writers switch between two languages when they are

composing in L2, as noted by some previous studies (e.g., Cumming, 1990; Uzawa, 1997). As data analysis shows, for 7535 number of words produced by all the subjects, their use of L-S accounts for about 20.15%. This proportion seems rather small in comparison with other studies (e.g. Manchon et al., 2000, came up with 58.5% in argumentative and 52% in narrative; Guo and Liu, 1997, 55% in story telling elicited by showing pictures). Though the difference can be attributed to the different methodologies adopted, to the students' level of proficiency, or even to the students' L1 incongruity in these studies, it is, however, reconfirmed that L-S is a prevailing phenomenon in L2 writing.

Reflecting on the observed behaviors in the thirty sessions of data collection along with the findings drawn out from it, one may come up with new thoughts about *functions* of observed L-S behaviors.

First, the participants' encoding of the generated ideas in L1 precedes their further developing of those ideas in L2. Qi (1998) explains this observation as follows. "This might suggest that encoding certain non-linguistic feelings or experiential mental images is cognitively demanding and would need to be accessed via L1_ the stronger language of a bilingual person." (p. 426). Two other explanations can be offered here. First, the degree of difficulty at which a specific target word or phrase is processed in an encoding process is related to L1 use in generating and initiating ideas, as it is evident in this study. Second, it may relate to what Friedlander (1990) has called the topic knowledge factor which refers to L1 conceptualizations of ideas and concepts in the learners' mind during their lives.

In relation to the development of a thought through constant switches between L1 and L2, the data suggests that, in addition to the use of L2, L-S makes it possible for a thought to be developed cross-linguistically without slowing down the pace of thinking. It also compensates for the possible failure to produce effective output in L2 only. In other words, L-S enabled an initiated thought to continue to develop and helped generate content which the participants sometimes felt less competent to produce when they used L2 only. This may suggest that developing a thought in an L2 at a normal speed would also be cognitively demanding.

Second, close examination of the think aloud protocols and matching them up with the information obtained from retrospection and interview revealed that

L-S facilitates rather than inhibits L2 composing processes. The idea that L-S is effective in L2 composing process provides important evidence supporting the notion that conceptual knowledge which is shared across L1 and L2 may be accessed cross-linguistically. In other words, knowledge may well be tied to a shared rather than a separate conceptual store in a bilingual's memory.

Third, a brief look at the categories of L-S behaviors triggers in the mind the idea that the main areas in which the participants tended to use L-S may be included in the *metacognitive strategies* used in language performance. Planning, revising and correcting, establishing and checking the coherence of ideas, confirming lexical meaning can all be instances of metacognitive strategies, but further research is needed to investigate the extent of the possible relationship between metacognitive strategies and L-S behavior which in turn needs a psycholinguistic analysis of metacognitive strategies and the general level of knowledge demands they need in order to be exploited by the learner, because "high level of knowledge demands was observed as a general factor potentially influencing L-S behavior" (Qi, 1998, p. 421).

As a final word, it is worth noting that two prevailing factors can be recognized (and discussed in this study) to influence L-S behavior, i.e., "Topic Knowledge" factor (Friedlander, 1990) and "High Level of Knowledge Demand" (Qi, 1998). Based on the data in the present study, it may be suggested that topic knowledge can be made more meaningful if it is discussed in terms of the level of knowledge demands. It is possible that an L2 learner accesses the topic knowledge in L1 in which the topic knowledge was processed and acquired. In this case, accessing the topic knowledge in an L2 in which the information has never been reprocessed would be more cognitively demanding than accessing the knowledge in L1, where the information was processed and stored in memory. It can be concluded that the level of knowledge demands may be a basic variable that influences L-S and determines whether knowledge may best be accessed and processed in L1 or in L2 composing task.

7.2. Reasons for L-S Behavior

So many sources are accountable for the occurrence of any phenomenon. The present research in an attempt to find the possible reasons for L-S occurrence recognized just three cases which are based merely on the participants' retrospections and the data elicited from them in the unstructured

interviews. The recognized reasons were "Linguistic deficiency", "Overload of Memory", and "Comfort of Native Language".

Considering the linguistic deficiency, the findings in this study support those of Wang (2003) in that "it makes learners attempt to simplify their writing production at the levels of lexis, syntax, and semantics and pushes them into concentrating on translations from L1 into L2 to perform their L2 writing." (p. 15-16) In fact, the participants resort to L1 to compensate for their L2 linguistic deficiencies in their writing processes during which negative transfer may be one possible consequence. In the present study, participants switched often to their L1 to construct a phrase or sentence, word by word through translation. This, according to Wang (2003), may suggest that such "writing processes may be firmly embedded in L1 framework" (p. 16). In this circumstance, the participants' switching for translation might be considered as a means to maintain their "Stable Composing Processes" (Perl, 1979, p. 328).

Regarding the second reason recognized in the present study (overload of memory), it seems that human beings, through experience, develop intuitive criteria to predict the limit of working memory span in relation to the load of a specific task. Participants in this study automatically switched to L1 when their working memory was overloaded. These cases of L-S were very swift and automatic. As the participants verified in the follow-up retrospections, the cause of these switches was claimed to be the high degree of complexity of information. This suggests that, like the consequences of linguistic deficiency, an overloaded memory makes the learners resort to their L1 to lessen the cognitive load of L2 processing.

The comfort of the native language as the third recognized reason in this study supports Friedlander's idea (1990) of topic knowledge factor. The task performers tend to switch to L1 in which the information related to the topic has been processed and developed through years of experience. When asked about the reason for their switching to L1, almost all the participants in the study stated that they were more at ease with Persian, their L1, and that they had studied, learned and heard everything about the topic in Persian.

Finally, as table 2 shows, the participants did not know the reason for 172 L-S cases. One might ask for the reason for this unawareness. This in turn may raise further questions and hypotheses which need to be investigated in

future studies. One explanation to be offered here relates to the level of the learners' language awareness. There may be some relationship between the students' self-awareness of their cognitive and affective states while performing a task and recalling the possible causes of certain behavior they do after finishing the task. This may be further explained through an aesthetic judgment where the reference is not made to an objective rule, but to ones' experience of harmony between feelings and understanding. Thus a person sometimes has no clear concepts or criteria to make a judgment or express a reason for an occurrence.

8. Conclusion

Much has been said about the similarities between writing in one's native language and writing in a second language (Hall, 1990; Raimes, 1985; Zamel, 1983). However, the most salient qualitative difference is that in L2 writing, two languages can be interchangeably used. As the results of the present study shows, this is not just a matter of presence or absence of something, but it is a different experience altogether.

This study, as an introductory investigation, has uncovered some basic patterns of L-S and has offered some possible reasons for the L-S occurrence. The results indicate that L-S is generally a positive process from which L2 writers can benefit very much in order to make appropriate linguistic or rhetorical choices. This idea is further substantiated by the reasons the participants have provided; all the reasons expressed emphasize the contributory role of L-S behaviors in the L2 composing task. Though some scholars (e.g., Chelala, 1982; Kaplan, 1966; Gass & Selinker, 1983) have found the L-S experience as impeding, especially in the contexts of speaking or even listening, we can almost strongly claim that L2 writing can capitalize much on the L1 available resources to improve. With the above point in mind, we may come to the conclusion that L2 writing, if not all other L2 skills, seems to be supportive of the compound bilingualism where the conceptual representation of the two languages are believed to converge.

And the last point is that the present study suffers from its own limitations, especially the ones associated with the think-aloud and retrospection methods of data collection (Jannssen et al., 1996; Tomlinson, 1984). Thus the results obtained in this study need to be cautiously interpreted and generalized.

9. Limitations of the study

While the present study investigated L-S in L2 writing context by adopting a research design using think-aloud data collection procedure, it suffers from certain limitations.

From a research methodology perspective, this study used concurrent think-aloud protocols as the main source of insights into the participants' L2 writing processes. Admittedly, this method of eliciting data has some drawbacks, such as slowing down learners' thinking processes (Ericsson & Simon, 1980) and creating reactivity problems (Jannssen et al., 1996; Stratman & Ham-Lyons, 1994). That is, writers' verbalizations may interfere with their thinking processes while they are composing. To minimize the possible effects of these drawbacks, this study had held a warm-up session for every participant before they started to compose. In this phase, the participants practiced thinking aloud a lot until they got familiar and felt comfortable with this method of data collection.

Another limitation related to the methodology is the cross-sectional design this study adopted to find answers to the research questions which in turn resulted from the time limitation the researcher was confronted with. As this study is psycholinguistic in nature, adopting longitudinal design may reveal many more aspects of learners' cognitive structures and also cognitive processes involved in L2 composing.

The last limitation to be mentioned here relates to the facilities such as a tape-recorder needed to conduct such research. Any distraction from the environment may change the participant' focus of attention and result in some unintentional interruptions which in turn affects the findings of the study.

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Greet with the same or render a better greeting: Some translational discourse of Persian-Gulf-Arabic greetings

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Very little is known about the translation or the terminology of the spoken discourse of Persian Gulf Arabic, though; the region has recently gained an unprecedented momentum for its strategic importance. This study explores the linguistic expressions, which are part of the discoursal conventions of Gulf-Arabic discourse community that are recognized by their communicative effects within culturally ritualized use. In particular, the study concerns itself with the way in which the Gulf-Arabic formulaic expressions of greetings and politeness are treated in a contemporary bilingual dictionary on the dialect. The examination focuses on five categories of greeting rituals; initiation of social encounter; concern about the wellbeing, health and state of affairs of others; temporal greetings; polite requests and thanking; and closings and farewells. The findings suggest that greeting rituals have to be independently treated, and their dictionary listing must be supplemented with; (1) explanatory definition; (2) actual articulation; (3) adjacency pairs; (4) authentic context; (5) etymology; and (6) cross-reference to the related entries. The study concludes to acknowledge that a single-author glossary is not necessarily bad, but it is too short to produce an adequate listing and complete description of socio-culturally oriented expressions, like greeting rituals.

Keywords: Greeting Formulas; Translation; Lexicography; Persian Gulf Arabic; Discourse Analysis

1. Introduction

Greeting discourse in the Gulf Arabic is best introduced with an explanatory disambiguation of its conceptual reference both as a discourse genre and as a linguistic entity. Hence, at the outset of our discussion in the present study, we start with a three-dimensional explanation. The *first* is related to the greetings frame of reference. Greeting discourse presents considerable variations in reference and hence leads to differences of opinion among

sociolinguists, discourse analysts and lexicographers. As far as the literature on terminology is concerned (cf. Holes 2001, Emery 2000, and Schleicher 1997, Davies 1987, Duranti 1997) greetings are referred to as, but not limited to, 'formulaic expressions', 'habitually spoken sequence' (Davies 1987), 'conversational routines', 'discoursal expressions', 'formulaic speech acts' (Aijmer 1996), and 'interpersonal verbal routines' (Ferguson 1978), among many others. The conventionalized association for greetings is that they are widely acknowledged as archetypical forms of politeness (Nguyen 1981, Emery 2000, Schleicher 1997, Davies 1987, Duranti 1997). For that matter, the query on greetings, in general, engages their discoursal function, user's familiarity and reciprocity, in addition to questions concerning their forms of use, adjacency pairs and social hierarchy (Schegloff and Sacks 1973; Piazza 1987). Within the general theory of terminology (Nedobity 1983), however, less attention has been paid to the cross-cultural informativeness of greeting formulas, and marginal consideration is given to their cross-societal uniformities (Youssouf et al 1976). As an exception, and hence infrequent in the literature, Schleicher 1997 attempted to utilize greeting formulas to teach cultural understanding. He correctly argued that 'greetings not only establish an atmosphere of sociability, they also communicate ideas' (ibid:334). We view greeting formulas, in the present study, as linguistic expressions which are part of the discoursal protocol of a given discourse community, that are recognizable and characterized by their communicative purpose, identified and understood by members of the speech community in which they are engaged. In other words, greeting formulas are combinations of words or 'formulaic expressions', in the sense that their speech values are reduced, which attain a frame of reference, hence a discourse value, within a culturally ritualized use. In the context of the present study, greetings are coupled to a given social context, i.e. Gulf Arabic, invariable in form, and usually come in 'adjacency pairs', where each of the interlocutors has an obligatory share in the process of greetings.

Secondly, greeting discourse, fundamental by the merit of its sociability, is, indeed, indispensable to the attainment of communicative competence in the target language. In the context of a foreign language, "the more speakers understand the cultural context of greetings, the better the society appreciates them, and the more they are regarded as well behaved" (Schleicher 1997:334). Failure to fulfill one's obligatory role during greeting exchange may consequently result in a social disappointment, which may

vary from dismay to a more serious breach of social relations and perhaps cause to be in a physical danger as in Tuareg greetings in the Sahara desert (Youssouf et al 1976). In fact, in some deeply rooted cultures of which Gulf Arabic is an example, failure to place greetings in their appropriate frame of use may be perceived not only as an evidence for a lack of linguistic proficiency, but rather as a breach of the socio-cultural rituals the community would rather preserve. Further, such violation is likely to be understood as an act of disrespect, hostility, or even a clear sign of impoliteness, particularly in the context of a rural use of Gulf Arabic, where linguistic exchange is exceptionally loaded with socio-cultural values and religious beliefs. This is probably why lexicographers find an interest, nowadays, to cast more light on the formulaic expressions used in Gulf Arabic, including forms of address, politeness strategies and greeting rituals, aiming to fulfill a pedagogical gap so as to disambiguate their foreign use. Hence, bilingual dictionaries, as tools through which cultures are understood (El-Sayed 1990, Nguyen 1981, Schleicher 1997), emerged to bridge English-language users with the Gulf Arabic.

Thirdly, as the Gulf region nowadays captures the world's attention for its economic and strategic importance, its language, to say the least, attracts an unprecedented momentum, especially for dictionary makers. Bilingual dictionaries (Gulf Arabic/English) emerged as a sign of growing interest in the region's language and as keen awareness and urgent appeal for an adequate description of Gulf Arabic. Some of these bilingual dictionaries, which vary in size from 'pocket' to 'collegiate-size' dictionaries, may serve the needs of business executives and representatives of commercial and international establishments who may visit the region for a short business trip or may stay there for relatively longer periods. Others may assist professional endeavors, including intellectual research, and English-language users who work for international organizations in the region or those who are affiliated with locally situated programs, which are good in number with respect to the developmental nature of the Gulf States. It is worth noting here that the Gulf region comprises well over ten million inhabitants of countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Oman. Unfortunately, monolingual and bilingual dictionaries of Arabic are quantitatively limited, if not out-of-date, and tell us qualitatively little about the lexicography of modern spoken language (Asfour 2003). Surprisingly, there is meager terminological knowledge available on the spoken Arabic of

the Gulf, a region of dynamic trade, diplomacy and strategic endeavors (Emery 2000). The research at hand assumes its share to fill this gap of knowledge as it sheds light on the formulaic expressions of greetings and the way these are treated in contemporary bilingual dictionaries of Gulf Arabic.

In what now follows, various accounts of Greeting discourse and some varieties of Arabic are briefly outlined so as to background dictionary-making in Arabic, in general, and in Gulf Arabic, in particular, with an eye on the conceptualization of greeting discourse as culturally contextualized. Then next, the reader will follow the analysis sections, which cast light on various greeting rituals, arranged in accordance with their sub-genres as; (1) initiation of social encounter, (2) concern about the interlocutor's wellbeing, family and state of affairs, (3) temporal greetings, (4) polite requests and thanking, and (5) closings and farewells. The treatment of such greeting formulas in the *Glossary of Gulf Arabic* (1996) will be thoroughly assessed.

2. Greeting discourse

Greeting discourse, to say the least, concerns a number of scholars in a wide spectrum of disciplines, not limited to the fields of terminology or dictionary making. Hence, so as to serve the scope of the present study, the discussion of greetings will be guided by the classificatory definition adopted for the associated reference of greeting discourse. Greeting formulas are a fixed set of linguistic expressions, as part of the discoursal protocol of a given discourse community, they are characterized by their communicative purpose, and understood by members of the speech community in which they are used. In other words, greeting formulas are combinations of words or 'formulaic expressions', which attain a frame of reference within a culturally ritualized engagement. In that, greetings are coupled to a given social context, invariable in form of use, and usually come in 'adjacency pairs', where each of the interlocutors has an obligatory share in the process of greetings. Within this frame of reference, a number of attempts, which account for the form and function of greeting encounters, will be purposely acknowledged, in addition to some accounts on mono-societal and cross-societal greetings as given in some bilingual dictionaries of Arabic and English.

In a methodologically significant treatment, Goffman (1971) examined various functions of greetings and farewells in the United States. Goffman was able to show a range of functions of greetings, such as "politeness, presence validation (for self and others), threat denial, petition preliminary, display,

and identity establishment for self and others". Goffman found that American greetings are also used to show pleasure in the company of the other, to affirm a differential allocation of status and, when performed between strangers, there is an element of guarantee for safe passage (Goffman 1971:74).

Looking for further illustration of the communicative function of greetings, an example is found in Youssouf et al (1976) study, that traced the greetings among the Tuareg nomads who live in an area central in northern Mali across the Sahara (Niger, Algeria and Libya). They found that the Tuareg greetings are "highly formulaic discourses … [with] structures which require responses on the part of the interlocutor, e.g. summons, praise, questions. Failure to respond to any of these forms is to be read as a violation" of the socio-cultural norms of the Tuareg (ibid:812). Significantly, this study highlights some major functions of greetings; such as showing respect, showing solidarity and obtaining and validating presence recognition. It has been found, in the Tuareg context where there is a history of intertribal warfare, that the identification of the other is critically important and that shortening of the greetings may be read as signaling rudeness or urgency, while extended greetings may be read as signaling extreme politeness or as a tactic for delaying or preventing other types of exchanges such as petitions or bad news (Youssouf et al 1976:814).

Through greetings and forms of address one may be able to understand, and for that matter teach, a culture, a fact that is realized by the Schleicher's (1997) examination of Yoruba greetings. The cultural information provided by the greeting discourse, Schleicher argued, goes far beyond teaching the meaning of the greeting forms to a foreign learner of a language. Although greetings may serve to set the stage for interpersonal communication, "issues of afterlife, reincarnation, religious belief, strong desire for children, communal style of living, concern for other people, and deities associated with different traditional occupations are revealed in the language of greetings." The issue of the informativeness of some cultural formulaic expressions was pushed a bit further by Gregory and Wehba (1986) who claim that *inshalla* , as a formulaic expression that carries Islamic cultural connotation, is entertained in a none taken-for-granted meaning in Alexandria Egypt, and often causes incorrectness when used by foreigners. In the context of language learning, greeting formulas "carry culture-specific

messages that must be understood if the language learner is to interact positively with other members of the society" (Schleicher 1997:342).

3. Some earlier analyses of Arabic greetings

As noted earlier in the introduction, the literature on Arabic greetings is not voluminous, the most pioneering of which is Ferguson's description of Syrian Arabic, which will be outlined here along with those by some others (Davies 1987 for Moroccan; Caton 1973 for Yemeni; Hassanain 1994 for Saudi; and Emery 2000 for Omani), pending a relevance to the analysis of the Gulf Arabic greeting rituals at hand. The literature gets even more scarce when one searches for a description of Gulf-Arabic greetings. Emery (2000) reports that "no published studies appear to have focused specifically on Arabian Gulf Dialect" (Emery 2000:196). One can easily observe a similar situation with regard to politeness studies, especially of greetings, in other world languages e.g. Hindi (cf. Mehrotra 1975; Patil 1994; 1996). The significance of the present study, to analyze the greeting rituals in Gulf Arabic, is hence justified.

Contrastively, Arabic greetings are addressed for the first time by Ferguson (1978) who points the foreign learner's attention to some cross-cultural mismatches between Syrian Arabic and American English. Ferguson examined the 'root-echo responses' formulas that characterize politeness formulas in both languages. He found out that the major source of difference between the American and Syrian greetings was related to the rhetorical formation and use of greeting rituals, which, he argued, are culture-specific and very much tied to the socio-cultural background and the history of each speech community. He correctly noticed that the culture-specific code *'the same or more'* is an intrinsic constituent of Arabic greetings. Such observation by Ferguson is factually endorsed by the reality that the Quran Arabic, symbolizing the standard variety from which dialects are derived, legislates for Arabic greetings, as in the Holy Quran (al-nissa 86), which states 'When a (courteous)greeting is offered to you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous, or (at least) of equal courtesy...' (Ali 1992:211). Similar to other varieties of Arabic, and perhaps other languages, the influence of Classical language marked, either wholly or partly, the politeness formulas in localized varieties. For example, the Classical Arabic *insha' allaah* (God willing) has been weakened to *nshalla* in Syrian Arabic, '*guwwa'* in Gulf Arabic is the shortened form of (*may God give you strength*, said as a form of greeting).

Likewise, *goodbye*, Ferguson noted, is the shortened English form of *God be with you*.

The question of translatability across cultures or the culturally equivalent terminology as far as greeting discourse is concerned was intuitively addressed in Davies (1987). The idea that one culture is likely to have more greeting and politeness formulas than the other is attempted by Tannen (1981) who claimed that Greek culture has relatively fewer politeness formulas than Turkish culture, but more than English. The Arabic *marHaba* (said to greet a visitor to the house), for instance, seems to Davies to be untranslatable, or when *welcome* is used, as an English equivalent, it "would sound rather quaint or stilted" (Davies 1987:80). More obvious formulaic expressions, which propose extreme difficulty for terminologists when considered cross-culturally, are phrases such as; *merry Christmas*, and *Hajon maqbul wa THenbon maGfur* (may God accept your pilgrimage and forgive your sin, said to someone who is about to go, or has come from, a pilgrimage to Mecca).

The 'cultural interpretation' of the richness and complexity of the Yemeni Arabic greetings, in which Caton (1973) was fascinated, serves to identify a clear signal of the extreme importance of these conversational routines and how sensitive their linguistic forms are to mark social interaction. Caton noticed that two social groups in Yemen (Sadah and tribesmen) employed significantly different functions, and hence types, of greetings in their respective communities. Their greeting rituals are very crucial to identify the social interaction among the group members and when conversing with members of the other community, so as to demonstrate one's honor and respect for one's self, and also to demand others to pay the due respect of one's honor and pride. Similar to Ferguson's note on Syrian Arabic, Caton, citing the use of a full form of *allah yisallimak* (may God bless you), also noticed that the greeting discourse in Yemeni Arabic is attached to a more higher, hence influential, variety of Arabic. He also reported that, in the Yemeni act of greeting, one sounds serious in engaging a religious act. The use of *as-salaam 'alaykum* and its various and repetitive responses demonstrate piety as enjoined by Islamic credo (Caton 1973). As will be demonstrated in the present study, the tie between religious greetings of Arabic is strong in GA greetings as well, which undoubtedly indicates a profound influence of religion on this vital aspect of a spoken variety of Arabic.

As we progress towards the region where Gulf Arabic is in use, a report comes from Hassanain (1994) on Saudi Arabic, which possesses various rhetorical, discoursal as well as terminological similarities with Gulf Arabic. Within a sociolinguistic framework, Hassanain classified examples of 'communicative repertoire' (greetings) used in a variety of face-to-face interactions in Mecca speech community, ranging from hello and leave taking to condoling and speaking of a dead person. Hassanain (1994) noted that Mecca greetings are largely dominated by religious discourse, particularly in greeting exchanges where "… the greetee does not thank the greeter, but rather thanks God for the state of his own health" (ibid:72). In addition, the study highlights the role of age in the form of greetings. For instance, when the interlocutors belong to almost the same age-group the term *ax* 'brother' is used as some kind of greeting idiom. But, if the greeter is younger than the addressee either *'am* 'uncle' followed by the addressee's name, or *abu X* 'father of X' are used as signs of politeness and respect. Out of the 57 formulas of Mecca greetings, arranged by Hassanain according to their speech function, we found that 39 formulas of them (68%) perform identical (or similar) functions in Gulf Arabic. The rest, though not formulaically used, are still intelligible to speakers of Gulf Arabic. This, we believe, highlights how much the repertoire of the two varieties of Arabic are terminologically close. Hassanain concluded his analysis by an appeal for a pedagogical analysis of the dialect so as to fulfill the outstanding need for foreign language instruction.

A variety of Gulf Arabic, Omani local dialect, has been inspected by Emery (2000) in the form of three categories of politeness formulas: greeting and parting, congratulating and condoling. At the very early stage of the analysis, Emery was able to detect significant influence of a higher variety (Classical or as he termed it 'pan-Arabic') on Omani's linguistic repertoire and patterns, which was due to early education and media. Significantly, the analysis depicts age-based and gender-based characterizations of Omani Arabic. Emery reports that "traditional vernacular forms of greetings were preserved by the old, while 'imported' pan-Arabic usages were exclusive to younger generation" (2000:214). On the other hand, "younger women were sometimes more innovative than young men who may exhibit solidarity with their male elders in their speech" (ibid:213). He also reports that Omani greetings come in the form of adjacency pairs with a strong social premium placed on an appropriate response" (ibid:214).

4. Gulf Arabic and bilingual dictionaries

The variety of Arabic rendered here is what dialectologists refer to as Gulf Arabic (GA), which is the language spoken by over ten million people residing in over 900 miles of land stretched along the coast of the Arabian Gulf from the city of 'Basra' in the southeast of Iraq to 'Muscat' the capital of the Sultanate of Oman in the south, inhabiting countries such as Kuwait, eastern province of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, the UAE and Oman. This coastal dialect of Arabic is the marked variety that is characteristically used in the Gulf major cities-or their suburbs. Hence, it is to be distinguished from the neighboring spoken varieties referred to invariably as Bedouin Dialects (Abu-Haider 1994), which, in fact, share geographical constituency with GA, but differ significantly not only in their linguistic repertoire but also phonologically and phonetically as well. GA, as a regional koinẻ, may exhibit some local variation particularly in speech temp and intonation, but it is the main stream variety which is intelligibly used and comprehended all over the Gulf states. In fact, it encompasses the inherited linguistic culture of Classical Arabic alongside some significant lexical borrowings form neighboring cultures such as Turkish, Persian, Urdu as well as English and some European and African languages, through trade and travel. Standard Arabic, particularly written Arabic, is essentially used, in the Gulf region, in professional and official contexts. Such higher variety is the language of the Quran, government, literature, education and professional publications. Although greeting rituals such as *as-salamu alaykum*, *alHamdu lil-laah*, *insha 'allah,* may have their roots in the Classical language, they are widely used in GA. However, various formulaic greetings of GA, for example; *guwwa* and its pair *gawwiik* 'may God give you strength' are culture-specific and are found to be intrinsic in the Gulf region.

In spite of the fact that pidginized variations of GA are growing rapidly among, and caused to happen by, the increasing numbers of migrant workers mainly from the Urdu-speaking subcontinent (Smart 1990), GA remains the intact spoken language of the natives, which is used at home, the workplace, the souq and among friends, relatives, and co-workers. Foreign visitors, particularly English-speaking ones, are expected to use the socio-culturally conventionalized language, i.e. GA, and not to use the pidginized variety since it is associated with the low-skilled working migrants.

Formulaic expressions are mainly used in GA in 'adjacency pairs'. Such social exchanges may take a relatively longer time than English greetings, for instance, and, in fact, the same individuals may exchange greetings several times a day. This is not to say that Gulf speakers have nothing much to do except exchanging greetings, an idea that appears possible to western audience, particularly Americans. Such GA greeting exchanges demonstrate social closeness and how much people care about each other. In question are greetings involving wellbeing concerns, questions about health, family and relatives as ways of strengthening friendship as well as establishing social communication. Gulf locals, in fact, appreciate and value the use of GA greetings and politeness expressions by foreign visitors, especially in the opening of speech encounters in business and diplomatic contexts.

Greetings, no doubt, perform a number of functions in any social interaction, the most obvious of which is to establish, prolong and hence improve communicative interaction. If failed, they disturb social encounters and may cause communication to come to an unpleasant end. The latter, is certainly not a desirable situation for a foreigner. In order for foreigners to communicate effectively with the locals, they need to be able to achieve the desirable impression on their interlocutors, task that will not be possible to attain without an adequate knowledge and awareness of what is the right form to use, when to use it, and what are the other forms possible when factors like social distance, gender, age and education vary. This is why a bilingual dictionary is needed to channel English speakers with the accurate use of GA.

In the light of the fact that the informative meaning of politeness formulas, including greeting rituals, is coupled to a given social context, where it attains the discourse frame of reference, it is simply not possible to recover such a meaning in a standardized monolingual dictionary. Hence, a specialized bilingual dictionary, in this respect GA-English, is the only ethnographic source of reference that renders assistance to foreigners when attempting to use such cultural expressions. However, dictionaries are generally deficient in this particular area of culture-specific vocabulary, such as greetings and phrases of politeness, which require clarification not only in social definitions but also demand a clear demarcation of possible forms of use (Landau 1989, and Fatani 1998).

El-Badry (1986) correctly reports that most of the bilingual dictionaries that describe Arabic dialects have been compiled by western orientalists who lived or traveled across the Arab world and compiled list-like glossaries so as to assist their fellow citizens when they attempt to make the same journey. The available references on GA, which have been recently published, are: Clive Holes' *Colloquial Arabic of the Gulf and Saudi Arabia* (1988), and Hamdi A., Qafisheh's *Gulf Arabic-English Dictionary* (1999). The present study will focus primarily on the *Glossary of Gulf Arabic* (1996) for the following reasons. First, Holes' book *Colloquial Arabic of the Gulf and Saudi Arabia* (1988), although among the recent publications on the Gulf and Saudi Arabic, is not a glossary. It is a textbook with a pedagogical orientation, or a knowledge-providing source book that was put together to assess English-speaking learners of Arabic. Holes complements this book with another textbook of an identical goal, *Grammar of Gulf Arabic* (1990). In the light of what Fatani (1998) referred to as the 'ethnographic source of reference' that renders assistance to foreigners when attempting to use cultural expressions in their speech encounters in the target culture, Qafisheh's *Gulf Arabic-English Dictionary* does not qualify to provide such an assistance to native English users of GA greetings. This book was compiled in 1999 through a fund by the US Department of Education, so as to assist as a reference for advanced students of Arabic at American universities. For that matter, its "entries are arranged according to the Arabic script" (introduction, XIII). In other words, to retrieve a greeting phrase like *guwwa,* if it is at all listed in this glossary, one has to be pre-equipped with the necessary knowledge that it is the shortened version of *allah ya`aTiik al guwwah* (may Gad give you strength), and be able to figure the root system for each and every word in its phrasal construction.

What is left, for the purpose of the analysis at hand, out of the above-mentioned texts is the *Glossary of Gulf Arabic 1996*, which was compiled to fill "an important linguistic gap in modern linguistic studies on peninsular Arabic and to serve the needs of English-speaking learners of Arabic as well as Arabists and dialectologists" (Qafisheh 1996:VII). For that matter, all the entries in the two parts of the glossary, GA-English and English-GA, are written or transliterated in Latin alphabets. The scope of the glossary at hand, as stated by its compiler, who is a native of Levantine Arabic, is claimed to cover all the words and phrases commonly used by native speakers of GA in

the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain. Comprehensiveness of coverage is one of the questions that concern us in this analysis.

The main concern of our analysis will be the English-GA (E-GA) part of the Glossary, which is intended to serve English speakers who are looking for the appropriate Arabic phrase that best suits their communicative needs to greet or use forms of politeness with their GA interlocutors. The GA-English (GA-E) part of the glossary is definitely unusable by English speakers due to; (1) The entries of GA-E part are arranged in accordance with the alphabetical order of GA, a method helpful mainly when retrieving the English equivalent of the 'known' GA form. (2) The GA terminology covered in this part of the glossary is qualitatively limited, as the analysis will demonstrate later in reference to greeting and politeness formulas. (3) There are numerous cases of terminological overlap between Standard Arabic and GA in this part of the Glossary, and the dictionary users, who possess no prior knowledge of GA, are not provided with helpful information. The intended user of the Glossary is most probably unable to use it in a receptive mode to distinguish between the two forms. Conversely, the receptive mode is usually realized in listening, a linguistic activity for which bilingual dictionaries are rarely used (Svensen 1993).

The aim of the present study is to provide a comprehensive account of formulaic greetings and politeness phrases and to find out how well the *Glossary of Gulf Arabic 1996* provides;

- i) a comprehensive description showing the discourse value of the expression,
- ii) accuracy of translation of greeting formulas and expressions of politeness, and
- iii) the degree of assistance rendered to the intended user to locate greetings and expressions of politeness in the wordlist.

From a lexicographic perspective, the analysis will focus on the most common greeting formulas and politeness expressions used in GA, as independently arranged in accordance with their discourse values:

(1) Initiating social encounter,
(2) Showing concerns about the interlocutor's health and state of affairs,
(3) Temporal greetings,
(4) Polite requests and thanking

(5) Closings and farewells.

The discourse value of each of these ritual expressions will be explored, along with its referential status in the Glossary at hand, in a table format. In order to avoid pointless repetition, a glance at the table will suffice to illustrate; (1) the GA form; (2) the adjacent pair(s), i.e. the associated response(s); (3) literal translation of the expression; (4) the Glossary part where the expression is listed; (5) the equivalent listing in the Glossary; (6) the response (adjacent pair) listed in the Glossary; and (7) the explanation given in the Glossary. The explanatory use of the greeting expression will be amalgamated with its discussion rather than listed in the table.

4.1. Initiating social encounter with a greeting:

Before embarking on an analysis of GA greetings, it is necessary to note that the greeting formulas of GA are indiscriminately allocated monosemous entries in the Glossary at hand, thus providing the user with a single context of use. Like their Classical Arabic counterparts, GA greeting formulas are highly polysemous in reference. Take for example *inshalla*, an expression used when one plans something for the future. While the canonical use of the expression is primarily religious; 'with God's wish', in the daily use of *inshalla*, it is used as '*maybe*' (with low probability) (Gregory & Wehba 1986). Likewise, *hala* is often used in GA as a response to numerous greetings.

In addition to *assalam alaykum* (peace be upon you) greeting and its response *wa `alaykum assalaam* (and peace be upon you), which are frequently used all over the Arabic-speaking community, there are certain greeting formulas commonly used by GA speakers as means to initiate a social encounter; like (1) *marHaba,* (2) *guwwa,* and (3) *alla bilxair (*or *labilxair*) (table 1). As polysemous expressions, some of these formulas are commonly used in GA not only as initial opening of a conversational exchange but could be used to draw someone's attention, such as (1) *marHaba* and (3) *labilxair*. '*MarHaba'*, as somehow the pan-Arabic form used among acquaintances and strangers alike, has (4) *hala* as its corresponding response in GA, but the canonical use of (1) and its equal partner *ahlan wasahlan*, are also utilized to welcome someone to your place, for example, capturing the meaning 'you are welcome'. In this case, *shukran* (thank you), the pan-Arabic form, is the only possible response. Such usage is frequently reported to be the contracted form of an older CA greeting: '*laqiita ahlan wa nazalta sahlan*' (you have found your own people, and you have come to a plain land—indicating that

plain land makes life easier than a rough ground) (Al-Nasser 1993:24). See Table 1 in Appendix.

The greeting (1) *marHaba*, as (4) *hala*, inclines towards CA. Hence it is exercised in some neighboring dialects; Saudi (Najdi), Levantine, and Iraqi. An evidence of this is clear through the utilization of the CA concept '*the same or more*', discussed earlier, in *marHabtain* (twice) and *maraaheb* (many) as responses to *marHaba*. This is probably why the Glossary lists only the CA meaning of *marHaba*, and not its common usage in GA, as a welcoming greeting. On the other hand, *guwwa* and *alla bilxair* are strictly GA specific. Both dialectologists and common users would benefit from a distinction, had each group (CA and GA) had its identified entry. '*ahlan wa sahlan'* is a CA greeting parallel to the use of *marHaba* in GA, which is usually used to welcome someone to your place, but not a response to *marHaba* neither in CA nor in GA, as incorrectly listed in the Glossary.

For (2) and (3) to be equated in the Glossary with 'how are you?' and 'good morning', respectively, is certainly misleading to its potential user. '*guwwa'* 'may God give you strength' is a form of greeting identified exclusively with the coastal community of GA speakers. The formula in (1) (*gawwhum* in Basra) was traditionally used in the context when one greets people working, usually on their ships by the seaside, by means of wishing them that 'God gives you strength'. Here, the GA form *guwwa* is derived from the CA form *quwwa* (strength), where /q/ changes to /g/ in GA, but the CA meaning (where 'God' is deleted for the sake of economy of speech) and CA usage remains intact. The addressee will respond with either *alla ygawwik* or *gawwik* (They differ in the anaphoric *y*, which is equally elliptical as its antecedent 'God'). The latter response *gawwik* is missing from the Glossary. Ever since, *guwwa* is used as a form of greeting associated with the opening of conversation everywhere in the Gulf. In fact, *guwwa* is one of the main lexical items that distinguish the Gulf dialect.

'*alla bilxair'* (may God do the good (for you)), which is exclusively used by male speakers of GA, has the same semantic implication as *guwwa*. Both forms reflect a religious connotation that God gives the addressee strength, in the first greeting, or good doing (*xair*), in the second. Evidently, *alla bilxairat* (many *xair*) as a response to *alla bilxair*, is an inherited format of 'greet with more', which has a religious association, as discussed earlier. Such a wishful address, 'God will do this for you', is a highly appreciated concept to be

incorporated with any form of greeting by all Moslems, GA speakers are not exception. Such concept is overlooked in the Glossary at hand, and this is why the lexical item '*xair'* (good) in *alla bilxair* misled the compiler to confuse the meaning of *alla bilxair* (may God do the good (for you)) with *SabaH alxair* (good morning), both of which are listed in one entry. The two greetings are unquestionably not interchangeable in any part of GA. The former is timeless, 'wishful' and GA-specific greeting. The latter, *SabaH alxair* is time-specific, pan-Arabic, and its GA localized form is *SabaHk (SabaHkum) alla bilxair* (Good morning to you (you, plural)) (cf. Homeidi 2004, Jabr 2001, and Jekat 2003).

The treatment of this set of greetings is inconsistent throughout the Glossary. Starting with the part of Glossary where they are listed, only *marHaba,* the pan-Arabic form has cross listing, *Guwwa* and *alla bilxair* are listed only in the GA-E section, and *hala* is not listed at all. Most important, is the Glossary listing of equivalents, where *marHaba* is assigned the English translation of hello/hi, which again is a monosemous entry of response. Similarly, *alla bilxair* is confused with *kaif Haalek* and *shloonek* when inadequately assigned the English meaning 'How are you?'. One may assume, here, that lack of knowledge of GA may have rushed the use of functional translation of such expressions. Such reliance on functional equation may conceal the exact meaning of the linguistic sign and may result in an entirely different greeting (cf. Jabr 2001, and Jekat 2003). An obvious example is '*guwwa'* being assigned the English equivalent 'How are you?', which requires, for the English-speaking users, a response within the semantic range of 'I'm fine'. To further confuse the user, the Glossary lists 'I'm fine' as a translation of the response *alla ygawwik* 'may God give you strength'.

4.2. Showing concern about the interlocutor's wellbeing, family and state of affairs

The previous set of greetings, which functionally initiate social encounters, is usually complemented with an additional set, which extends the greetings to inquire about the addressee's wellbeing, family and state of affairs. In what sounds like an interrogative structure, this second phase of greetings involves semantically synonymous expressions, sometimes even repetitive, as it takes relatively longer time than other greetings, particularly when the social exchange involves acquaintances who are meeting after a long time. The discourse value of this set of greetings is to infuse sociability with the warmth of friendship and to express sincerity and care. In a family-oriented

community like GA, if you are addressed with queries about your family and your latest affairs, it does not mean that you are under interrogation nor that your interlocutor is a snoopy who pries into your own personal affairs, as the case may appear to some Westerners (cf. Homeidi 2004). On the contrary, it means that your interlocutor is trying to articulate the warmth in his greetings and communicate how much you, your affairs and your family mean to him. This social affection on the part of your interlocutor, for instance, is even more obvious if we look at the manner in which these question-like greetings are exchanged. The greeter repetitively inquires about the addressee's wellbeing, family, news and the like within a socio-culturally conventionalized sequence without even waiting for the addressee to respond. Interestingly, the associated responses for such greetings are always in the positive, even though they do not represent reality. Speakers of GA use these greeting rituals along with the appropriate responses as adjacency pairs, a sense that the Glossary at hand does not take into account at all.

The question-like greetings in (5) '*kaifHalek*' or *(ishHalek* in UAE), (10) '*kaifiSiHah*', and (6) '*ishlonek*', are semantically identical greetings that express (How are you?), though they literally mean; (How is your wellbeing?), (How is your health?) and (What is your color?), respectively. In spite of the fact that they may have interrogative structures, and may sound so when articulated, but their socio-cultural connotation simply suggests that 'I am concerned' and 'I want to hear you saying that 'you are fine, you are in good health, your family is also fine, and you carry pleasant news. Their illocutionary force suggests 'I have not seen you for a while; I hope that you are okay'. This is why, the culturally expected responses are all in the positive, even if the fact of the matter is otherwise. This pragmatic conception is even more obvious when we consider the subsequent expressions in this sequence of greetings, i.e. (7) `*asaak Tayeb*' or its counterpart `*asaak ibxair*' (Hope that you are well/in goodness), as well as their affirmative responses; *Tayeb `asak Tayeb*, *bxair `asak ibxair* (I am fine, and I hope you are fine too.), (I am well, and I hope you are well, too.).

While '*kaifHalek*', '*kaifiSiHah*', and '*ishlonek*' (and their dependents `*asaak Tayeb/ibxair*' and *shaxbaarek*) are fairly common among GA speakers and equally used by acquaintances and strangers alike, the greeting in (8) '*shaxbaarek*' and its counterpart in (9) *sh`lumek* (How are you!, or literally what are your news) are most likely to be socially restricted as they are

exchanged among acquaintances. In someway, they correspond to the American phrase 'what's up!'. It must be stated here that some of these rituals are more common in some Gulf states than others, for example, *ishHalek* is the UAE version of *kaifHalek*, and *kaifHalek* and *kaifiSiHa* are more common in Saudi Arabia, while *shi'lumek* is less common in Kuwait and Bahrain, where the latter indicates that the speaker is likely to be of a Bedouin descent. Such explanatory information, though very essential to the foreign user of GA, are overlooked in the named Glossary. See Table 2 in Appendix.

The greeting formulas listed under this category (see table 2) were indiscriminately transliterated, in the Glossary at hand, with some kind of an accent but definitely not GA, may be Levantine, (cf. Mahmoud 2000), henceforth, the Glossary transliteration is identified with ***bold italics*** next to the correct GA pronunciation. Dialects of Arabic vary tremendously, among other consonantal differences, in vowel length and quality; thus, some phonological features of the compiler's own dialect apparently transferred into the transliteration of many words and phrases in the Glossary of Gulf Arabic at hand, noticeably not limited to the listed greetings. To give just a few illustrative examples; /*kaif Halek*/ is transliterated as /*keef Haalak*/; /*ishlonek*/ as /*shloonak*/; /*ibxair*/ as /*ibxeer/*; and /*kaifiSiHa*/ as /*keef issaHHa*/. GA has medial diphthongs in some phonological environments where Levantine dialect, for instance, has long vowels. GA also shortens (softens) the ultimate vowel as a vocalic manifestation so as to prepare for the falling tone at the end of a statement (cf. Alharbi 2004).

The Glossary translation of the question-like greetings here shows a tendency to imitate the surface structure of the greeting formula, i.e. to enquire. This is obvious when three of the five greetings have been indiscriminately assigned the English equivalent *how are you?*. Most of the etymological information, which is imbedded into the phraseology of the greeting formula, will not be available to the potential user of the Glossary. Take for example, *shlunek* , explained as being a contraction of CA *shloon* or *shu loon* (Levantine How?) (Table 2), but literally it means (What is you color?). The etymology of this greeting goes back to the 19th century when an infectious fever spread in the Gulf region causing one's face to turn yellow. The Gulf inhabitants, at that time, intentionally used the form 'What is your color?' to inquire about the color of the addressee's face, hoping it is not yellow, i.e. hoping that the addressee is not affected by the fever!

'*shaxbaarek'* as a fairly common greeting in these question-like formulaic expressions is surprisingly not listed in the Glossary. Similarly, the corresponding responses to this set of greetings are not supplied, except an artificial insertion of the negative phrase *ma 9indi 9luum* (I have no news.) as an answer to *shi'lumek,* mistakably confused with its common response *'lum xair* ('I carry' news of goodwill), as frequently used among the inhabitants of the eastern province of Saudi Arabia, particularly among those who are of Bedouin descent.

As shown in table 2, only two greetings were included in both parts of the Glossary, the rest are either listed in one part, or not listed at all as is the case with *shaxbaarek*. The Glossary, in general, fails to supply the greetings responses or to give illustrative comments explaining the contextualized use of such class of greetings.

4.3. Temporal greetings

The set of greeting rituals considered here is limited to an invariable expression of wishing someone a good morning/evening in a relatively formal exchange. The GA greetings in (11) '*SabaaHilxair'* (good morning) and in (12) '*masailxair'* (good evening) are the allophonic variants of the CA (*SabaaH il-xair*, and *masaa` il-xair*), with their corresponding responses; *SabaH/masa inoor*, used side by side with the more personalized varieties, *SabaHk allabilxair* and *masaak allabilxair* (Good morning/evening to you.). As have been numerously indicated earlier, GA greeting formulas express more warmth and personalized sense than their formal CA counterparts. The only difference between *SabaaHilxair* and *SabaHk allabilxair* is related to the latter being more of a personal message addressed to 'you' as a particular individual, whereas the former is official-like addressing an individual and a group.

The greetings in (13) (*tiSbaH `ala xair*) and in (14) (*timsi `ala xair*) and the corresponding answer for both *wenta minahl ilxair* (Literally: and, you are among the people of goodness, too.) are typically used as leave-taking greetings, depending on the time of the day; where *tiSbaH `ala xair* corresponds to 'good night' and *timsi `ala xair* corresponds to 'good evening'. The time reference signaled in greetings in 12 and 14 is equated with an English approximation of 'evening. It is, indeed, clear that GA greetings do not differentiate further than morning and evening. The afternoon, evening and night, as part of English greetings, are all expressed in GA word 'masa'

(evening). Such cultural variations must be made clear so as not to confuse the English learner of GA (cf. Zughoul and Abdul Fattah 2002). To this effect, the Glossary at hand provides no explicit assistance. See Table 3 in Appendix.

In the Glossary of Gulf Arabic, the morning greeting *SabaaH ilxair* (Good morning) is listed in the E-GA section, along with its GA personalized counterpart *subaHk allabilxair* (Good morning to you), under the same entry 'morning'. On the other hand, *masailxair*, the after mid-day greeting, is listed in E-GA section, but without its GA personalized version *massaak allabilxair* (Good evening to you). In both cases, the anticipated responses are not provided. As illustrated in table 3, the greetings in 13 and 14 are easily confused by the foreign user, with the greetings in 11 and 12, because they sound alike. The Glossary provides no explicit help in this respect. Again, the appropriate responses and contextualized uses of this set of greetings are totally ignored.

4.4. Polite requests and Thanking

The set of formulaic expressions listed here represents some, but not all, the GA expressions used to express polite requests and thanking. While the forms in 17 through 19 (*tifadhal*, *minfadhlek*/*law samaHt*/*law tikaramt*, and *`anithnek*) are typically used to facilitate a request for an excuse of an attempt, the forms in 15 (*shokran, mashkoor*) and 16 (*jezaak allaxair*) express thanking.

The formula *shukran* (and its corresponding response *`afwan/el`afu*) is an archetypal CA form of thanking, which is habitually used by almost all the Arabic speaking community, of which the Gulf community is not an exception. However, as we have noticed earlier, GA usually derives its localized formula from the CA form with a more personalized sense; thus, the form *mashkoor* (Thanks to you.) is the GA localized and personalized form of the CA *shukran* (Thank you). The illocutionary force for such adoption is to express warm politeness and illustrate social closeness with the interlocutor. Note that the CA *shukran* or its localized variant could be used also as an answer to 17 *tifadhal* (welcome).

The thanking formula '*jezaak allaxair'* (God rewards you with blessing.) is the rural version of the widely used religion-bound thanking *yezaak allaxair*. In most cases, the rural /j/ becomes /y/ in urban pronunciation, a phonetic phenomenon that characterizes GA. This particular thanking formula is an

archetypal categorization of a pious and elderly speaker. Its corresponding response *Hayaak alla* (May God welcome you.) is equally sheltered with religious connotation. Age, in addition to religion, are the determining factor as to when this thanking formula is utilized; where the addressee has to be younger, and the social encounter appreciates religious association. Such meaningful insight into the illocutionary force of this thanking formula is amazingly missing from the Glossary.

The different requests for an excuse in 18 and 19 are in fact semantically synonymous with almost identical illocutionary force, i.e. to ask for permission to do something. They are arranged here in accordance with their frequency of use as *law samaHt, min fadhlek, law tikaramt,* and *`anithnek* (excuse me, for permission). The latter somewhat tends to sound more formal than the rest. See Table 4 in Appendix.

As table 4 suggests, there is inconsistency in inclusion and treatment of these thanking and politeness formulas in the Glossary. The form in 17 has cross listing in both sections of the Glossary, whereas 15 and 18 are listed only in a GA section, and 16 and 19 are not listed at all. There is no translation given for the thanking formula in 16, which stands for a culturally loaded expression that requires detailed explanation of its associated usage in GA.

Surprisingly, the Glossary does not list the commonly used thanking form *shokran,* in an independent entry, possibly because it characterizes CA, which the compiler may want to avoid. Nonetheless, the Glossary lists *mashkoor* in the GA-E section, but the associated responses *`afwan*, *el`afu*, and *Hayaak alla* are not given in the same entry. This is a departure from the linguistic fact that nowadays the young generation in GA use *shukran*, *`afwan*, and *el`afu*, as they are exposed to such CA formula as presented by media, education, and the daily contact with a large number of Arabic-speaking people from most Arab countries, where CA is fairly common.

4.5. Closings and farewells

As greetings validate the opening of an interpersonal encounter, farewells signal its end with a positive perpetuation of a social relationship. In fact, greetings and goodbyes are among the social expressions to be intuitively encapsulated during the earlier stage of acquiring a foreign language, if one aims to feel comfortable while communicating with members of the target-language community. There is a full range of formulaic expressions in GA that

are associated with the departure from a social encounter or the closing of a conversation. Out of these expressions, the Glossary lists three forms; the farewell formula in (20) *fursa sa'eeda* (nice to meet you., Literally:'happy opportunity'), and the goodbye formulas in (21) *ma'assalama,* (Literally: 'I leave you with safety'.) and *fi amaan illa,* (Literally: 'I leave you' with peace from God) and in (22) *nshofek 'alaxair* (See you later. Literally: 'see you 'later' in goodness').

In addition to these closing/farewell formulas, there is also *assalaamu 'alaikum* (Peace be upon you.), which has a dual greeting function in GA, and presumably in other dialects of Arabic. In GA, *assalaamu 'alaikum*, with its religious connotation, is used to greet at the initial stage of interpersonal encounters and also used as a goodbye greeting. The GA Glossary fails to give the basic sociolinguistic facts about this greeting, which are very essential and must be made available to the foreign user of GA in an independent entry.

As for the thanking formula *jezaak allaxair* (God rewards you with blessing.), discussed earlier, there is a related indigenous expression *astarxiS* (I seek permission), and its personalized counterpart *min rexSitek* (I seek 'your' permission), which is used mainly by the old GA generation to indicate the intention to leave. The young generation, on the other hand, tend to prefer the use of the CA formula in (22) *ashofek 'alaxair* and its corresponding answer *ma'assalama*. Here, the greeter, while leaving, wishes to see his addressee next time in *xair* (goodness). The interlocutor replies with a similar wish: 'I leave you with *salaama* (peace/safety)'. The Glossary listing of ***inshaalla*** as an answer to the goodbye formula *ashofek 'alaxair* is totally out of context. It seems that the greeting formula here is confused with an exchange of plain statements in a conversation, for instance, which happen to share similar lexical construction with the formulaic expression of goodbye. This confusion is categorically expected in bilingual dictionaries where formulaic expressions are indiscriminately included with the basic lexicon, and granted the same level of treatment. See Table 5 in Appendix.

The formula *ma'asslama* is the most commonly used farewell expression in GA, and perhaps in other Arabic dialects as well. It corresponds to the English *goodbye*, both in form and in function. As *goodbye* is short for 'God be with you.', *ma'asslama* is the shortened form of 'I leave you with peace/goodness'. Both *goodbye* and *ma'asslama* have identical illocutionary force; i.e. a farewell expression indicating a good wish for the interlocutor, whom you are about to

leave. The GA interlocutor affirmatively responds with either; (a) exactly the same greeting, which is more common, or (b) with a more localized and explicitly religious formula *fi amaan illa* (I leave you in God's safety.). The latter is also used as a farewell greeting with *alla ysalmek* (God makes you safe) as its corresponding answer, which is not listed in the Glossary.

A glance at table 5 shows the incomplete treatment of this set of greetings in the GA Glossary. For example, *ma'asslama* is listed in the GA-E section with its response (the same or *fi amaan illa)* with no translation given to the second. The corresponding answer for *fi amaan illa* is *alla ysalmik*, which is listed in another entry under the title *salaam*, and explained exclusively as the response for *ma'assalama*!. Surprisingly, *fursa sa'eeda* the CA greeting, which is actually common in the Gulf region as well, is not listed. Also, the GA equivalent to 'see you later', *nshofek 'alaxair*, is not listed.

5. Conclusion

The present study set to explore the greeting formulas, which are part of the discourse conventions of Gulf Arabic discourse community that are recognized by their communicative effects within culturally ritualized use. From a terminological perspective, the study sheds light on the way in which the Gulf Arabic formulaic expressions are treated in one of the contemporary bilingual dictionaries on the dialect: *Glossary of Gulf Arabic*.

The analysis shows that Gulf Arabic greeting discourse requires special attention, from not only sociolinguists and discourse analysts but also from terminologists and dictionary compilers. The study suggests there are a number of reasons that necessitate a special handling of the formulaic expressions of greetings in Gulf Arabic. The foremost reason concerns the dialect of Gulf Arabic, which is linguistically phenomenal with somehow contradicting particulars. On the one hand, there is unprecedented linguistic demand to learn and use this specific dialect of Arabic, particularly by the English-speaking world, for obvious reasons. On the other hand, there is very limited linguistic knowledge available on Gulf Arabic. From a terminological standpoint, the dictionaries available on Gulf Arabic, as presented by *Glossary of Gulf Arabic*, suffer some serious weaknesses, as illustrated here.

As formulaic expressions, the phraseological constructions of greetings and their communicative force, bare no direct linkage, for the most part, with the words and phrases of which the formulas are composed. The illocutionary

force of Gulf Arabic greetings is semantically derivable from the socio-cultural context in which the expressions are used. From a structural perspective, for instance, Gulf Arabic greetings such as '*kaifHalek*', '*kaifiSiHah*', '*ishlonek*', `*asaak Tayb/ibxair*' and *'shaxbaarek'* give no interrogative force as the structure of their phrasing seems to suggest; rather they communicate affirmative sociability full of warmth, friendship and concern. From a pragmatic perspective, on the other hand, reliance on the literal equation, as an alternative translation of the greeting formula, may conceal the cultural meaning of the linguistic form and may disturb social interaction. For instance, the Gulf-Arabic popular greeting '*guwwa*' equated with 'How are you?', as in *Glossary of Gulf Arabic*, will eventually necessitate--for the English-speaking users--a response within the semantic proximity of 'I'm fine', which is contrary to the religious/cultural meaning of the greeting.

Gulf-Arabic greeting formulas are culture-bound expressions. Although, there is a clear sign of influence from Classical Arabic on the Gulf-Arabic greeting formulas, particularly the religious connotation, the fact remains that there is a localized force on the form and function of Gulf Arabic greetings. Lack of an adequate explanation of the etymological reference of Gulf Arabic greeting will either lead to the GA formula to be confused with the CA form, as the compiler of the *Glossary of Gulf Arabic* did when '*ma 'indi 'luum'* (I have no news.) was suggested as the corresponding answer to the greeting '*sh`lumek'* (What news do you have?), or the greeting '*ishlonek'* (What is your color?) will remain mysterious, if not semantically colorless, without its etymological reference.

The analysis reveals some interesting findings with respect to the inclusion of greeting formulas in the *Glossary of Gulf Arabic.* In the light of the findings that over 71% of the greetings were listed in the GA-English section of the Glossary, which are basically entered in accordance with the root system of the initial word of the greeting formula, it is obvious that the *Glossary* user will receive little help in looking up the appropriate greeting to use in a given social situation. Such method of listing may help users who are already familiar with the Gulf Arabic greetings but search for the appropriate format of usage. To confuse the user of the *Glossary* further, words and phrases, including greeting formulas, are entered in most cases according to the English alphabetical order in the GA-English part. To give an illustrative example, the greeting '`*asaak tayeb'* (I hope you are well.) is listed under the

entry ‘hopefully’, although *tayib* 'well' is the main word of the phrase, as in `*asaak bxair’*. It seems that there is a number of linguistic crossings that mislead the methodology of data entry in the *Glossary* at hand, particularly with reference to greeting formulas. For one, unfamiliarity with the dialect of Gulf Arabic, a case of confusion that is evident not only on the entry method, which confuses Gulf Arabic greetings with Classical Arabic root-based system, but also on the pronunciation of a great number of Gulf Arabic words and phrases. Second, the lack of similar formulas in the two languages seems to force the imbalanced entry of the greetings. Third, the fact that the Arabic language is characterized by the use of elaborate greetings, in addition to the proliferation of religious and cultural references in Gulf Arabic formulas and the non-existence of such magnitude of reference in English, may have forced the compiler to give preferentiality in lexical entry to his native language, if not his native Levantine dialect.

The analysis reveals a number of cases of inconsistency in the provision of corresponding responses in the *Glossary*. No more than 36% of the examined greetings are followed by their corresponding responses in the Glossary. The rest are either scattered around in other entries or simply not listed at all. As an additional sign of less familiarity with the dialect of GA, the *Glossary* failed in most cases to give illustrative explanation as to in what situation the greeting is used, or what the etymology of the expression might be.

To improve accessibility to the greeting formulas, especially for a user interested in complementary information on the greetings such as explanatory statements or example sentences, word roots and etymology, the greetings must have their independent entry, in a special section of the dictionary under the title ‘greetings’. In such a case, they have to be arranged in accordance with their discoursal categories, as suggested in the study. The dictionary listing of Gulf Arabic greetings, we suggest, must be supplemented with; (1) explanatory definition; (2) correct pronunciation of the greeting; (3) the adjacent pair of the greeting, and other possible responses; (4) authentic context of use; (5) the phrase etymology; and (6) cross-reference to the related entries in the remaining sections of the dictionary. Gulf-Arabic greeting formulas must be exclusively listed according to their linguistic manifestation, i.e. their Arabic alphabetical sequence.

Finally, we want to emphasize the fact that a single-author glossary is not totally bad, but terminology becomes too laborious for a single individual to

be able to produce an adequate job. Hence, we propose a joint effort of a team of editors, including native-Gulf linguists, and specialists in translation and lexicography, to compile a comprehensive, complete and adequate bilingual dictionary of Gulf Arabic.

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Appendix

Table 1.
Greeting formulas to initiate social encounters

Expression:	(1) *marHaba*	(2) *guwwa*	(3) *alla bil-xair / laah bi-lxair*	(4) *hala*
Response (adjacent pair)	*marHaba / marHabtain / maraaheb / hala*	*alla ygawwik / gawwik / / hala*	*alla bilxair / alla bilxairaat / hala*	*Hala / ahlain*
Literal translation	A welcome	May God give you strength.	By God do (you) the good.	People
Glossary part	GA-E + E-GA	GA-E	GA-E (under alla)	_
Glossary equivalent	Hello, Hi	How are you?	Good morning	_
Glossary response	*marHaba / ahlan wa sahlan*	*alla ygawwiik*	The response is the same	_
Glossary Explanation	_	_	It is said at any time of the day; characteristic of Iraqi and Kuwaiti.	_

Table 2.
Showing concern about the interlocutor's wellbeing, family and state of affairs.

	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Expression:	*KaifHalek keef Haalak*	*ishlonek shloonak*	*'asaak Tayb/ 'asaak ibxair 'asaak tayyib /(ibxeer)*	*shaxbaar ek*	*sh`lumek shi'loomak*	*kaifiSiHa keef essiHHa*
Response (adjacent pair)	*bxair/ bxair allaysalmek / Tayeb/* lHamdolla / (*baHsan Haal)*	*bxair /* bxair *alHamdella /Tayeb / lHamdella*	*Ttayib 'asaak Tayib / bxair 'asaak ibxair*	*axbaar xair / lHamdilla* (praise be to Allah)	*'lum xair*	*bxair /* bxair *lHamdella* (praise be to Allah)
Literal translation	How are you?	How are you?	Hope you are well/in goodness?	How are you? (What are your news?)	How are you?(What are your news?)	How is your health?
Glossary part	E-GA + GA-E	E-GA + GA-E	E-GA	_	GA-E	E-GA
Glossary translation	How are you?	How are you?	I hope you are well, fine!	_	What news do you have?	How are you?
Glossary response	_	_	_	_	*ma 'indi 'luum* 'I have no news'	_
Glossary Explanation	_	Contraction of sh-loon or shu loon: how?	_	_	_	_

Table 3.
Temporal greetings

	(11)	*(12)*	*(13)*	*(14)*
Expression	*SabaHilxair/ SabaHk allabilxair SabbaHk allah bilxeer/subaH elxeer*	*masailxair/ masaak allabilxair Massak allah bilxeer/masa' elxeer*	*tiSbaH `ala xair tesbaH 'ala xeer*	*timsi `ala xair Tmassa 'ala xeer*
Response (adjacent pair)	*SabaH inoor/ SabaHk alla binoor*	*masa inoor/ masaak allabinoor* 'may God give you an evening of light'	*wint minahl ilxair* 'and you are one of the people of goodness'	*wint minahl ilxeer* 'and you are one of the people of goodness'
Literal Translation	(I wish you) morning of goodness./May God give you a morning of goodness.	(I wish you) evening of goodness./May God give you an evening of goodness.	You attain the morning in goodness. (Equals to 'Good night' in English.)	You attain the evening in goodness. (Equals to 'Good evening' in English.)
Glossary part	E-GA	E-GA	_	_
Glossary translation	Good morning	Good evening	_	_
Glossary response	_	_	_	_
Glossary Explanation	_	_	_	_

Table 4.

Polite requests and Thanking

Expression	*(15) shokran/ mashkoor*	*(16) jezaak allaxair/ Jizaak allah xeer*	*(17) tifadhal*	*(18) law samaHt/ min fadhlek/ law tikaramt*	*(19) `anithnek 'an ithnik*
Response (adjacent pair)	*`afwan / el`afu*	*Hayaak alla* (You are welcome).	*shokran/ mashkoor* (thanks)	*tfadhal* (Have the merit.)	*tfadhal* (Have the merit.)
Literal translation	(You are' Thanked	May God reward you with blessing.)	(Welcome)	(Excuse me!/or permission)	(Excuse me!.. for permission).
Glossary part	GA-E	_	GA-E + E-GA	GA-E	_
Glossary translation	Worthy of thanks; meritorious, praiseworthy; thank you!	_	Please! Here you are! Help yourself! Come in! Go ahead!	Please!	_
Glossary response	_	_	_	_	_
Glossary explanation	_	_	_	_	_

Table 5.
Closings and farewells

	(20)	*(21)*	*(22)*
Expression:	*fursa sa'eeda*	*ma'assalama/ fi amaan illa*	*nshofek 'alaxair*
Response (adjacent pair)	*waana as'ad* (and I am happier)	The same./ *fi amaan illa*	*ma'assalama/ inshaalla* (if God wills)
Literal translation	(Happy opportunity 'to meet you'.)	(I leave you in God's safe hands). With safety.	See you in goodness
Glossary part	—	GA-E	—
Glossary translation	—	Goodbye!	—
Glossary response	—	The same or *fi amaan illa!* 'in the safety of God'	—
Glossary Explanation	—	—	—