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Persian requests: Redress of face through indirectness

Mohammad Ali Salmani Nodoushan, University of Zanjan, Iran

This paper reports the findings of a study designed to investigate the notion of indirectness in the speech act of requests among native speakers of Persian across different levels of Perceived Situational Seriousness. 372 respondents took a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) with six scenarios ranging from formal to informal degrees of Perceived Situational Seriousness (PSS), and returned 2232 Requestive Speech Acts (RSAs). The acts were then analyzed according to models proposed by Blum-Kulka, et al. (1989), and Scollon and Scollon (2001). Results, after analysis of the data, indicated that, in general, native speakers of Persian prefer conventionally indirect (CI) strategies when issuing requests. Social distance was found to trigger indirectness in requestive speech acts (RSAs); solidarity was found to enhance addressors' inclination towards directness in RSAs. It was further noticed that pragmatic knowledge (i.e., knowledge of the world and of each other that interlocutors share) resulted in Persian native speakers' inclination towards NCI strategies in RSAs.

Keywords: Persian Requests; Perceived Situational Seriousness; Requestive Speech Acts; Indirectness; Politeness.

1. Introduction

The seminal work of Brown and Levinson (1978) on "politeness" and its relation to "indirectness" and "face" resulted in an upsurge of interest in conversational analysis. Since then, many linguists have sought to fathom the depths of communicative events and speech acts in an attempt at arriving at the unspoken and tacit purposes that lay at the heart of them; speech acts were classified to include directives, commissives, expressives, assertives and declaratives. Requests were found to be intrinsically face threatening in that they are usually intended to threaten the addressee's negative face (Brown and Levinson, 1987), and to be directives and pre-events that can initiate the negotiation of face during a conversational interaction (Félix-Brasdefer, 2005).

Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) proposed a model for the classification of direct and indirect strategies in Requestive Speech Acts

(RSA). A request, in their model, is a speech act that may employ either of the three types of (in)directness: (a) Direct Strategies (DS), (b) Conventionally Indirect Strategies (CIS), and (c) Non-conventionally Indirect Strategies (NCIS). Scollon and Scollon (2001) classified social relationships between speakers and hearers into three levels of Perceived Situational Seriousness (PSS) or Politeness Systems: (a) Hierarchical politeness System (HPS), (b) Deferential Politeness System (DPS), and Solidarity Politeness System (SPS). Being based on these two models, the present paper reports the results, and discusses the findings, of a research designed to investigate Persian speakers' use of "Indirectness" strategies in Persian Requestive Speech Acts in the context of Perceived Situational Seriousness.

2. Background

A thorough review of the literature on "Requestive Speech Acts (RSA)" reveals that the term "request" finds occasion in the contexts of "politeness" and "face." As early as 1973, people like Lakoff had noticed their importance in social interaction. According to Lakoff (1973), there are a number of politeness maxims which people assume are being followed in the utterances of others. These maxims include (a) do not impose, (b) give options, and (c) make your interlocutor feel good. Later, in 1978, Brown and Levinson viewed politeness and face as powerful constraints that control the way people interact verbally. According to Brown and Levinson (1978), politeness is the manifestation, through speech, of respect for another individual's face. We all evaluate the people to whom we talk partly on the basis of their ability to interact verbally. That is, we develop a feeling about others partly based on how they speak. The overall impression (of themselves) that people leave in us can be called their face.

Face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced. Brown and Levinson (1978) noticed three important factors that determine the distribution of face among interlocutors: (1) power relation or the vertical social distance (P), (2) solidarity or the horizontal social distance between participants (D), and (3) the weightiness or size of the imposition negotiated by interlocutors (R). Wolfson (1989, p.67) argues that:

In deciding how much to take another person's feelings into account, we have three factors to consider. First, people are usually more polite to others when they are of higher status or perceived of as being powerful;

second, people are generally more polite to others who are socially distant; and third, we are usually more polite in relation to the gravity of the threat we are about to make to others' face.

Social distance is defined as a "symmetric dimension of similarity/difference . . . based on an assessment of the frequency of interaction and the kinds of materials or non-material goods (including face) exchanged between S(peaker) and H(earer)" (Brown and Levinson, 1978, p. 76). Power, however, is an "asymmetric social dimension of relative power" which involves the degree to which "H can impose his own plans and his own self-evaluation (face) at the expense of S's plans and self-evaluation" or vice versa (Brown and Levinson, 1978, P. 76). The third factor (i.e., the weightiness of imposition) involves the degree to which impositions are considered to interfere with an agent's want of "self-determination or of approval" (Brown and Levinson, 1978, P.77). Impositions are ranked on the basis of the "expenditure of services (including provision of time) and of goods" (non-material goods like information, expression of regard and other payments included) (Brown and Levinson, 1978, P. 77).

In an attempt to organize these factors, Scollon and Scollon (2001) proposed a politeness system with three degrees of Perceived Situational Seriousness (PSS); they used the term "hierarchy" to refer to Brown and Levinson's "Power," and the term "deference" to refer to their "distance." Instead of using the term "imposition," Scollon and Scollon (2001) noticed that "social closeness" or "solidarity" could affect speakers' perception of "size of imposition." As such, they used the term "solidarity" to signify Brown and Levinson's "size of imposition." Their model of politeness is, therefore, based on three factors: (a) hierarchy, (b) deference, and (c) solidarity. Scollon and Scollon's model of Perceived Situational Seriousness (or politeness systems) can be summarized as this:

Perceived Situational Seriousness (PSS)	Power	Distance
Hierarchical Politeness System (HPS)	+	+
Deferential Politeness System (DPS)	-	+
Solidarity Politeness System (SPS)	-	-

In HPS one person is in a subordinate position and the other in a superordinate position (*e.g.*, boss vs. employee); in DPS both interlocutors are of equal social status but share a distant relationship (*e.g.*, classmates); in SPS

both interlocutors are of equal social status and their relationship is close (*e.g.* roommates).

An earlier attempt at theorizing about "politeness" had been made by Brown and Levinson in 1978. At that time, they proposed a model of politeness with two elements: (a) Positive Politeness, and (c) Negative Politeness. An example of positive politeness is our positive evaluation of our interlocutor's accomplishments, appearance, etc. Positive politeness also includes hints and signals that show the listener he or she is considered a friend and member of the speaker's "in-group." This may be accomplished through such strategies as giving gifts, showing interest in the other, extending invitations towards the other, etc. Negative politeness, however, involves a show of deference. The speaker, through negative politeness, usually tries to show the listener that he does not wish to disturb or to interfere with the other's freedom. Apologies, indirect requests, and other forms of remedial work usually appear in this category.

Brown and Levinson (1978) had based their classification of politeness into positive and negative types on their observation of "face" in social interactions. In this connection, they noticed that two aspects of people's feelings were involved in the negotiation of face: (a) negative face, and (b) positive face. Negative face is the desire of the individual not to be imposed on (*i.e.*, freedom from imposition); positive face, on the other hand, is the desire of the individual to be liked or approved of (*i.e.*, freedom of action). As such, positive face has to do with negative politeness, and negative face with positive politeness.

Brown and Levinson (1978) contended that any speech act has the potential of threatening both the face of the speaker or that of the hearer. They believed that conversation is much more concerned with observing politeness expectations designed to ensure the redress of face than with the exchange of information. One strategy often employed by speakers to ensure the observation of politeness is "Indirectness." It is assumed that speakers will use higher degrees of indirectness when the size of imposition in their speech acts grows. Leech (1983) suggested that indirect illocutions increase the degree of politeness "(a) because they increase the degree of optionality, and (b) because the more indirect an illocution is, the more diminished and tentative its force tends to be" (pp. 131-132, cited in Félix-Brasdefer, 2005).

Indirectness can be better understood when it is seen in the light of "speech acts." The term "speech act" has been used by Crystal (1991, p. 323) to refer to: "a communicative activity (a LOCUTIONARY act), defined with reference to the intentions of speakers while speaking (the ILLOCUTIONARY force of their utterances) and the effects achieved on listeners (the PERLOCUTIONARY effect of their utterances)." Each specific form of language, by default, serves a specific communicative functions. For example, A question like "How much does that book cost?" is usually a form functioning as a question. A question, however, can function as a request. For instance, the question "Can you pass the salt?" uttered at a dinner table does not signal the speaker's attempt at eliciting information about the listener's abilities or inabilities. It rather functions as a request for action. This manifests the fact that linguistic forms are not always employed to fulfill their default, congruent, salient functions; hence, the term indirectness. As such, the sentence "I can't find my umbrella!" uttered by a frustrated adult who is late for work on a rainy day may possibly be a frantic request for all the people in the household to join in the search for the umbrella.

As early as 1974, people like Sadock had noticed that there are cases in which one illocutionary act is performed indirectly, by way of another. Sadock (1974) even coined the terms "whimperatives" and "quaclaratives" to indicate the apparent hybrid status or the indirectness of imperatives and declarations respectively. In 1979, Searle noted that the observation of politeness often resulted in the speaker's use of indirect speech acts. It is important to note, however, that not all writers are using the term "Indirectness" in the same way. Brown and Levinson (1978), Grice (1975), and Searle (1979) were principally concerned with politeness as an "underlying motivation" for indirectness. Leech (1983), however, was concerned with politeness as a "surface-level" adherence to social norms. Politeness, according to Leech (1983), does not need to have anything to do with any genuine desire to be pleasant to one's interactants.

A more recent study of indirectness was conducted by Félix-Brasdefer (2005). Drawing on Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness model, he identified three types of requests in Spanish: (a) direct or on-record requests, (b) indirect or off-record requests, and (c) hybrid requests (i.e., a compromise between direct and indirect requests). Quoting from Searle (1975, pp. 60-61), he argued that indirect requests tend to be more polite

since in indirect speech acts, "the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and non-linguistic, together with the rational powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer." By way of contrast, direct requests intrude in the addressee's territory and are, therefore, inherently impolite and face-threatening (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983).

Some scholars have claimed that "Indirectness" is culture-bound. For instance, Wierzbicka (2003) noticed that the "pragmalinguistic resources" and the "illocutionary force" employed to perform an indirect "Requestive Speech Act" (RSA) tended to vary across languages. Along the same lines, Blum-Kulka, et al. (1989) identified three types of directness in requestive speech acts in German, Argentine Spanish, Australian English, Canadian French, and Hebrew:

Directness: This is achieved when, by default, there is congruence between the linguistic form used by speakers, and the illocutionary force of the speech act performed through that linguistic form (*e.g.*, a "question" used to "ask for information" or an "imperative" used to "ask for action");

Conventional Indirectness: This is achieved when conventionally accepted linguistic forms (i.e., forms other than the unmarked, default, salient, congruent form) are used to fulfill the illocutionary force of a speech act (*e.g.*, a "question" used to perform a "request");

Non-conventional Indirectness: This is achieved when interactants' shared knowledge determines the illocutionary force of the speech act; this type of indirectness is sometimes non-linguistic (*e.g.*, use of "hints" instead of linguistic forms to perform a speech act).

Conventional Indirectness (CI) relies on "conventions of language" including propositional content (literal meaning) and "pragmalinguistic form" to signal an illocutionary force; Non-conventional Indirectness (NCI or NI), however, centers on "sociolinguistic context" and is, therefore, open-ended in terms of propositional content, linguistic form, and pragmatic force.

A request is often defined as a directive speech act that counts as an attempt to bring about some effect through the action of addressee. Through requests,

the speaker (S) requires the hearer (H) to perform actions which will satisfy the speaker's needs and wants. Very often requests include two elements: (a) head acts, and (b) supportive moves. Head acts are core elements and refer to the request itself or to the main strategy employed to make the request; supportive moves are peripheral elements that can modify the intensity of requests. If supportive moves occur in the same sentence that carries the request itself, they are called Internal Supportive Moves (ISM); however, if they occur in other sentences that precede or follow the request-carrying sentence, they are called External Supportive Moves (ESM). Supportive moves are not always obligatory and their use depends very much on speakers' perception of the degree of situational formality (i.e., Perceived Situational Seriousness). On the contrary, request head acts are obligatory; it is not possible to perform requests in the absence of head acts. Take the following example in which a student asks his instructor for some extension for a delayed homework assignment:

Move 1: ESM *Sir, I need to ask you a favor.*

Move 2: HA *I need some extension for my homework assignment;*

Move 3: ESM *you know, I was sick for a few days and could not finish it in due time.*

In this example, the student begins with a pre-posed external supportive discourse move (a preparator) and then utters the request head act. Then he goes on with a post-posed external supportive discourse move (a reason). Even inside the head act itself, it is possible to include lexical and syntactic modifications (i.e., internal supportive discourse moves). So, the general structure of a request can be shown in this formula:

Request = (Pre-posed Supportive Moves)+Head Act+(Post-posed Supportive Moves)

In their classification of request head acts, Blum-Kulka, et al. (1989) included three types of indirectness: Direct Strategies (DS), Conventionally Indirect Strategies (CIS), and Nonconventionally Indirect Strategies (NIS or NCIS). Direct head acts employ one of the following strategies: (a) Mood Derivable, (b) Performative, (c) Obligation Statement, (d) Need Statement, or (e) Want Statement; conventionally indirect head acts use either of the following two strategies: (a) Query Preparatory, or (b) Suggestory Formula; nonconventionally indirect head acts employ 'Hints' that can be either strong or mild. Take the following examples selected either from my corpus or from my previous observations (See Appendix B for the phonetic guide to Persian examples):

1. Direct Strategies (DS)

- a) Mood Derivable: In this strategy the speaker uses the default linguistic form (i.e., imperative verbs) to make the request; the verb should be used in the imperative form.

e.g.,

jozvahaato be man əamaanat bede ziraaks mikonamo zud barmigardunam.

Lend me your class notes and I will Xerox them and give them back to you in a while.

- b) Performative: In this strategy the speaker uses a performative verb (i.e., I VERB YOU TO) linguistic form to make the request; the verb should be a performative verb.

e.g.,

əz shomaa mikhaam ələaan əin əotaaq raa takhliye konid.

I order you to evacuate this room now.

- c) Obligation: In this strategy the speaker uses an utterance that tells the hearer s/he is obliged to do according to the request.

e.g.,

shomaa əakhlaaqan baayad be man komak konin.

You are ethically obliged to help me.

- d) Need Statement: In this strategy the speaker says what s/he needs to be done by the hearer.

e.g.,

baraaye bardaashtane əin baste be komake shomaa əehtiyaaj daaram.

I need your help with this parcel.

- e) Want Statement: In this strategy the speaker talks about what he wants to be done by the hearer; this is very much like the "performative strategy" except that in this case the verb is not a performative verb.

e.g.,

əzetun mikhaam takaalifetuno taa əakhere hafte tahvil bedin.

I want you to submit your homework by the end of this week.

2. Conventionally Indirect Strategies (CIS)

- a) Suggestory Formulae: In this strategy the speaker makes a suggestion the aim of which is to get something done by the hearer; the suggestion is to be interpreted as a request by the hearer.

e.g.,

chetore ein hafte to xune ro nezaafat koni hafteye dige man?

What if you clean the house this week and I will do it next week.

- b) Query Preparatory: In this strategy the speaker utters a questions and expects the hearer to take it as a request; the question is used in a marked non-salient way.

e.g.,

mishe jozvahaato chand saaʔat be man ʔamaanat bedi?

Could you lend me your class notes for a few hours?

3. Nonconventionally Indirect Strategies (NCIS/NIS)

- a) Mild Hint: In this strategy the speaker signals to the hearer through a mild hint that s/he wants the hearer to do something.

e.g.,

man jozvahaaye ein darso ʔehtiyaaj daaram va tu ein kelaas shomaa tanhaa kasi hastid ke mishnaasam.

I need the class notes and you are the only person I know in this class.

- b) Strong Hint: In this strategy the speaker signals to the hearer through a strong hint that s/he wants the hearer to do something.

e.g.,

man jozvahaaye ein darso niyaz daaram va motmaʔennam shomaa ʔunaaro behem ʔamaanat midin.

I need the class notes and I am sure you will lend them to me.

A thorough review of the literature on RSAs shows that various aspects of requests have been address by researchers in diverse languages. This literature includes at least the following studies: Puerto Rican Spanish (Walters, 1979); Hebrew and American English (Blum-Kulka 1987); German, Hebrew, Australian English, Canadian French, and Argentine Spanish (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989); Greek and British English (Sifianou, 1992); Peruvian Spanish (Garcia, 1993); Peninsular and Colombian Spanish

(Delgado, 1994); Mexican Spanish (Koike, 1994); Peninsular Spanish (Le Pair, 1996); Cuban Spanish (Ruzickova, 1998); Ecuadorian and Peninsular Spanish (Placencia, 1998); Peninsular and Uruguayan Spanish (Marquez-Reiter, 2000); Uruguayan Spanish and British English (Marquez-Reiter, 2000); Polish (Wierbicka, 2003), and Mexican Spanish (Félix-Brasdefer, 2005).

To date, however, no study has addressed indirectness in Persian requests. In this paper, I will investigate the notion of indirectness in the speech act of requests among native speakers of Persian across different levels of Perceived Situational Seriousness.

3. METHOD

3.1. Instrument

A Discourse Completion Test (DCT) written in Persian—respondents native language—with six formal and informal scenarios was used as the main tool for data collection (See Appendix A for a rough English translation of the DCT). The scenarios for the DCT were based on my observations in the Iranian society. In other words, all of the scenarios had occurred in actual naturalistic contexts and I had observed and recorded them. I then used these scenarios in the compilation of my DCT. The scenarios portrayed formal and informal situations of language use. In fact, the scenarios on the DCT described the place where the event took place, level of familiarity between participants in the event (+ or – Distance), and the power relationship between the interlocutors (+ or – Power). The politeness system proposed by Scollon and Scollon (2001) was used for the development and classification of the situations portrayed by the scenarios; as such, scenarios 1 and 2 belong to the hierarchical politeness system (HPS) and are therefore formal, scenarios 3 and 4 are semi-formal and belong to the deferential politeness system (DPS), and scenarios 5 and 6 are related to the solidarity politeness system (SPS) and are informal.

The advantages of the DCT technique make it a widely used and fruitful data elicitation procedure. The DCT procedure, originally developed by Blum-Kulka (1982), has been widely used by researchers like Olshtain and Cohen (1983), Olshtain and Cohen (1987), Beebe (1985), and Allami (2006) in their investigations of speech acts in different languages. Wolfson (1989, pp. 69-70) argues in favor of DCTs:

One great advantage of this type of data collection is that it permits the researcher to control for specific variables of the situation, thus giving coherence to the findings which may be very difficult to achieve otherwise Another great advantage ... is that they allow investigators to collect a considerable amount of data on a given type of speech behavior within a relatively short time.

3.2. Participants and procedures

The DCT was written in respondents' native language (i.e., Persian). After the compilation of the DCT, I followed two procedures for the circulation of the DCT:

1. I posted it on my personal website so that each visitor could voluntarily complete and submit it to me.
2. I sent the DCT through e-mail to Internet users who were enlisted members of famous Internet service providers in Iran.

Both of these procedures returned a total of 372 completed DCTs. As such, I had a corpus that consisted of 2232 instances of requests across different levels of situational formality (i.e., 372 responses to each scenario). Then, each request was analyzed and classified according to the type of (in)directness found in it. Finally, the frequencies of the (in)direct strategies were rated and employed as the data for this study which were then submitted to appropriate statistical analyses.

3.3. Data Analysis

Responses to the DCT were then tabulated and analyzed according to the analytic frameworks proposed by Blum-Kulka, et al. (1989), and Scollon and Scollon (2001) in terms of indirectness strategies (i.e., DS, CIS, and NIS/NCIS) used in request head acts and perceived situational seriousness (or politeness systems). It was hypothesized that the three politeness systems proposed by Scollon and Scollon (2001) affect the degree and type of indirectness Persian speakers employ when they perform requestive speech acts. As such, "politeness system" was the independent variable of the current study and "indirectness" the dependent variable. The data were then submitted to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 15.00) for analysis. Three statistical tests were employed for the analysis of the data: (a) one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), (b) Tukey's HSD Post Hoc Test, and (c) Paired-samples *t*-test. In each case, the alpha level was set at 0.01.

4. Results and Discussion

Overall, 372 respondents produced a total of 2232 requests across the six DCT situations. Of these, 16.22% ($n=362$) were direct (DS) requests and 83.78% ($n=1870$) were indirect (IS) requests (that is, 12.14% Nonconventionally Indirect ($n_1=271$), and 71.64% Conventionally Indirect ($n_2=1599$)). Figure 1 shows the distribution of (in)directness strategies across the three politeness systems and in terms of DCT situations.

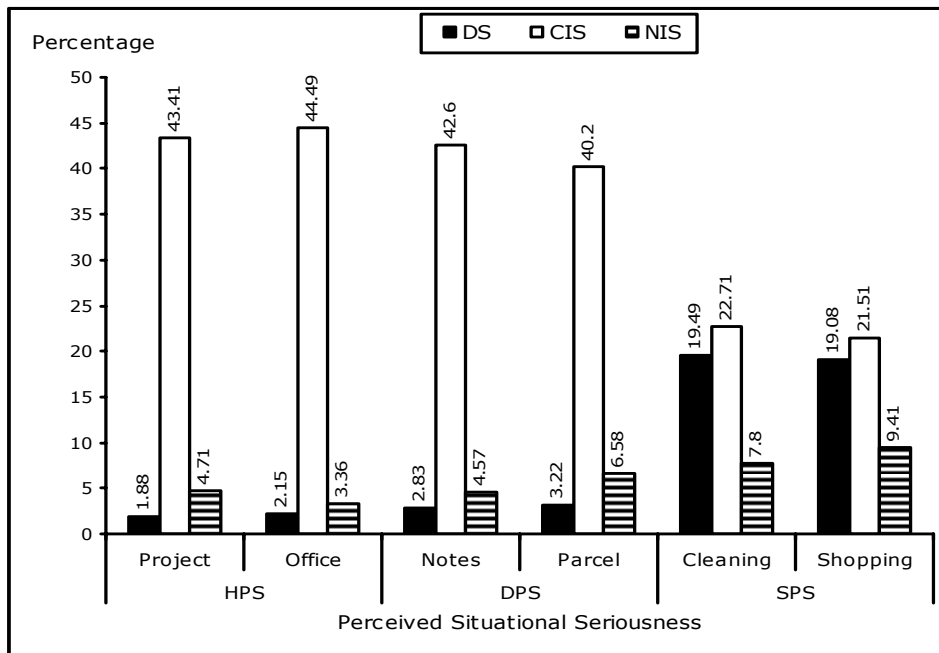


Figure 1. Distribution of (in)directness strategies across politeness systems.

One aim of the study was to answer the question "Is there a difference in indirectness for HPS, DPS, and SPS?" A one-way between groups ANOVA was conducted to explore the impact of "politeness" on levels of "indirectness." There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < 0.01$ level in indirectness scores for the three politeness systems [$F(2, 2229) = 105.41, p = 0.00$]. The actual difference in mean scores between the politeness systems was moderate; the effect size, calculated using eta squared, was 0.08 which suggests a medium effect size when it is interpreted in the light of the guidelines proposed by Cohen (1988). Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for SPS ($M = 30.71, SD = 31.46$) was significantly different from both HPS ($M = 47.98, SD = 21.29$) and DPS ($M = 46.97,$

$SD=23.36$). HPS and DPS did not differ. Another one-way between groups ANOVA was conducted to see if HPS ($M=4.03$, $SD=19.68$), DPS ($M=6.04$, $SD=23.85$), and SPS ($M=38.57$, $SD=48.71$) differed in terms of directness scores [$F(2, 2229)=252.004$, $p=0.00$]. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that SPS differed from both HPS and DPS in terms of directness. The actual difference was quite large ($\eta^2=0.18$).

Direct requests (DS) were observed more frequently in SPS than in DPS or HPS; that is, both conventional and nonconventional indirect requests (IS) were observed more frequently in HPS and DPS. The feature that both DPS and HPS share is (+distance). As such, it can be argued that social distance can trigger indirectness in requestive speech acts (RSAs). In other words, the more distant the relationship between interactants, the more likely it is for them to issue indirect requests. SPS, on the other hand, has a distinctive feature (+solidarity). The higher frequency of DS requests in SPS can indicate that solidarity can trigger an inclination towards directness in RSAs.

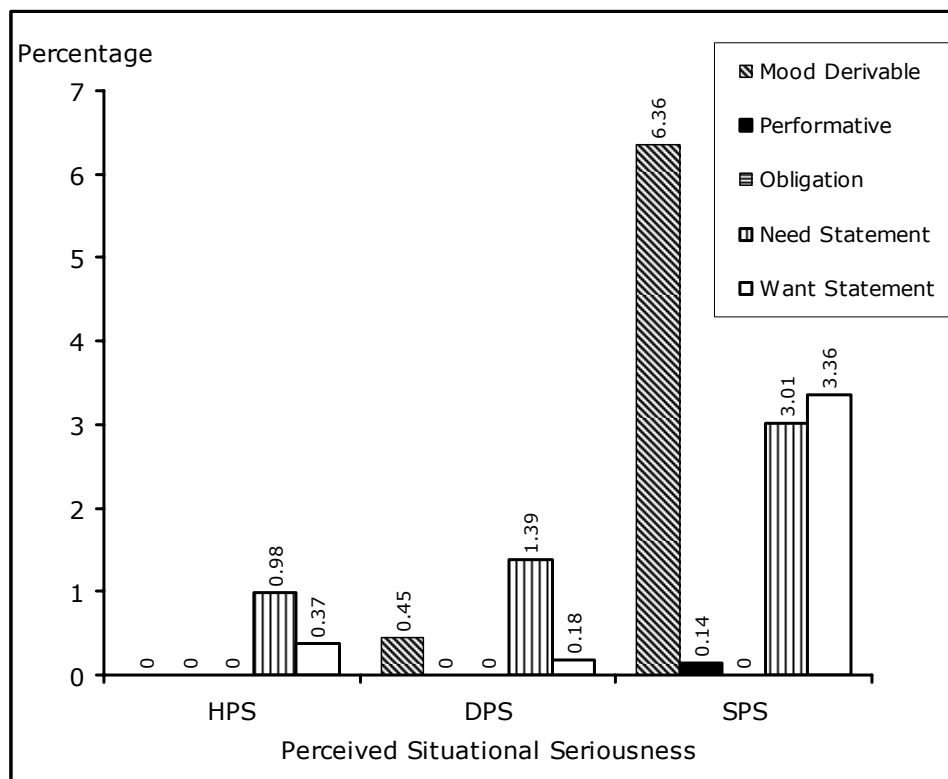


Figure 2. Distribution of directness strategies across politeness systems.

It was explained in section 2 (above) that Blum-Kulka, et al., (1989) identified five categories of Direct Strategies (DS) in request head acts. Their model was used for the classification of DS request heads found in the corpus of the present study. Figure 2 shows the distribution of directness strategies across the three politeness systems.

As can be seen in table 1 below, "Obligation" was not employed by the respondents; "Per formatives" were not found in DPS and HPS; moreover, "Imperatives" or "Mood Derivables" were not observed in HPS. The explanation for these might be that the respondents in DCT scenarios are the addressors, not the addressees; therefore, in the corpus, the addressees are more powerful in the HPS scenarios, and the respondents less powerful. hence, they cannot use strategies which are often expected when the addressor is superior to the addressee in terms of "power." Table 1 also indicates that "Performatives" and "Obligation" were the least preferred DS in the Solidarity Politeness System (SPS). Since there is neither "power" nor "distance" in SPS, this finding can mean that these DSs are less polite and, therefore, are often avoided in Persian requests. The high frequency of "Imperatives" in SPS scenarios can indicate that solidarity can lead to higher degrees of directness in Persian requests. Table 1 displays the distribution of DS requests in the situations under study.

Table 1
Distribution of Directness Head Acts in Persian Requests

DS	HPS		DPS		SPS		N	%
	Project	Office	Notes	Parcel	Cleaning	Shopping		
Mood Derivable	0	0	3	7	73	69	152	6.81
Performative	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	0.14
Obligation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Need Statement	12	10	14	17	34	33	120	5.38
Want Statement	2	6	4	0	36	39	87	3.89
N	14	16	21	24	145	142	362	16.22
%	1.88	2.15	2.83	3.22	19.49	19.08		

A one-way between groups ANOVA was also conducted to explore the impact of "politeness" on levels of "conventional indirectness" (or CI). There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < 0.01$ level in conventional indirectness scores for the three politeness systems [$F(2, 2229) = 256.62, p = 0.00$]. The actual difference in mean scores between the politeness systems was large; the effect size, calculated using eta squared, was 0.18 which

suggests a very large effect size. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for SPS ($M=44.22$, $SD=49.69$) was significantly different from both HPS ($M=87.9$, $SD=32.63$) and DPS ($M=82.79$, $SD=37.76$). HPS and DPS did not differ. Figure 3 shows the distribution of conventional indirectness (CI) strategies across the three politeness systems.

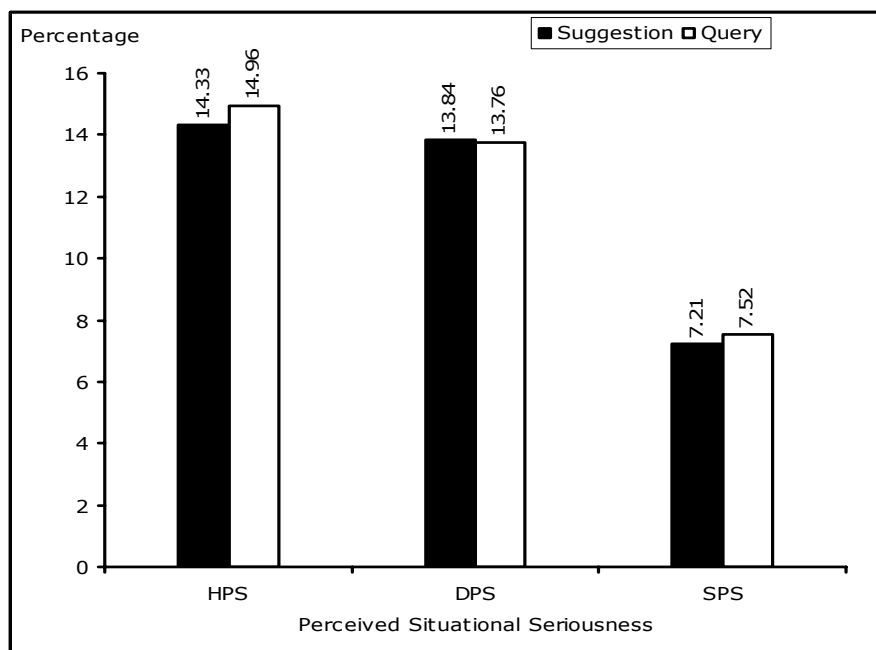


Figure 3. Distribution of CI strategies across politeness systems.

Overall, two types of CI strategies were observed in the corpus: (a) suggestions, and (b) Questions. Of the total 1599 CI requests, 36.25% ($n_1=809$) employed questions and 35.39% ($n_2=790$) suggestions. Table 2 displays the distribution of CI requests in the situations under study.

Table 2

Distribution of Conventionally Indirect Head Acts in Persian Requests

CIS	HPS		DPS		SPS		N	%
	Project	Office	Notes	Parcel	Cleaning	Shopping		
Suggestion	157	163	157	152	83	78	790	35.39
Query	166	168	160	147	86	82	809	36.25
N	323	331	317	299	169	160	1599	71.64
%	43.41	44.49	42.60	40.2	22.71	21.51		

One-way between groups ANOVA was conducted, once more, to explore the impact of "politeness" on levels of "nonconventional indirectness" (or NCI). There was a statistically significant difference at the $p < 0.01$ level in nonconventional indirectness scores for the three politeness systems [$F(2, 2229) = 15.26$, $p = 0.00$]. The actual difference in mean scores between the politeness systems was small; the effect size, calculated using eta squared, was 0.01 which suggests a very small effect size. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for SPS ($M = 17.20$, $SD = 37.76$) was significantly different from both HPS ($M = 08.06$, $SD = 27.24$) and DPS ($M = 11.15$, $SD = 31.5$). HPS and DPS did not differ. The explanation for this might lie in the amount of pragmatic knowledge (i.e., knowledge of the world and of each other that interlocutors share) that the addressor and the addressee share. Since NCI is manifested in the use of hints (both mild and strong), it can be claimed that, since friends happen to know much better how to interpret each other's hints, they tend to use NCI requests more frequently than socially distant people do. Figure 4 shows the distribution of nonconventional indirectness (NCI) strategies across the three politeness systems

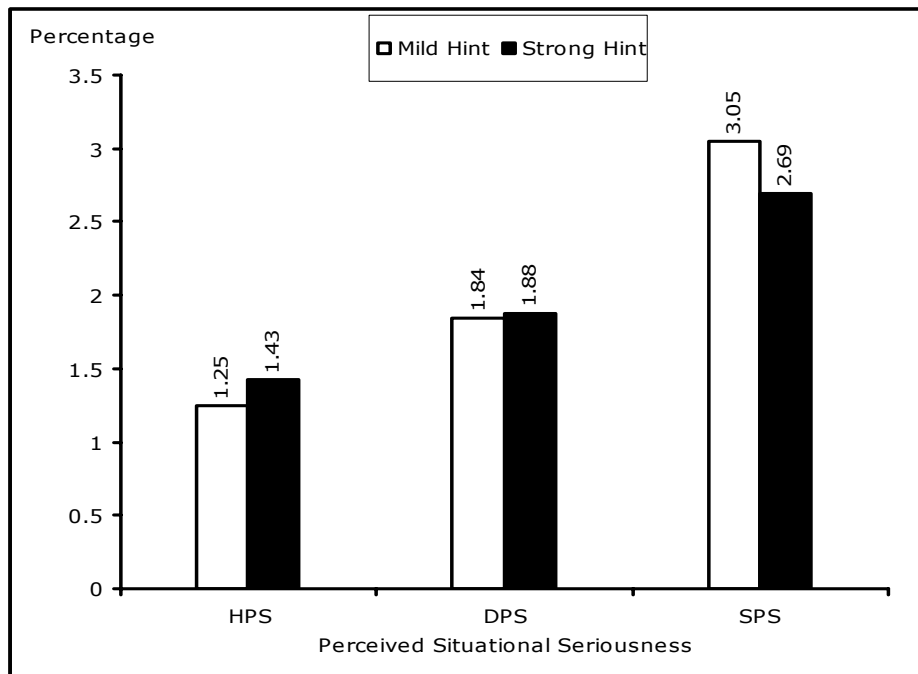


Figure 4. Distribution of NCI strategies across politeness systems.

In the case of NCI requests, the mean difference between DPS and SPS ($MD = -06.05$, $Sig. = 001$), although statistically significant, was not that large. As such, I compared the DCT scenarios to see what might have caused this. Two DCT scenarios belonged to DPS (i.e., "Parcel" and the "Notes"), and two to SPS (i.e., "Cleaning" and "Shopping"). Paired-samples t -tests were conducted to compare respondent's mean scores in these scenarios. The results of these t -tests indicated that, while the difference in NCI strategy use between "Notes" and both "Cleaning" and "Shopping" scenarios was statistically significant, it was not so when "Parcel" was compared to either "Cleaning" or "Shopping." Table 3 presents the results of paired-samples t -tests.

Table 3
Paired-samples t-tests for DPS and SPS DCT Scenarios

	t	Sig	eta
Notes (M=09.13, SD=28.85) & Cleaning (M=15.59, SD=36.32)	-2.67*	0.008	0.018
Notes (M=09.13, SD=28.85) & Shopping (M=18.81, SD=39.13)	-3.86*	0.000	0.038
Parcel (M=13.17, SD=33.86) & Cleaning (M=15.59, SD=36.32)	-0.92	0.357	0.002
Parcel (M=13.17, SD=33.86) & Shopping (M=18.81, SD=39.13)	-2.14	0.033	0.012

* observed t is significant at an alpha level of 0.01

The explanation for this might be that, in the "parcel" scenario both the addressor and the addressee are present in the speech event and, therefore, share a great amount of "here-and-now" or pragmatic knowledge (i.e., knowledge of the world and of each other). As such, hints (i.e., NCI strategies) can safely be used by the addressor, and pragmatic knowledge will help the addressee to interpret the hints correctly.

Overall, two main types of NCI requests were identified in the corpus: (a) mild hints, and (b) strong hints. Of the total 271 NCI requests, 06.13% ($n_1=137$) employed mild hints and 06.01% ($n_2=134$) strong hints. Table 4 displays the distribution of NCI requests in the situations under study.

Table 4
Distribution of Nonconventionally Indirect Head Acts in Persian Requests

NIS	HPS		DPS		SPS		N	%
	Project	Office	Notes	Parcel	Cleaning	Shopping		
Mild Hint	16	12	18	23	32	36	137	6.13
Strong Hint	19	13	16	26	26	34	134	6.01
N	35	25	34	49	58	70	271	12.14
%	4.71	3.36	4.57	6.58	7.8	9.41		

5. Conclusion

In general, native speakers of Persian prefer to use conventionally indirect (CI) strategies in their requestive speech acts. The results from the current study coincide with findings of previous studies in that conventional indirectness is the most preferred strategy in other languages (Blum-Kulka, et al., 1989; Felix-Brasdefer, 2005; Garcia, 1993; Hassall, 1999; Le Pair, 1996; Marquez-Reiter, 2002).

In situations where there is social distance between interlocutors, direct requests are very rare. However, in situations where there is no social distance, Persian native speakers frequently use direct requests as if they have a potential for expressing camaraderie and friendship. This finding is consistent with other studies which found that directness in German, Polish, and Mexican Spanish cultures is not a sign of impoliteness, but rather a sign of closeness and affiliation (Felix-Brasdefer, 2005; Pavlidou, 2000; Wierzbicka, 2003).

In situations where interlocutors shared a great deal of pragmatic knowledge (i.e., knowledge of the world and of each other that interlocutors share) native speakers of Persian sometimes used nonconventionally indirect strategies in their requests. This was observed in the Solidarity Politeness System (SPS), and also in the "Parcel" scenario in the Deferential Politeness System. Since NCI is manifested in the use of strong and mild hints, it can be concluded that, since friends happen to know much better how to interpret each other's hints, they tend to use NCI requests more frequently than socially distant people do. Likewise, in the "parcel" scenario both the addressor and the addressee are present in the "speech event" and, therefore, share a great amount of "here-and-now" or pragmatic knowledge. As such, hints (i.e., NCI strategies) can safely be used by the addressor, on the ground that pragmatic knowledge will help the addressee to interpret the hints correctly. This finding is consistent with the claims of Blum-Kulka (1987) and Marquez-Reiter (2002) who maintain that speakers employ conventional indirectness to balance pragmatic clarity and non-coerciveness during the negotiation of face in their interactions.

The results of this study cannot be generalized to all native speakers of Persian, but rather, can only be taken as an indicator of "appropriate" conduct when initiating a request in Persian. Replications of the study in which other means of data collection and larger subject populations are involved will

definitely shed light on the issues of "socio-economic" and "gender" differences in requestive speech act behavior. Finally, other studies may examine requests in the light of prosodic features of speech.

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Appendix A: DCT for Data Collection*

Age: 20-30 30-40 40-50 50+ Sex: Male Female Education: Primary School Secondary School Bachelor Graduate

Dear Respondent,

Please read the following scenarios carefully and write your answer for each case in the spaces provided. Thank you very much indeed.

-
- 1 You have failed to complete your homework assignment in due date because you were sick for a few days. You go to your teacher's office to ask for some extension. What do you say to your teacher?
-
- 2 You have to work late in your workplace. There is a great soccer match in the city stadium and you would like to go to see the match. You decide to go to your boss's office to ask permission for leaving the workplace earlier. What do you say to your boss?
-
- 3 You have missed some of your class sessions due to illness. You are not intimate with any of your classmates, but decide to ask one of your classmates whom you are somewhat familiar with to lend you his/her notes. The classmate is of the same sex as you are. What do you say?
-
- 4 You come out of a shop with your arms full of what you have bought. A parcel drops and you are not able to pick it up. You decide to ask a passerby to hand the parcel to you. What do you say?
-
- 5 This is your turn to do the cleaning today, but you must go to pick up your father from the airport. You decide to change turns with your roommate. What do you say?
-
- 6 Your friend goes shopping from a mall which is far from your place, but you cannot go with your friend. You want to ask your friend to do your shopping too. What do you say?
-

* This is the translated version of the DCT. All the respondents received the Persian version of the DCT (i.e., their native language version) with more details in each scenario.

Appendix B: Guide to phonetic symbols used for reporting Persian examples.

Symbol	Example	Symbol	Example	Symbol	Example
aa	<u>a</u> rm	p	<u>p</u> en	t	<u>t</u> ea
o	<u>o</u> r	s	<u>s</u> o	j	<u>j</u> oke
u	<u>u</u> oo	ch	<u>ch</u> ange	h	<u>h</u> ouse
a	<u>a</u> t	x	<u>x</u> ub	d	<u>d</u> oor
e	<u>e</u> ten	z	<u>z</u> oo	r	<u>r</u> ed
i	<u>i</u> sheep	zh	<u>zh</u> ision	sh	<u>sh</u> oe
q	<u>q</u> om	n	<u>n</u> oon	f	<u>f</u> oot
k	<u>k</u> ill	y	<u>y</u> ard	g	<u>g</u> ood
l	<u>l</u> and	ə	<u>ə</u> aləaan	m	<u>m</u> oon
v	<u>v</u> oice	b	<u>b</u> ad		

NOTES:

1. The /ə/ symbol represents glottal stop, and is used at the beginning of Persian syllables followed by a vowel.
2. The /q/ and /x/ symbols represent Persian-specific consonants.
3. The Persian sporadic feature *tashdid* is represented by the repetition of the phoneme that receives it.

The effect of constructivist language teaching/learning on students' conceptions of L2 reading

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Using a constructivist approach, the present study investigated the development of students' conceptions of L2 reading as an important skill in the ESP context. The analysis of initial and final descriptions of 'reading' indicated that reading was conceptualized in five different ways: (1) reading as a set of binding rules; (2) reading as an integration of various language elements; (3) reading as a sampling technique; (4) reading as a confrontation between reader and writer; and finally (5) reading as an attempt to identify and comment on the content features. The subjects tended to move towards the last three categories in their final essays while in their beginning essays they were heavily dependent on the first two categories. Upon the constructivist treatment, the subjects showed the following categories of change in their descriptions: (1) adding new concepts; (2) redefining the formerly stated concepts; (3) forming a complete framework and picture before initiating to conceptualize (define) reading; (4) arriving at an abstractive level of conceptualization; and finally (5) evolving descriptive into explanatory concepts.

Keywords: Constructivism; Concept change; Conception; Skill knowledge; L2 reading

1. Introduction

L₂ reading has been the focus of much research. Research in this area has run the gamut from pure graphological issues to linguistic elements and more recently to the role of the reader in the construction of meaning (Grabe and Stoller, 2002). Yet, most of the research on L2 reading has been directed at evaluating students' learning in terms of factual outcomes or memorization and reproduction of information. This is to say that readers are expected to grasp the content of the texts. True as it is that the grasp of knowledge is the ultimate goal in any act of reading, it should be borne in mind that the content needs to be corroborated, in order to be fully grasped, by another type of

knowledge called skill (Allan,1996). Skill knowledge is also in literature labelled procedural or implicit knowledge (Celce-Murcia, 2001). Skill knowledge along with content is believed to exist in long-term memory as different systems (Celce-Murcia, 2001). This fact implies that the two types of skills can be developed independently. As regards the content knowledge, it cannot be readily and uniformly treated especially in the context of reading comprehension while the procedural knowledge may prove a manageable area for the development and research.

In fact, the acquisition of skill knowledge is the construction of an infrastructure that underlies all the reading activities and can redefine the reader's role and status in the reading acts (Zarei, 2002). This kind of knowledge is equal to what Widdowson (1985) calls 'superposed knowledge', which can permeate other learning activities.

One useful method to develop the skill knowledge is to provide the conditions for the readers to experience the relevant reading tasks and conceptualize (construct) such knowledge. The method is referred to as constructivism.

2. Constructivism

The term constructivism is derived from Piaget's reference to his views as "constructivist", as well as from Bruner's (1966) description of discovery learning as "constructionist". Some others have also used other terms to refer to constructivist views of learning, including: generative learning (Wittrock, 1985), situated learning and authentic instruction (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989), and postmodern curricula (Hlynka, 1991).

Constructivism suggests that learner's conceptions of knowledge are derived from a meaning-making search in which learners involve in a process of constructing individual interpretations of their experiences. The constructions that result from the investigations about the tasks and experiences result in a kind of knowledge whose similarity to external reality may be little (Mahoney, 2005). However, to the degree that most of our learning is filtered through a process of dialectical tensions, social negotiation or distributed cognition, generally shared and isomorphic meanings tend to be constructed (Mahoney, 2004).

Constructivism as an epistemological view of knowledge acquisition emphasizes knowledge construction rather than knowledge transmission. The role of the learner is conceived as one of building and transforming

knowledge. While there are several interpretations of what constructivist theory means, most agree that it involves a dramatic change in the focus of teaching and learning, putting the students' own efforts to understand at the center of the educational enterprise. Also in the light of this theory of language learning, some scholars view foreign/ second language learning as a constructivist venture and construction of knowledge as the basis for learning the foreign language (Wolff, 1994).

Also most scholars agree on the four central characteristics of constructivism which are believed to influence learning: 1) learners' construction of their own learning; 2) the dependence of new learning on students' existing understanding; 3) the critical role of social interaction and; 4) the necessity of authentic learning tasks for meaningful learning. In fact these principles are considered constitutional in conducting the present study.

Relevant to the constructivist learning/teaching environment is what changes are likely to occur when learners experience the intended task to develop the respective knowledge (Tynjala, 1998). This aspect is called 'concept change' in the present study and is discussed below.

3. Concept change and constructivism

The theory of concept change is basically derived from Piaget's notion of disequilibrium (1977) as well as Kuhn's description of scientific revolution (Kuhn, 1970). Generally it is believed that concept change occurs along two lines. First, a basic way of perceiving, thinking, or doing faces a "state of crisis", hence, failing to provide solutions for the significant problems identified. Second, an alternative paradigm with the potential to solve these problems takes over. These two conditions can increase the likelihood of or result in a radical change called a "paradigm shift," or adoption of a new framework for thinking. As far as Piaget's theory goes, learning in the sense of concept change similarly includes the dichotomous issues of accommodation and assimilation. The former (accommodation) is believed to be the modification of the previous concept in the person's mind or its replacement by a new concept or what is called the scientific revolution (Tynjala, 1998). Assimilation is the acceptance of new information with no shuffling of the previous repertoire. As the assimilation-type of concept change shows the addition of new information to an existing knowledge repertoire, it is also labelled as an enrichment type (Vosniadou, 1994). A very clear example of this radical shift (paradigm shift) at the macro-level in the context of language

learning is moving away from a behaviourist (transmissional) view of teaching to a constructivist (transformative) perspective of learning. As a matter of fact, this perspective suits the teaching /learning of the subjects at micro-level as well. Thus telling students that their views of a particular task are not accurate or simply presenting them a new concept will not lead to the concept change on the part of learners. It seems that cognitive conflict strategies, derived from a Piagetian constructivist view of learning, and socially mediated and discovery-oriented learning of Vygotsky are effective tools in teaching for concept change (Duit, 1999). Hence, this study enjoys the constructivist and experiential approaches to help learners develop their concepts of the reading as a skill, making the necessary modification en route to the state of equilibrium.

Along the above lines of research, the reading skill knowledge (procedural knowledge) seems not to have received any such an educationally oriented investigation. The lack of such studies in the area of second/foreign language renders it theoretically and practically more essential.

4. Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to provide a constructivist learning environment for EFL students in a reading course. Students were expected to experientially attend to the diversified aspects of reading and develop their own knowledge of this skill. More specifically, the following questions were addressed in this study:

- 1. What are the students' initial (pre-treatment) and final (post-treatment) conceptions of reading as an important skill?*
- 2. What are the changes in the student's conceptions of reading within a constructivist teaching/ learning environment?*

5. Design of the study

5.1. Subjects

The study was carried out during an ESP reading course. The subjects were 35 male and female students of engineering at freshman and sophomore levels, with the age range of 18-20. They had enrolled for the course "Engineering English" in the 2004 Spring semester at Isfahan University of Technology (IUT), Iran. Based on the IUT regulations, these students were enrolled in the required course "English for the students of engineering", either directly if they had obtained no less than 60 percent on the Konkoor

(university entrance) English test or indirectly after the completion of two Remedial courses: Remedial English I, and Remedial English II.

5.2. Instructional materials

The book chosen for the class was entitled “English for the Students of Engineering”, prepared by Isfahan University of Technology (IUT) English Language Center. The reading passages included the topics relevant to the course and were followed by five true/false statements and about ten multiple-choice questions. It is available at IUT bookstore (The code number for the book is 64-11).

5.3. Constructivist treatment

The constructivist instructional design was based on the constructivist view of learning as discussed above. Thus all the aspects of constructivism were incorporated into the design such that the conditions provided the individual, social, collaborative and contextual opportunities for the learners' development. The course was also intended to help students start with their own understanding of the problems and share that understanding with others. Use of writing (text summary) in the class was also considered as a part of knowledge-constructing model of learning. Writing is also believed to be a challenging task (Wilson, 1999) that could lead to the change of students' conceptions of the subject and also the related task (herein reading) under treatment (Vosniadou, 1994). It is also believed that reading, writing and group discussions combined in teaching are more effective than each of them being separately used. Following the above-mentioned theoretical basis, the constructivist plan was constructed of the steps as follows: (1) learners' announcement of problems, (2) group discussions and settlement of problems, (3) jotting down of the discussions, (4) text summary writing, and (5) essay writing (on my conception of reading). More specifically, Students were asked to read a passage per session before the class, taking notes of all the problems they faced. Each session of the class gave the chance to the students to read the passage again and discuss the problems. And they were also asked to jot down the discussions as they would consider proper. About ten minutes of the class were devoted to writing a summary for the passage read and discussed. Every two weeks the subjects were also asked to write an essay on the same topic (My conception of reading). This was to help students keep their memories fresh with their experiences. The treatment was intended to stimulate interactions among class members. The purpose was to

enhance the subjects' reflection on the reading activity and all its potential dimensions since metconceptual awareness plays an important role in concept change (Vosniadou, 1994).

The treatment did not provide the subjects with any canonical view of the reading skill or text types or problems. Some scholars believe that imposing a special view of the issues restricts the reflective aspects of the tasks (Hennessey, 1999), and hinders overall development.

5.4. Essay task

The essay task (My conception of reading) was supposed to disclose the subjects' views about reading at the beginning and end of the semester for the study of processes and concept change. The essay task was also repeated every two weeks to contribute to the students' gradual building of knowledge about reading as a skill.

Based on a previous study by the researcher (Zarei, 2002), the subjects were asked to answer the following question while writing about reading:

How do you characterize reading, and reading comprehension? What are the points/aspects you consider important in your reading?

Since the incomplete ability in the second language might influence the subjects' writing performance and consequently the disclosure of their potentials, the subjects were required to write down their essays in their native language (Cohen, 1998).

5.5. Data analysis

The sources of data for this study were the initial and final essays. The obtained data were analyzed using the procedure described by Marton (1994). The unit of analysis was not an individual person, but the written texts were handled as a whole and the researcher and his assistant tried to find out the "recurrent themes" or pool of meanings. The first step was to detect and separate the statements about reading in the initial and final papers of the students as whole. The texts were repeatedly read to determine distinct ways through which the subjects described reading. The second step was to list the observed data and place them within descriptive categories (e.g., category of grammar, etc.). After the identification of the descriptive categories, the researcher carried out further analysis by arranging the categories on the basis of their frequencies. This was to represent the

students' general tendency, which is one way to have a hierarchy of categories. However, this hierarchy is not to be taken strictly (Tynjala, 1998).

The third step included the cross-comparison of the initial and final descriptions through a 'concept map' (Marton, 1994) to determine how the conceptions had changed. The researcher tried to justify, explain, and label the changes involved in the light of the treatment the students had received in the class over the duration of the experiment.

Below is the design of the study schematically summarized.

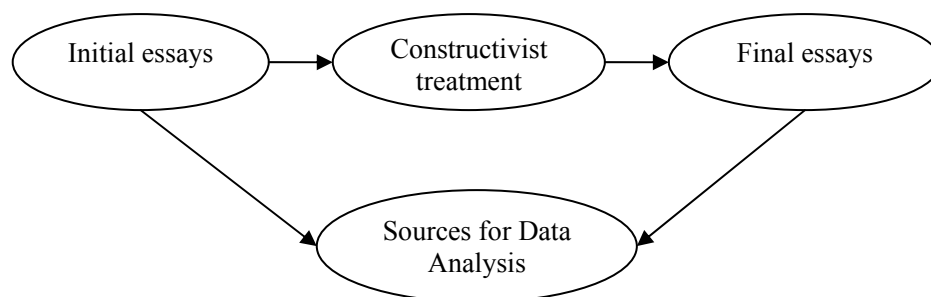


Figure1. Design of the study

6. Results

6.1. Types of students' conceptions of reading

The focus of this part is the analysis of the data which dealt with development of reading as a skill. Thus reading in this study is viewed as the students' explicit descriptions of what they think reading is like or how reading is defined in their opinions. Below are the descriptions provided by the subjects. Before presenting the descriptions, some points are in order: (1) all the examples given are translations from Farsi; and (2) The examples given and the way they have been grouped as belonging to a particular category does not rule out the possibility of the same also belonging to another category if judged from another vantage point.

The subjects in this study defined reading:

1. as a set of rules binding vocabulary items: These descriptions stressed that reading is created as the rules of grammar are called to establish the

proper connections among the vocabulary items. This category reveals the importance and priority of grammar on the part of the students. A typical example is as follows:

Example: "In my opinion reading comprehension is the recognition of the rules which connect the words together."

2. as an integration of various language elements: The descriptions in this category viewed reading as an activity dealing with different elements. Some of these descriptions were not explicit about the elements at work but they all admitted the multiplicity of the essential elements for the reading to be materialized as such.

An example for this category is:

Example: The clear point to me is that reading should be considered as a combination of various grammatical and content factors.

3. as a sampling technique developed by the reader: These descriptions demonstrated that the students knew not only how to take care of the message but to read selectively as well. As they can sample out the information-carrying parts contrasted with the redundant sections, this capacity saves them time and energy. This approach nears the holistic treatment of the text. One example is given below:

Example: I believe reading is not just an attempt to figure out the discrete points, but an effort to attend to the points which convey meaning.

4. as a confrontation between reader and writer: These descriptions revealed the readers' active role in the comprehension process. More than that, they thought that they had to criticize what is supposed to be read. This is believed to be the advanced process of reading through which the reader finds a chance to break into the new dimensions of the topics. A typical example is:

Example1: No doubt does the reader use his potential to deal with the topics and compete seriously with the writer.

5. as an attempt to identify and comment on the content: In these statements students tried to make some value judgments about the content quality or quantity. Apparently they had developed some knowledge about the ways reading had to be characterized. This evaluating ability can be illustrated as follows:

Example: I feel that some passages need to be continued or reconsidered.

The following table presents the types and frequencies of the categories:

Table 1.

Categories of Conceptions of Reading

The category of conceptions (N=35)	Initial <i>f</i>	%	Final <i>f</i>	%
1. Reading as a set of rule binding voc. Items	32	91%	32	91%
2. Reading as an integration of various elements	30	85%	31	88%
3. Reading as a sampling technique developed by readers	4	11.4%	24	68.5%
4. Reading as a confrontation between reader and writer	3	8.57%	23	65.7%
5. Reading as reader's attempt to identify and comment on the content features	0	0%	18	51.4%

As one can find, before receiving the treatment the subjects relied on the textual elements, while in their final essays they considered reader to be an important agent in the act of reading.

6.2. Types of changes in students' conceptions of reading

To find out more about the development and changes of the reading conceptions, the students' initial and final essays were cross-compared through a method named a 'concept map' (Marton, 1994). As a result the following types of concept changes were identified: (1) introducing new concepts; (2) modifying former concepts; (3) conceiving a complete framework to define reading; (4) moving towards abstractive (would-be) conceptions; and (5) evolving descriptive to explanatory conceptions. More detailed descriptions of the developments or changes as well as the relevant examples are presented below.

1. Introducing new concepts: This type of change indicates that some of the students did not include or express certain concepts in their initial essays but they broadened their views by incorporating new ones. As an example, student 12 did not mention anything about the role of reader in his pre-treatment essay, but in his final essay, acknowledges the role for the reader.

Student 12: I think full comprehension of reading depends largely on the reader's active involvement in the text.

2. Modifying the former concepts: This category shows that some students managed to re-evaluate their own roles in the reading process, mostly from one of discreteness to integratedness. In her final essay, the following student states that the act of reading, viewed as the reader's unilateral attempt in her initial essay, comes full circle if the reader tries to interact actively with the writer of the text.

Student 29: We should remember that the reader's role gets completed via the writer's role in creation of meaning.

3. Conceiving a complete framework to define reading: This category refers to those descriptions which take care of reading as a top-down and holistic phenomenon. Some of the students in their final essays, unlike initial ones, attempted to imagine a general picture as a prerequisite to include the discrete points while they had approached it discretely at the beginning. Here is a relevant example:

Student 10: I guess reading comprehension begins with a more general picture, moving down to grasp and include the details.

4. Moving towards abstractive (would-be) conceptions: The statements in this category demonstrate that some aspects of reading cannot be readily accounted for by the observations so far made; in other words, some dimensions may remain cryptic, idiosyncratic, and subject to topical, contextual and textual variations. These descriptions have clearly transcended the concrete and existing dimension towards what could potentially exist. Some students expanded their final descriptions and included this facet as well.

Student 16: I think reading well requires a flexible mental template which can capture the unpredictables as well.

5. Evolving descriptive into explanatory conceptions: Though students in their first essays *described* what reading was like in their opinions, it was in their final essays that they managed to provide some *explanations* for their descriptions. The following example can cast some light on the idea.

Student 14: Failure in comprehension is not the reader's fault only, but it can be the result of insufficient elaboration of the subject.

The following table presents categories of change.

Table 2.

Categories of Change and their Frequencies

Category of change (n=35)	<i>f</i>	%
1. Adding new concepts	35	100
2. Modifying the previous concepts	26	74.2
3. Conceiving a complete framework to define reading	17	48.5
4. Moving towards abstractive conceptions	8	22.8
5. Evolving descriptive into explanatory conceptions	6	17.1

7. Discussion

In this section we shall provide discussion and explanation for the questions posed in this study in the light of the results presented above. The main purpose of this study was to seek what students thought reading as a skill was like. It further aimed to find out the effect of the constructivist treatment on the students' conceptions of reading.

As regards the first question, the data shows that the students had a very limited view of what reading was like at the beginning. Almost all of them pointed out that reading was a process of identifying vocabulary and rules. This shows that students rely heavily on the discrete aspects of reading. And they view reading as a bottom-up processing activity. In addition to the above observation, the majority of students also managed to pinpoint some other characteristics or descriptions of reading. They stated further that vocabulary identification and syntactic parsing cannot happen separately, but that reading is an attempt to combine different language elements.

On the whole, the initial essays reveal that the subjects relied heavily on the discrete points in the reading despite the fact that reading is best described as a holistic phenomenon. This over-reliance on discrete and itemized pieces of information may prove that the students are not treated otherwise in their pre-university studies in Iran. This finding is in line with the claim that most of the university students are under-prepared for the reading classes (Caverly, 1997).

The initial descriptions of reading show that the subjects recognize the textuality and interconnectivity as important elements in reading. However this may prove the idea that students are extremely text-bound, which can have serious repercussions for the comprehension of the reading passages. The primary orientations, or in other words, the primary epistemological

positions always impose a special direction on our behaviors. It is consequently quite logical to conclude that the students' reading behaviors are also led through the theoretical conception they have or can have thereof. Therefore, if students are showing a very weak model or a vague orientation of the reading skill, it is highly likely that they cannot grasp the focal and important messages of the text.

An explanation for the students' being text-tied, could be the negative washback effect they have received from their education systems which impose what has been called a "meaning in the text" fallacy (Spiro, 1979).

The analysis of final views reveals a qualitatively and quantitatively different model. From among the five categories, 4 categories were stated in the initial essays, two of which were minimally referred to. Like their initial essays, the students also are aware of the decoding processes in their final essays. By looking at the frequency of the categories, we notice that the decoding categories of vocabulary, grammar, their integration, and other language elements have high degree of frequency. Of course, it should be borne in mind that final essays seem to offer a balanced view of the reading processes. Students not only mention that the intratextual elements are important, but also they say that the reader needs to play a part. Unlike their initial states, they finally recognize the significance of the reader towards achievement of the reading comprehension.

Though students at their initial state could not provide a full-scale text-based model of reading, in their final essays they seem not only to present a text-restricted model of the reading, but also to get into another realm which has in literature been termed a situation model of reading (Grabe and Stoller, 2002). In the situation model of reading, the reader involves himself very actively in the construction of the meaning. This may arise from the fact that the students are beginning to understand their operative role more and more.

The students in their final state, as noted in this study, discover the fact that they have to turn away from being servile to the text. The text may provide an external stimulus, but should not restrict them too much. Of course, they must not read too much into the text as well. Kimmel and MacGintie (1984) believe that "perseverative text processing" makes readers reach premature interpretation of the text based on an initial sampling and neglect to revise it in line with further information.

The students of this study show that they are progressively modifying their conceptualization of reading, that is, their procedural knowledge of reading, and especially the knowledge of their own roles in the construction and revision of the text meaning.

An additional focus of the study with regard to the conceptions of reading was the changes that were likely to occur in the conceptions. The move from pre- to- post treatment was expected to make students change their views about reading, namely, they should change their procedural knowledge of L2 reading as a skill. This area is particularly related to the concept change or the changes in the conceptions since some postulate that the most fundamental question in the researches on the conceptions should be “what changes when the development of a phenomenon occurs (Dysktra et al., 1992).

In fact, concept change opens a window into the reader’s schematic make-up which can have both theoretical and practical implications. As made clear through the five categories identified, the majority of students have succeeded in adding the missing or unknown aspects to their concept repertoire, and to a lesser extent some have managed to modify their former positions. It should be noted that the ‘addition’ type of change or quantitative one can be viewed as ‘assimilation’, and also as an enrichment type of change (Vosniadou, 1994). In contrast, the modification of one’s position or qualitative change, as includes categories 2 to 5 in this study, is referred to as ‘accommodation in terms of Piagetian classification’ and also as revision type of change as defined by Vosniadou (1994).

To elaborate, it can be stated that the category 1 indicates a shift in learners’ ontological status whereas all other categories point out some epistemological shift (Tynjala, 1998). The fact that most of the typologies recognized are of epistemological change supports Pozo’s (1997) hypothesis that the students’ earlier ideas are not necessarily replaced by the new viewpoints. This may explain why the students’ fragmented views of reading coexist with their new holistic perspectives about reading.

As to categories 2 and 3, the students display their ability not just to reformulate their thought but also to perform the job within a structured organization. Category no. 4 is also of special significance. This change represents a movement beyond the existing facts towards those facts that are possible to exist. This is a distinctive human characteristic which can bring

about dynamism in one's attitudes and inclinations in reaction to the tasks one is supposed to undertake. Such capacity is usually equated with 'formal thought' development (Piaget, 1977). And finally category 5 demonstrates the students' development towards the explanation of their thought. This kind of change also requires the activation of reflective aspects of one's thought, implying that the accumulation of knowledge needs to be substantiated and justified logically. As a word to define these categories of change, it can be stated that students' ability to articulate their thought can prove the development of thought on the part of the learners (Tynjala, 1998). This is to say that the articulation of thought as observed through the students' descriptions can be indicative of improvement in the communication skills of the foreign language as well. With such an ability developed, then we can more confidently admit the Wolff's (1994) words to the effect that construction of knowledge is the basis for the learning of a foreign language.

8. Conclusion

The results of the present study provide some explanations that all those learning theories or learning conditions affiliated with 'constructivism', can have the positive developmental effect arising from the social aspects of instruction and their influence on cognitive outcomes (Mayer, 2001). As the developmental results reached in this study are attributed to the publicization and discussion of the problems through the class interaction they can be considered as the enrichment of the sociocultural theories of language learning as well, especially Vygotsky's socio-cultural and activity theory that stresses the role of learning environments where learners can exchange views on the learning issues.

The findings of the study also give support to the consideration for the global features of education. In this perspective, education is not viewed in terms of short-term training or apprenticeship, rather in terms of the chance provided for the achievement of underlying capabilities. Widdowson (1985), Wolff (1994), and Grabe and Stoller (2002) argue that learning programs should be designed such that they can bring about life-long and practical results for learners.

As the final point, with regard to the crucial role the constructivist approach played in the development of reading conception in this study, it may sound justified to admit the claim that a shift of emphasis from one of instruction

(transmissional or teaching paradigm) to one of learning (constructivist paradigm) should be an essential part of any modern curriculum (Dochy et al., 2003), especially in the context of English language pedagogy in Iran.

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The construct validation and application of a questionnaire of Attribution Theory for Foreign Language Learners (ATFLL)

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Attribution theory, as an important theme in psychology, has not been touched by professionals in ELT to date. That English language learners to what issues—intelligence, task difficulty, motivation, perseverance, or something else—attribute their successes and failures differs from culture to culture, having lots of consequences and implications for language teachers and syllabus designers. To our knowledge, up to now nobody has constructed a questionnaire to investigate to what issues English language learners attribute their successes and failures. The major aims of this study were to construct, validate, and apply the questionnaire of attribution theory for foreign language learners in the context of Iran. To construct the questionnaire, a standard procedure was followed including three steps. To validate the questionnaire, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used. Included in this step was a pilot study at two stages. A sample of 627 EFL students at Ferdowsi University was gathered during the pilot study. To apply the validated questionnaire, it was administered to a sample of 442 EFL students majoring in Engineering, Medicine, Psychology, and English so that the researchers could identify the factors to which students in Ferdowsi University attribute their perceived successes and failures with respect to gender and major. For these to determine, Descriptive statistics, Multiple independent T-test and one-way ANOVA were run.

Key words: attribution theory; construct validity; individual differences; perceived success and failure

1. Introduction

The search for ways of understanding why some learners are more effective than others has recently turned towards individual differences. A theoretical perspective that could provide interesting and extensive data in this respect is that of attribution theory. Attribution theory (Weiner, 1985) starts with an

outcome. It is mainly concerned with the explanations that people tend to make to explain their perceived successes or failures.

Indeed, from a psychological perspective, according to Williams and Burden (1997), there are three areas that are related to the ways in which individuals perceive themselves namely: Self- concept, Locus of control, and Attribution theory.

Essentially, Weiner's (1986) attribution theory for perceived success and failure proposed that people wholly tend to ascribe their perceived successes and failures to four sets of attributions in life: *a) ability, b) effort, c) luck, d) task difficulty*. These four most common attributional factors relate to the three dimensions of locus, stability, and controllability. Locus refers to the location of a cause (internal or external to the actor); stability refers to the duration of a cause over time (stable vs. unstable); and controllability refers to the degree to which the cause is subject to volitional change (controllable vs. uncontrollable). Weiner's (1986) causal dimensions of attribution factors can be identified in Table 1:

Table 1.
Attribution Factors and Dimensions

Attribution Factors	Casual dimensions		
	Locus	Stability	Controllability
Ability	Internal	Stable	Low
Effort	Internal	Unstable	High
Task difficulty	External	Stable	Low
Luck	External	Unstable	Low

Ability is relatively internal and stable element over which the learner does not have direct control. For example: "I have talent". "I'm not good at languages".

Effort is an internal and unstable element over which the learner has a great deal of control. For example: "I worked really hard to improve my skill". "I don't know how to study effectively".

Task difficulty is an external and stable element that is largely beyond the learner's control. For example: "the task was easy". "The test was too hard".

Luck is an external and unstable element over which the learner has very little control. For example: "This is my lucky day". "Unfortunately, I'm not living in an ESL environment".

An important issue underlying attributions is the notion of 'perception' according to which what a learner *believes* with regard to his perceived success may be more important in his experiences of second language learning than what he *actually* achieves in learning a second language since it depends on "how it seems to me". Perceived success and failure are not absolute but relative as there is no absolute in the universe. As perceptions are not fixed, they are defined in different ways by different cultures, groups, and individuals. For example, a learner, who has passed many terms learning English language and who is able to speak English fluently, may feel that he is not successful when he sees himself unable to understand some dialogues in an original film. By contrast, a learner, who has just studied a few terms, may feel that he is successful for the simple reason that he knows how to make some sentences in English. Or, a person who is familiar with about 100 idioms in English may claim that he knows English idioms, while another person may know about 500 idioms in English and feels that he is not satisfied with the result. Consequently, the first person feels that he is successful while the second does not.

It is too dangerous when a learner attributes his failure to external or stable factors over which he has no control, like intelligence or poor methodology. This will lead to determinism, pessimism, discouraging him from more perseverance. That is to say, learners who see failure as due to lack of ability or intelligence and feel that they have no control over their actions they will become frustrated and depressed. Quite the contrary, when a learner attributes his failure to some internal factors like lack of effort or motivation, this situation will lead to free will and optimism, encouraging him to work harder.

Moreover, it is most likely that there are cultural differences pertaining to people's attributions for their successes and failures. As an example, it is apparent in our society to evade all responsibility for our failures or fault by means of external factors, such as fate or chance. As we have frequently heard the sentence, "It was my fate". But, from a religious perspective, this statement is morally against the principles of Islam that gives choice to human beings. Instead, people must learn to boldly declare, "It was my fault

or neglect". In fact, when a person accepts his own fault, he tries harder because he sees failure as due to internal factors that are within his control. Therefore, he benefits more.

The crux of the matter is that attributions in schools and classrooms are most likely to be socially constructivist in nature. That is, there will be a shared discourse amongst students to account for why they feel more or less able to learn (Williams, Burden, Poulet, and Maun, 2004). As Graham (1994) summarized, the most common attributions in school environment are: Ability, Effort, Task difficulty, Luck, Mood, Family background, and Help or hindrance from others.

Since, to the best knowledge of the researchers, no study has been done to construct a questionnaire of Attribution Theory for Foreign Language Learners (ATFLL), the current study attempted to construct, validate and apply such questionnaire in the context of Iran. To this end, specifically, the present study attempts to answer the question: "*What are the reliability and validity of the ATFLL questionnaire when examined with EFL students?*" And second, "*To what students in Ferdowsi University attribute their perceived successes and failures with respect to gender and major?*"

In seeking to find an answer for each of these questions, the study aimed at: 1) validating a questionnaire of ATFLL, 2) applying the validated questionnaire to identify the factors to which university students attribute their perceived successes and failures with regard to gender and major of the participants. The researchers defined success as 'doing well' as previous studies (Williams and Burden, 1997; Williams, Burden, Poulet, and Maun, 2004) showed that students understand this more easily than succeeding. Failure is also defined as 'not doing well'.

The results help the students to identify their beliefs about their successes or failures, and it helps the teachers and syllabus designers to foster positive attitudes and positive emotional factors like self-esteem, and satisfaction, and also to overcome negative attitudes and negative emotional factors such as lack of intelligence, and frustration. The teachers in this respect can emphasize the role of effort, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) proposed by Vygotsky (1978), and Multiple Intelligences suggested by Gardner (1983) in foreign language learning. They can help learners to develop autonomy. For instance, when a person says a sentence like, "I lack the ability to learn a foreign language", the teacher would remind the learner of "practice makes

perfect". Or, the syllabus designers can choose topics that orchestrate the suggestive factors in a learning situation such as 'To want is to be able to'.

2. Review of Literature

An attributional perspective lies within a constructivist framework. There are three schools of thought from an epistemological perspective: Empiricism, Rationalism, and Constructivism. In seeking to understand individuals, a more helpful approach to take is a constructivist one. Constructivism, with Kant as the progenitor, is a perspective that has well presented itself in developmental and cognitive psychology over the last 25 years. It is a kind of cognitive approach to psychology that highlights the ways in which individuals bring their own meanings to the world. These meanings are personal to them.

According to Schumann (1999), in a constructivist theory of learning what the learner does is constructing personal meaning. Contrary to static views of learners as passive, constructivism applied to second language learning (SLL) takes learners as "actively involved in making their own sense of the language input that surrounds them as well as the tasks presented to them" (Williams & Burden, 1997 p. 23). Arnold and Brown (1999) argued that what we see as the causes for our past successes and failures will affect our expectations and our future performance. Rebecca Oxford (2002) in *The Handbook of Applied Linguistics* pointed out that attribution theory (Weiner, 1985) is important but has not been studied sufficiently in the language.

Dornyei (2001) explained that attribution theory is particularly relevant to the study of language learning for two reasons:

1. Failure in learning an L2 is very common: Despite the great number of individuals who spend a significant amount of time studying foreign languages worldwide, only relatively few will reach a level of L2 proficiency that satisfy them without any reservations. The unpleasant fact is that most learners fail in at least one L2 during their lifetime. Moreover, even successful learners frequently get into frustrating situations when they cannot use the L2 as well as they would hope to. Dornyei (2001) argued, "With failure being such a common experience, the way people process these failures is bound to have a very strong general impact" (p. 120).

2. The ability to learn an L2, often called *language aptitude*, is a notion that people in general are familiar with and therefore refer to regularly. This means that it is too easy to come up with negative ability-attributions, such as 'I don't have a knack for languages' or 'I am not a natural linguist', even if this is not the case at all.

The most recent comprehensive study employing attributions in the field of foreign language learning was conducted by Williams, Burden, Poulet, and Maun (2004). It showed that out of 957 reasons cited for success and failure, six of which were most commonly cited as reasons for both success and failure, namely effort, strategy, ability, teacher, interest, and task as attributions for success, and lack of effort, lack of ability, lack of interest, behavior, teacher, and lack of strategy as attributions for failure. This and the few other studies in the field of second language learning (Williams and Burden, 1997; Tsi, 2000; Williams, Burden, Poulet, and Maun, 2004) employed an open-ended sort of questionnaire to identify learners' attributions for success and failure. Since there is no validated questionnaire in this regard, the present study, following the guidelines proposed by Weiner' (1986) attribution theory, attempted to construct and validate a questionnaire of attribution theory for foreign language learners to be used as an instrument for conducting further research in the field.

3. METHOD

3.1. Participants

The whole study consisted of two phases: 1) Validation and 2) Application of ATFLL questionnaire. The validation phase included a pilot study at two stages. Overall, the sample consisted of 627 EFL students, 251 males and 376 females, in the first phase of the study and of 442 EFL students, males 241 and females 201, in the second phase of the study, studying at Ferdowsi University in Mashhad, a city in the northeast of Iran.

During the pilot study, the sample consisted of 404 EFL students, 167 males and 237 females, at the first stage and of 223 EFL students, 84 males and 139 females, at the second one. The students ranged from 18 to 24 years old with a mean of twenty and a half for the first stage and twenty for the second stage of the pilot study. Participants majoring in Engineering, Medicine, Psychology, and English Language took the questionnaire. Among different majors, these

four majors were selected because they are samples of the three basic disciplines in Iran educational system, namely Engineering, Medicine, and Humanity.

Since the questionnaire was validated for processing further applications to the field of foreign language learning, later, in the second phase of the study, a sample of 442 students, studying at the same university participated again in the research work. The students ranged from 18 to 25 years old with a mean age of twenty and a half. The students majoring in Engineering, Medicine, Psychology, and English Language participated in the research project.

3.2. Instrument

Since, to our best knowledge, nobody has constructed a questionnaire of ATFLL, the questionnaire was first constructed and then validated to be used as an instrument for conducting further research in the field of foreign language learning.

3.3. Procedures

Following the guidelines proposed by Weiner's (1986) attribution theory, the researchers constructed the related questionnaire adopting a straightforward procedure including three steps: 1) Designing the test, 2) Doing a pilot study, and 3) Administering the test.

Applying the guidelines provided by the experts in the field of psychology and language teaching, the researchers designed the questionnaire with 45 items in the 5 scale Likert type. In doing so, they held joint consultations to revise the items while taking the most common attributions as well as cultural attributions into considerations. The whole process, employing also think aloud procedure, took three months during the current year.

Then, a pilot study was carried out at two stages. During the first stage of the pilot study, the questionnaire was administered to 404 students during class hours by prior arrangement with the instructors. At the second stage of the pilot study, the researchers, using the newly-made questionnaire comprising 34 items, gathered data from 223 students. Later, to apply the validated questionnaire to students in Ferdowsi University, it was administered again to 442 students majoring in Engineering, Medicine, Psychology, and English Language.

4. Data Analysis

The internal consistency of the whole questionnaire was assessed with the Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate in each of the two stages of the pilot study. Moreover, using Cronbach Alpha, the internal consistency of each factor constructing the validated questionnaire was also examined.

The validity of the hypothesized factor structure of the ATFLL questionnaire was examined through exploratory factor analysis. Initially, principal axis factoring identified the underlying factors by calculating the eigenvalues of the matrix greater than 1.0. Due to the subjectivity of the criterion for selecting absolute value, the researchers decided to interpret only factor loadings with an absolute value 0.45 or greater. To decide about the number of factors to retain for rotation, the Scree test was used. Since interpretation of the factors can be very difficult, a solution for this difficulty is factor rotation. In so doing, Varimax (orthogonal rotation) with Kaiser Criterion was used. This resulted in a rotated component matrix and a transformation matrix. The rotated component matrix illustrated the variables loaded on each factor so that the researchers came up with the new factors.

Then, the validated questionnaire was applied to identify the factors to which students Ferdowsi University attribute their perceived successes. For this to determine, descriptive statistics was used to describe the body of data including a sample of 442. Also, the questionnaire was used as an instrument to examine the extents to which these attributions vary according to the gender and major of the participants. To this end, Multiple Independent T-test and One-way ANOVA were run to investigate ATFLL questionnaire in gender and major respectively.

5. Results

4.1. Reliability of the ATFLL Questionnaire

In the first stage of the pilot study, Cronbach Alpha estimated the reliability of the whole items as 0.83. In the second stage of the pilot study, using Cronbach Alpha, a consistency coefficient of 0.83 was also identified for the whole items including 34 items. After factor rotation was inspected, the number of items was reduced to 30. All of the four factors yielded good reliability estimates ranging from 0.84 to 0.52 (See Appendix A for the reliabilities).

4.2. Construct Validity (The pilot study)

4.2.1. Stage I

Initially, PCA extracted 12 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 which accounted for 58% of the variance. 34 items had loadings of 0.45 or greater on any factor, as displayed in Appendix B. Put it another way, items 2, 11, 17, 19, 29, 37, 41, 2, 43, 44, and 45 were not found to have loadings of 0.45 or higher on any factor, and are therefore not displayed. It is evident from the table that the first factor accounted for the maximum part of the variance. This shows that this factor is the most important factor since most variables have high loadings on it.

4.2.2. Stage II

The newly-made questionnaire, consisted of 34 items, was administered again to 223 subjects in the second stage of the pilot study to reexamine the construct validity of the factor structure of the questionnaire through EFA. This time, PCA extracted 10 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 which accounted for 61% of the variance (Appendix C). The results of the Scree Test (Cattell, 1966) indicated that a four-factor solution might provide a more parsimonious grouping of the items in the questionnaire (Appendix D).

Then, orthogonal rotation was inspected. Varimax with Kaiser Normalization resulted in a rotated component matrix which appropriately represented the underlying factor structure. The results of this analysis are displayed in Appendix E. With reference to this table, the first factor consisted of 9 items. The second factor consisted of 11 items. Factor 3 consisted of 6 items and items 25, 26, 30, and 29 made up the fourth factor. The total number of items was 30.

Having analyzed items comprising each factor, the researchers named the new factors as *emotions*, *self-image*, *Intrinsic Motivation*, and *Language Policy*. Items representing each factor are displayed in Appendix F, and the validated questionnaire is given in Appendix G.

4.3. Application of the ATFLL questionnaire

This phase included three research questions which are explored below.

1) *To what students in Ferdowsi University attribute their perceived successes and failures?*

The results from descriptive statistics revealed that students in Ferdowsi University attribute their perceived successes and failures more to intrinsic motivation (mean: 3.97) and language policy (mean: 3.78). Since the questionnaire was 5-scale Likert, the maximum and minimum scores were 5×1 respectively.

As Table 2 shows, students attribute their perceived successes and failures from the most to the least as follows: 1) Intrinsic motivation (mean: 3.97), 2) Language policy (mean: 3.78), 3) Emotions (mean: 3.20) and Self-image (mean: 2.29). It should be noted that the maximum score calculated was 5.

Table 2.

The Means of Factors Obtained from Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Intrinsic Motivation	442	3.97	.52
Language Policy	442	3.78	.65
Emotions	442	3.20	.81
Self-image	442	2.29	.84
Valid N (listwise)	442		

2) *To what students in Ferdowsi University attribute their perceived successes and failures with respect to the gender of the participants?*

The Results of Descriptive Statistics showed that there is a significant difference between males and females concerning their attributions for success and failure. Table 3 shows the difference between the two means for each factor.

Table 3.

The Results of Descriptive Statistics for Gender

	gender	N	Mean	SD	Std. error Mean
Emotions	male	241	3.2815	.78502	.05057
	female	201	3.1111	.84477	.05959
Self-image	male	241	2.3836	1.00784	.06492
	female	201	2.1914	.59281	.04181
Intrinsic Motivation	male	241	3.9661	.54503	.03511
	female	201	3.9926	.49307	.03478
Language Policy	male	241	3.7873	.69609	.04484
	female	201	3.7736	.61319	.04325

To find out whether there is any significant difference between gender and ATFL factors, multiple independent t-tests were run. The results

demonstrated that there are significant differences between gender and emotions ($t=2.195$, $p<.05$), and also between gender and self-image ($t= 2.381$, $p<.05$). It means males more than females attribute their successes and failures to emotions and self-image. The results also revealed that there are no significant differences between gender and intrinsic motivation ($t= - 0.532$, $p> .05$) and between gender and language policy ($t=0.218$, $p> .05$) (Table 4).

Table 4.

The Results of T-test for Equality of Means Gender and ATFL Factors

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Emotions	2.195	440	.029	.17039	.07763
Self-image	2.381	440	.018	.19217	.08070
Intrinsic Motivation	-.532	440	.595	-.02654	.04987
Language Policy	.218	440	.828	.01371	.06302

3) *To what students in Ferdowsi University attribute their perceived successes and failures with respect to the major of the participants?*

To determine whether there is any significant difference between major and ATFL factors, one-way ANOVA was run. The results from One-way ANOVA illustrated that the findings are statistically significant for *emotions* ($F= 29.28$, $p<.05$), *self-image* ($F= 3.49$, $p<.05$), and *intrinsic motivation* ($F= 3.33$, $p<.05$). Table 5 demonstrated that there is no significant difference between major and language policy ($F= 1.95$, $p>.05$).

Table 5.

The Results of One-way ANOVA for Major and ATFL Factors

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean ²	F	Sig.
Emotions	Between Groups	49.090	3	16.363	29.287	.000
	Within Groups	244.720	438	.559		
	Total	293.810	441			
Self-image	Between Groups	7.438	3	2.479	3.495	.016
	Within Groups	310.672	438	.709		
	Total	318.110	441			
Intrinsic Motivation	Between Groups	2.679	3	.893	3.334	.019
	Within Groups	117.316	438	.268		
	Total	119.995	441			
Language Policy	Between Groups	2.525	3	.842	1.951	.121
	Within Groups	188.984	438	.431		
	Total	191.510	441			

To locate the differences among means, a post hoc comparison of means was used. To this end, Scheffe Test, which allows very powerful testing of grouped means against other grouped means, was used.

1. Emotions: The results from Scheffe Test revealed that the students majoring in Psychology, Medicine, Engineering, and English attributed their perceived successes and failures to emotions (Table 6)

Table 6.
The Results of Post Hoc Scheffe Test for Emotions

Major	N	Subset for alpha = .05		
		1	2	3
English	121	2.7883		
Engineering	103		3.0888	
Medicine	112		3.2906	
Psychology	106			3.6991
Sig.		1.000	.262	1.000

2. Self-image: Scheffe Test illustrated that students majoring in Psychology, Medicine, English, and Engineering attributed their perceived successes and failures to self-image (Table 7).

Table 7.
The Results of Post Hoc Scheffe Test for Self-image

Major	N	Subset for alpha = .05	
		1	2
Engineering	103	2.1546	
English	121	2.1931	2.1931
Medicine	112	2.3645	2.3645
Psychology	106		2.4795
Sig.		.333	.097

3. Intrinsic Motivation: The results from Scheffe Test revealed that the students majoring in English, Medicine, Engineering, and Psychology attributed their perceived successes and failures to intrinsic motivation, although the differences are not statistically significant (Table 8).

Table 8.
The Results of Post Hoc Scheffe Test for Intrinsic Motivation

Major	N	Subset for alpha = .05 1
Psychology	106	3.8769
Engineering	103	3.9185
Medicine	112	4.0471
English	121	4.0539
Sig.		.094

5. Conclusion and Implications

5.1. The Validated Questionnaire

Specifically, the present study attempted to answer the question, "*What are the reliability and validity of the ATFLQ questionnaire when examined with EFL students?*" The results of this analysis were used to label each factor. The underlying reasons for the selection of the stated labels will be explored below.

The first factor is referred to as *Emotions* which consists of 9 items questions. As it is given in Appendix F, items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 9 measure the learners' emotional factors concerning being displeased, disappointed, unsatisfied, neglectful, frustrated, and discontented respectively. Item 7 tests a learner's dissatisfaction at his teacher's lack of emotional support which would lead to losing motivation. Item 8 measures a learner's dissatisfaction at his teacher's lack of knowledge, and item 5 implies a learner's displeasure with his family's lack of emotional support. Students' attributions for their perceived successes and failures to negative emotional factors are dangerous. If they do so, they will always anticipate failure for their future performance. This will lead to designation and depression. They must learn to overcome their negative emotions and foster their positive emotions since cognition without emotion has nothing to do with learning.

The second factor is called *self-image* which is defined as the particular view that people have of themselves. This factor consists of 11 items. Items 1, 2, and 6 measure learners' attitudes towards their own capabilities. Items 4, 5, 7, and 8 test learners' views on their senses of competence. Successful learners tend on the whole to be those who feel competent of learning. Here, a competent learner can be defined as a person who has enough skills and knowledge to accomplish his learning tasks well. A learner who feels

incompetent will develop negative feelings as this is measured by items 9, 10, and 11. Also, students' perceptions as incompetent would lead to their negative attitudes towards significant others especially their teachers. This is evident in item 3 which tests the students' reactions to pessimism.

Factor 3 which is known as *intrinsic motivation* consists of 6 items. learners' attributions for success to intrinsic motivation would show that they tend to work not to please teachers by achieving good grades, but to develop a love of knowledge or what Bruner (1990) referred to as "the autonomy of self-reward", according to which, language learners will have a better chance of success once they learn for their own reasons of achieving competence and autonomy. Items 1, 3, 4, and 6 refer to students' love for learning English. Item 5 tests students' development of autonomy and item 2 test students' desires to speak English outside the classroom. That is to say, it refers to students' desires to live in an ESL environment in which English is spoken in the society. They believe that they can improve their English greatly in this way.

The last factor of the questionnaire is referred to as *language policy* based on which text-books at schools are designed. This factor consists of 4 items. Item 4 measures the kinds of text-books taught at schools which are boring and full of contrived conversations. The syllabus designs are developed with reference to the classroom rather than learners' needs in actual communicative situations in the world outside. Item 1 tests wrong order of teaching skills at school since teachers focus on teaching reading and writing before listening and speaking due to the kind of text-book and the negative washback of University Entrance Examination in Iran. Item 2 tests learners' attitudes towards teaching listening and speaking at schools with focus on conversation. Item 3 is concerned with practicing speaking skill at school. Students do not speak English even if they can. There are three reasons for this. First, teachers teach their English course in Farsi since the kind of methodology requires them to do so. Second, whenever a student tries to speak in English, he will be confronted with other students' reactions. Third, students must focus on reading skills and grammar due to the language policy in testing.

The fact of the matter is that learners have recently realized that they would learn English more effectively through listening and speaking. The undeniable fact is that those learners who participate in English courses at private

institutes have a high level of performance compared to the same learners' performances at school. It is most likely that students in our society tend to ascribe their failures to language policy, namely the kind of text-books, the focus on grammar, no discussion or role play to improve speaking, and poor teaching. Since this factor is an external factor which is likely to be stable over which the learner has no control, it will lead to pessimism, discouraging the learner from more perseverance. It is recommended that the learners alter their negative attitudes with other positive attitudes such as insufficient knowledge of appropriate strategies, or lack of long-term effort.

5.2. Application of the ATFL questionnaire

As indicated earlier, this phase included three research questions which are canvassed below.

1) To what students in Ferdowsi University attribute their perceived successes and failures?

Given learners' attributions for their successes and failures, the results from descriptive statistics indicated that Ferdowsi college students attribute their perceived successes and failures more to *intrinsic motivation* and *language policy*. Learners who attribute their failures to language policy must change their attitudes since language policy is an external and stable factor over which the learners have no control. Attribution for failure to the kind of text-book and teaching methodology both at schools and ESP courses at university must be regarded as a negative attitude for the learners that may lead to underachievement, apparent lack of ability, and frustration. Therefore, it is highly recommended that learners change such a negative attitude and instead ascribe their failures to some internal and unstable factors over which they have a great deal of control like intrinsic motivation, and effort. Having an intrinsic motivation to learn English language will help learners participate in private institutes or work on text-books that are based on communicative approaches and meet the learners' needs, like task-based instruction.

2) To what students in Ferdowsi University attribute their perceived successes and failures with respect to the gender of the participants?

The results of the study illustrated that males more than females attribute their successes and failures to *emotions* and *self-image*. According to Deaux (1985), it seems that men tend to attribute success to stable and internal

factors more than do women. Women are likely to have lower expectations for themselves and tend to attribute their success more to luck and external causes. Besides, the pilot study carried out by Williams, Burden, Poulet, and Maun (2004), confirmed that when it comes to internal factors, a higher percentage of boys than girls attributed their successes to their own efforts and when it comes to external factors, a higher proportion of girls attributed their successes to the influence of the teacher. Similarly, the results from the current study also confirmed that males more than females attribute their successes to internal factors namely emotions and self-image. It is likely that males develop more positive self-image than females. They look more confident. However, Williams and Burden (1997) argued that if women attribute their successes to external causes, it might just be that women are more modest than men (the so-called modesty factor). Anyway, females must learn to ascribe their successes to internal and unstable factors since this attitude will help them anticipate their future successes, that is, their successes are at their own hands not due to some external factors which will lead to autonomy.

3) *To what students in Ferdowsi University attribute their perceived successes and failures with respect to the major of the participants?*

The results of the study illustrated the students majoring in psychology attributed their perceived successes and failures more than those of other majors to *emotions*, and *self-image* and students majoring in English more than those of other majors to *intrinsic motivation*. It is likely that students majoring in psychology are more familiar with emotions and self-image which belong to the field of psychology. However, their problem is that they have not enough motivation to participate actively in English private institutes. On the other hand, students majoring in English are highly motivated. Since these students, who ascribe their perceived successes and failures to intrinsic motivation, are more successful than students of other majors, it seems that this factor is more important than other factors in second language learning. However, the problem with students majoring in English is that they focus more on the cognitive aspect of learning maybe due to the atmosphere of the classrooms and the underlying assumptions of the teachers who mostly ignore the emotional factors in their classes. Learners need to be liked, valued, and appreciated. The classroom can be an environment where values and positive attitudes can be promoted. If a

teacher can understand the importance of emotional factors, believing that all students can learn, he will offer opportunities for success to all students. To maintain their positive self-image, students need not to be humiliated in the classrooms.

5.3. Practical Implications

Indeed, there are many potentially helpful implications for language teachers in relation to attributions for success and failure.

1. Teachers ought to emphasize the affective side of learning process. They should see how they can overcome learners' problems caused by negative emotions and how they can create and use more positive facilitative emotions. As Goleman (1995) proposed the notion of 'emotional illiteracy' and he put forth as a solution a new vision for education, bringing together mind and heart in the classroom. For this, teachers should create a climate in the classrooms where mistakes can be made without embarrassment, where learning tasks lead to the feeling of success not failure.
2. To foster positive attitudes, the teachers can open up multiple opportunities for the students to demonstrate positive features like self-image and self-esteem, a feeling of 'I can' and to excel. For example, they can start the study of a new lesson with a task in which everybody is likely to do well. Moreover, they can help learners to express their feelings and communicate more effectively through cooperation.
3. To stimulate the development of intrinsic motivation in the L2 classrooms, the teachers can help learners to develop autonomy by learning to establish personal goals and to use learning strategies. They, also, can encourage learners to find self-satisfaction in doing a task well.
4. Due to the shortcomings stem from inadequate language policy, and since there is no 'perfect' method for learning foreign languages, and a second language can be acquired in different ways using diverse strategies, teachers can help the learners to discover for themselves the methods and learning strategies by which they learn best.

5.4. Implications for Syllabus Designers

The research work also offers psychological implications for syllabus designers not to ignore learners' perceptions about their perceived successes

and failures while designing their syllabi. They need to focus on important factors like individual learner needs, the use of appropriate strategies, presenting tasks based on Zone of Proximal Development (Vygosky, 1978) according to which everybody is likely to do well, Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983), and cooperative learning. For example, they can select the tasks in keeping with learner needs, interests, and language skill level. Or, they can choose topics that orchestrate the suggestive factors in a learning situation such as 'To want is to be able to'.

5.5. Suggestions for Further Research

Research is needed to be done in Elementary, Middle, and High schools at urban and rural areas. Further research may investigate the social situations of the students between upper and lower classes. Another research is needed to be done to see whether there is any relationship between students' scores on a language proficiency test and their attributions. Further effort should be made to examine the reasons that learners attribute for their perceived successes and failures in relation to language skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Again another research is needed to investigate whether an individual's self-ratio proficiency assessment has any influence on the kind of attributions he perceives for success and failure.

Finally, we suggest that the door is open for doing further research concerning attributions for success and failure in language learning in order to develop a comprehensive picture of this area in relation to learning foreign languages

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Appendix A: Reliability of Each Factor

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Factor 1	.845	9
Factor 2	.812	11
Factor 3	.541	6
Factor 4	.524	4

Appendix B: Component Matrix

Component Matrix

	Component											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
VAR000	.676											
VAR000	.663											
VAR000	.636											
VAR000	.635											
VAR000	.633											
VAR000	.624											
VAR000	.613											
VAR000	.601											
VAR000	.595											
VAR000	.573											
VAR000	.563											
VAR000	.555											
VAR000	.545											
VAR000	.528											
VAR000	.494											
VAR000	.484											
VAR000	.456											
VAR000												
VAR000												
VAR000												
VAR000		.641										
VAR000		.623										
VAR000		.563										
VAR000		.554										
VAR000		.505										
VAR000		.490										
VAR000												
VAR000												
VAR000												
VAR000												
VAR000			.526									
VAR000			.519									
VAR000			.492	-.504								
VAR000												
VAR000					.541							
VAR000					.463							
VAR000												
VAR000						.515						
VAR000						.486						
VAR000							.508					
VAR000												
VAR000										.535		
VAR000											.488	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

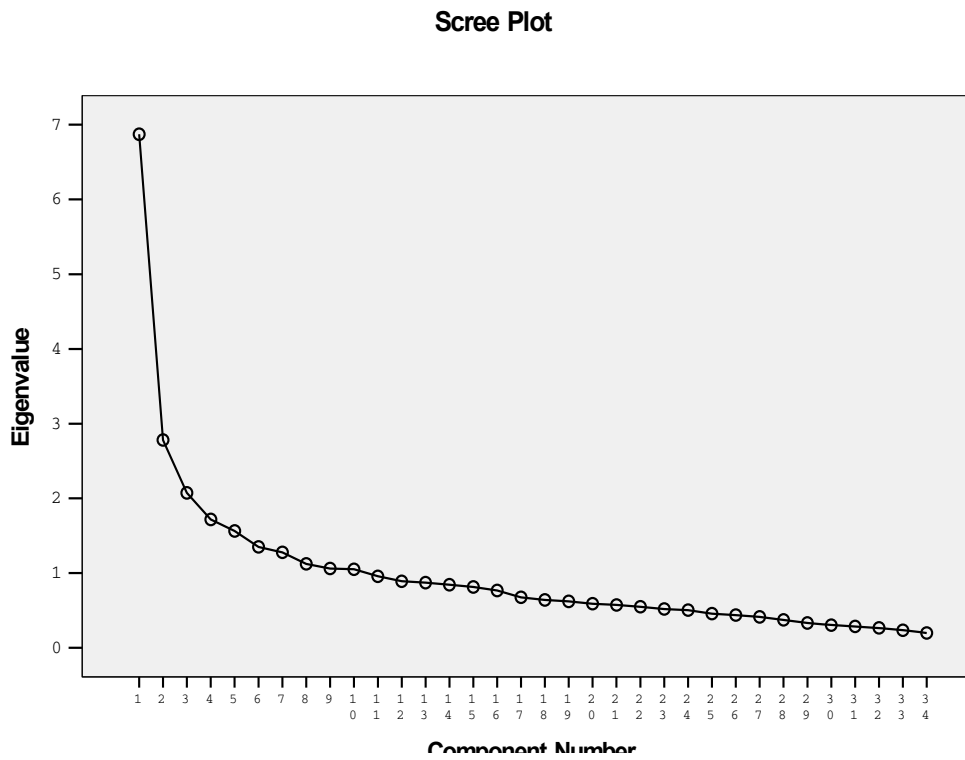
a. 12 components extracted.

Appendix C: Factors Extracted from PCA (Phase II)

Initial Eigenvalues						
Component	Total	Variance %	Cumulative %	Total	Variance %	Cumulative %
1	6.872	20.211	20.211	6.872	20.211	20.211
2	2.781	8.179	28.390	2.781	8.179	28.390
3	2.073	6.098	34.488	2.073	6.098	34.488
4	1.718	5.053	39.542	1.718	5.053	39.542
5	1.564	4.599	44.140	1.564	4.599	44.140
6	1.351	3.972	48.112	1.351	3.972	48.112
7	1.278	3.759	51.871	1.278	3.759	51.871
8	1.123	3.303	55.175	1.123	3.303	55.175
9	1.061	3.121	58.296	1.061	3.121	58.296
10	1.051	3.092	61.387	1.051	3.092	61.387
11	.957	2.816				
12	.890	2.619				
13	.872	2.564				
14	.844	2.482				
15	.814	2.395				
16	.768	2.258				
17	.676	1.990				
18	.641	1.886				
19	.622	1.829				
20	.591	1.737				
21	.574	1.687				
22	.549	1.616				
23	.520	1.528				
24	.505	1.484				
25	.457	1.344				
26	.438	1.288				
27	.414	1.219				
28	.374	1.099				
29	.332	.976				
30	.304	.895				
31	.287	.843				
32	.267	.784				
33	.234	.689				
34	.199	.586				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Appendix D: The Scree Plot



Appendix E: Rotated Component Matrix

	Component 1	Component2	Component 3	Component 4
VAR 13	.757			
VAR 04	.734			
VAR24	.729			
VAR22	.658			
VAR05	.635			
VAR19	.626			
VAR20	.611			
VAR12	.593			
VAR14	.520			
VAR17				
VAR06				
VAR27		.667		
VAR28		.573		
VAR07		.566		
VAR15		.554		
VAR02		.509		
VAR01		.490		
VAR34		.469		
VAR33		.467		
VAR32		.458		
VAR21		.453		
VAR16		.451		
VAR18				
VAR10			.602	
VAR09			.507	
VAR03			.486	
VAR08			.476	
VAR31			.458	
VAR11			.459	
VAR23				
VAR25				.678
VAR26				.607
VAR30				.594
VAR29				.477

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.

Appendix F: The Factors of ATFLL Questionnaire**Factor 1: Emotions**

۱. فکر می‌کنم به اندازه کافی برای یادگیری زبان وقت نگذاشته‌ام.
۲. خیلی دلم می‌خواهد زبان را یاد بگیرم، ولی سخت است.
۳. از پیشرفت خودم در یادگیری زبان راضی نیستم.
۴. احساس می‌کنم در یادگیری زبان کوتاهی کرده‌ام.
۵. اگر در خانواده‌ام به زبان انگلیسی اهمیت بیشتری داده شود، من هم زبان را یاد می‌گیرم.
۶. احساس می‌کنم بخاطر روش‌های نادرست تدریس، نسبت به یادگیری زبان سرخورده شده‌ام.
۷. فکر می‌کنم معلمان بخوبی در من ایجاد انگیزه نکرده‌اند.
۸. اگر زبان را یاد نمی‌گیرم، بخاطر اینست که تا کنون مدرس زبان خوبی نداشته‌ام.
۹. برای دستیابی به موفقیت در یادگیری زبان، آنطور که دلم می‌خواهد تلاش نکرده‌ام.

Factor 2: Self-image

۱. احساس می‌کنم نمی‌توانم زبان انگلیسی را یاد بگیرم.
۲. برداشتم از واکنش سایرین اینست که فردی بی‌استعداد هستم.
۳. فکر می‌کنم درست وقتی که بلد نیستم، معلم از من سوال می‌پرسد.
۴. در یادگیری زبان بخوبی از عهده تکالیفم بر نمی‌آیم.
۵. فکر می‌کنم هنگام یادگیری اشتباها تم زیاد است.
۶. فکر می‌کنم بیش از این توان یادگیری زبان را ندارم.
۷. وقتی از عهده انجام تکالیفم بر نمی‌آیم، بخت و اقبال را سرزنش می‌کنم.
۸. فکر می‌کنم انرژی‌ام را بیهوده صرف یادگیری زبان کرده‌ام.
۹. هر گاه در یادگیری زبان با واکنش منفی از سوی معلم روبرو شوم، احساس ناامیدی می‌کنم.
۱۰. احساس می‌کنم نسبت به یادگیری زبان بی‌انگیزه شده‌ام.
۱۱. از مشارکت در فعالیت‌های کلاسی احساس نگرانی می‌کنم.

Factor 3: Intrinsic Motivation

۱. من برای یادگیری زبان سخت کار می‌کنم.
۲. متأسفانه، در کشوری زندگی می‌کنم که در آن زبان انگلیسی صحبت نمی‌شود.
۳. علاقه خاصی به یادگیری زبان انگلیسی دارم.
۴. فکر می‌کنم یادگیری زبان انگلیسی بیشتر از هر زبان دیگری حائز اهمیت است.
۵. پیشرفت در یادگیری زبان به خاطر خودم است، نه به خاطر افراد یا شرایط دیگر.
۶. وقتی خودم از عهده انجام تکالیف سخت زبان بر می‌آیم، لذت می‌برم.

Factor 4: Language Policy

۱. فکر می‌کنم تدریس زبان از طریق گرامر در مدارس، یادگیری آن را دشوار نموده است.
۲. به نظر من، از طریق مکالمه زبان را راحتتر می‌توان یاد گرفت.
۳. با اینکه می‌دانم توانایی صحبت کردن در زبان انگلیسی را دارم، ولی در کلاس صحبت نمی‌کنم.
۴. فکر می‌کنم کتابهای زبان تا لیف داخل کشور خشک و خسته کننده هستند.

Appendix G: ATFL Questionnaire

نام و نام خانوادگی	سن دقیق:	ترم:	چند ترم:
جنسیت مرد <input type="checkbox"/> زن <input type="checkbox"/>	رشته تحصیلی		
آیا تا کنون در موسسات زبان شرکت کرده اید؟	بله <input type="checkbox"/> خیر <input type="checkbox"/>	نمره زبان عمومی:	معدل کل:
آیا بجز زبان انگلیسی زبان دیگری هم می دانید؟	کردی <input type="checkbox"/> ترکی <input type="checkbox"/> فرانسه <input type="checkbox"/> آلمانی <input type="checkbox"/> عربی <input type="checkbox"/>		

پاسخ دهنده گرامی: هدف از این پرسش نامه تعیین عوامل موفقیت و ناکامی فراگیران زبان انگلیسی بعنوان زبان دوم می باشد. قبلاً از همکاری شما سپاسگزارم.

	۵	۴	۳	۲	۱
۱ فکر می کنم به اندازه کافی برای یادگیری زبان وقت نگذاشته ام.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۲ خیلی دلم می خواهد زبان را یاد بگیرم، ولی سخت است.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۳ از پیشرفت خودم در یادگیری زبان راضی نیستم.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۴ احساس می کنم در یادگیری زبان کوتاهی کرده ام.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۵ اگر در خانواده ام به زبان انگلیسی اهمیت بیشتری داده شود، من هم زبان را یاد می گیرم.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۶ احساس می کنم بخاطر روش های نادرست تدریس، نسبت به یادگیری زبان سرخورده شده ام.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۷ فکر می کنم معلمان بخوبی در من ایجاد انگیزه نکرده اند.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۸ اگر زبان را یاد نمی گیرم، بخاطر اینست که تا کنون مدرس زبان خوبی نداشته ام.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۹ برای دستیابی به موفقیت در یادگیری زبان، آنطور که دلم می خواهد تلاش نکرده ام.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۱۰ احساس می کنم نمی توانم زبان انگلیسی را یاد بگیرم.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۱۱ برداشتم از واکنش سایرین اینست که فردی بی استعداد هستم.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۱۲ فکر می کنم درست وقتی که بلد نیستم، معلم از من سوال می پرسد.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۱۳ در یادگیری زبان بخوبی از عهده تکالیفم بر نمی آیم.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۱۴ فکر می کنم هنگام یادگیری اشتباهاتم زیاد است.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۱۵ فکر می کنم بیش از این توان یادگیری زبان را ندارم.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۱۶ وقتی از عهده انجام تکالیفم بر نمی آیم، بخت و اقبال را سرزنش می کنم.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۱۷ فکر می کنم انرژی ام را بیهوده صرف یادگیری زبان کرده ام.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۱۸ هر گاه در یادگیری زبان با واکنش منفی از سوی معلم روبرو شوم، احساس ناامیدی می کنم.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۱۹ احساس می کنم نسبت به یادگیری زبان بی انگیزه شده ام.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۲۰ از مشارکت در فعالیت های کلاسی احساس نگرانی می کنم.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۲۱ من برای یادگیری زبان سخت کار می کنم.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۲۲ متأسفانه، در کشوری زندگی می کنم که در آن زبان انگلیسی صحبت نمی شود.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۲۳ علاقه خاصی به یادگیری زبان انگلیسی دارم.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۲۴ فکر می کنم یادگیری زبان انگلیسی بیشتر از هر زبان دیگری حائز اهمیت است.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۲۵ پیشرفت در یادگیری زبان به خاطر خودم است، نه به خاطر افراد یا شرایط دیگر.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۲۶ وقتی خودم از عهده انجام تکالیف سخت زبان بر می آیم، لذت می برم.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۲۷ فکر می کنم تدریس زبان از طریق گرامر در مدارس، یادگیری آن را دشوار نموده است.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۲۸ به نظر من، از طریق مکالمه زبان را راحتتر می توان یاد گرفت.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۲۹ با اینکه می دانم توانایی صحبت کردن در زبان انگلیسی را دارم، ولی در کلاس صحبت نمی کنم.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
۳۰ فکر می کنم کتابهای زبان تا لیف داخل کشور خشک و خسته کننده هستند.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

۱ = کاملاً موافقم ۲ = موافقم ۳ = نظری ندارم ۴ = مخالفم ۵ = کاملاً مخالفم

The sociolinguistics of Edo personal name constructions

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Naming a child is no trivial pursuit in Edo culture. Names are given to children depending on the circumstances before, during or even after the birth. The choice of names to be given to a child is determined by various events both within the immediate and extended families. They therefore tend to give names that portend posterity, success, long-life, good luck, etc and not the ones that have any negative connotations. Their belief is hinged on the fact that whatever names that are given will have a great effect on him or her for the rest of the life. The purpose of this paper is to examine the factors that motivate the various types of names that are given to children in Edo culture. We also showed in the paper that Edo personal names are indeed single words and not phrases which are productively derived out of noun phrases and or sentences. The evidence is provided within the model of morphology and syntax interaction. Finally, the work showed clearly that Edo names are abridged version of syntactic structures, which lexicalize the people's folk-psychology and their language morphological structures as previously observed by Yoruba speakers.

Keywords: Morphology; Personal names; Sociolinguistics; Folk-psychology; Edo

1. Introduction

Edo, according to the Nigerian 2006 national census has a population of about 3.2 million inhabitants, occupying about 10, 372 square kilometers in the mid-western part of Nigeria. Elugbe (1989) classified Edo as one of the languages that constitute the North-Central Edoid group. The Edoid group is in turn a branch of (New) Benue-Congo (Williamson, 1989). The constitution of The Federal Republic of Nigeria recognizes three major languages (apart from English). These are Hausa, Ìgbò and Yorùbá. Èdó is therefore considered as a minority language because its speakers are restricted to a region of the country.

Tan (2004, p. 307) quoting Andrews (1993, p. 616) said that the 36th American Vice-President, Humphrey disagreed with Juliet, when she said:

what's in a name? That which we shall call a rose, by any other name, would smell as sweet' (Romeo and Juliet, 2:1-58). After all, she was trying to justify her love for Romeo. Humphrey declares in a speech made on 26th march 1966. In real life, unlike in Shakespeare, the sweetness of the rose depends upon the name it bears'.

The above quotation aptly illuminates the various angles by which people view naming. While some scholars on names are of the view that personal names have no meaning and do not make any sense, others are of the view that names function to individualize and distinguish people from others. To Euro-Western thought in general, a name is not part of a person, or a personality. The name is just a label, a tag, something to be used in reference to a person, but no more than that. This view is supported by Ziff (1960, p. 174) who insists that "there is nothing in a proper name. It has information content, even so, it is all sound and if the sound is changed, the name is changed" Searte (1971, p. 134) also opines that "proper names do not have a sense, they are meaningless marks, they have denotation but not connotation". Other scholars who shared the views of Ziff (1960) and Searte (1971) include Mill (1949) and Kriple (1977). On the other hand, some scholars are of the view that personal names have meaning. Frege (1992) and Lyons (1977) are in this category. Lyons (1977, p. 219) states that: "... the most widely accepted philosophical view nowadays is that names have meaning in some cultures and reference in all cultures."

He however missed the point when he said further that personal names have no sense at all and that they cannot be used predicatively purely as names. Our conclusion is that majority of these authors do not seem to have taken into consideration, the peculiarity of African culture. African names are a bundle of information regarding the bearer and the family. Events before, during and after the birth of the child (within both the nuclear and extended family) play significant roles in the name or names to be given the child. It is pertinent to note that it is not only African names that have meaning and stories behind them. Even in the Judeo-Christian culture, names are known to perform special roles in the lives of the people. For instance, in the bible, (New Testament Translation), a widow exclaims:

Don't call me **Naomi** (pleasant)
Instead call me **Mara** (bitter), for the

Almighty has made life very bitter for me
(Ruth 1:20)

Edo personal names provide necessary link to the future, in terms of the parent's hope and aspirations for the child, and to the past, in terms of the connectedness of the name to the child's ancestors or identification within a particular community. More often than not, a name is a repository of accumulated meanings, practices and beliefs, and a powerful linguistic means of asserting identity

Edo people carefully select the names given to children during the naming ceremony. This is because of their belief that any name given to a child will ultimately affect him or her throughout the rest of its life. Hence, they give such names as:

1. i. Èvbárúè "prosperous" (a child born where the parents sojourn)
- ii. Ìdélégbàgbón "I have been established"
- iii Ìdòlò!yì " I have come to repair (what an enemy has destroyed in our family)"
- iv Òsàkiódè!mè "God has opened the way for me"

2. The Sociology of Edo Personal Names

Naming a child is no trivial pursuit in Edo culture. The culture places a great emphasis on the choice of names that are given to a child because it is their belief that a child's name affects its behaviour and ultimately determines its fate, saying:

2. Èkè nè á hèé ènì ghèé òré èrè ènì lá ghé
"a person is a reflection of his name"

The relationship between the bearer of a name and the name he/she bears is believed to be an intimate one. Hence, parents consult oracles when names are to be given to the baby.

Traditionally, the naming ceremony, (ìzòmò) ì- zé-òmó "Act of choosing a name" takes place in the morning of the seventh day after the birth, if the baby is healthy and fourteen days if the baby is sickly. During this period of incapacitation, a tentative name Umweni, which means 'you do not have a name', is given to the child. This name is however adopted if the child is not

healthy after fourteen days. However, if the child is alright, a proper naming ceremony is conducted and he or she is incorporated into the society. Ogie (2002, p. 145), quoting Guemple (1965, p. 324) mentions that the Eskimos have a similar culture in that they delay the naming ceremony for a few days to ascertain if the child will live. During the naming ceremony in Edo, the ancestral spirits are invoked for blessing. The items used include: coconut, (which represents the wealth that the child will bring to the family—coconut was an important item of trade brought by the Portuguese to the Benin Empire), Orhue (white chalk- which symbolizes purity and happiness), native gin and colanuts (used for invoking ancestral blessing for the child), honey (which symbolizes the sweetness of life), and alligator pepper (which symbolizes the bitter side of life). (cf: Ogie 2002, p. 143).

While the parents give their preferred names, those present at the naming ceremony equally give names depending on their views about life or the various circumstances surrounding the birth of the child. Ogie (2002) reports that prior to the proper naming ceremony, seven different animal names are given to the child to deceive the various forces present and distract their attention from the actual names.

Investigation reveals that several factors motivate the various types of names that are given to children in Edo culture. Some of these include:

- a) The perceived roles of God.
- b) The physical appearance of the baby.
- c) The state of mind of the parents.
- d) The circumstances of birth.
- e) The deities /gods worshipped by the family.
- f) Infantile mortality.
- g) The various types of objects.

2.1. The perceived roles of God

While some parents see the birth of children as the work of the family ancestral spirits and the various deities they worship, others, more commonly, see the hand of God in the birth of a child. They are of the belief that the supreme God, makes it to happen. Some of the names they give under this category include:

3. i. Òsémwénkhà
òsé mwén khàá
enough me say
“I have good news to tell from what God has done for me”
- ii. Òvbìòsà
Òvbí Òsà
Child God
“a child of God”
- iii. Tièósà
Tié Òsà
Call God
“one who calls on God”
- iv. Òsàgbémwórhùè
Òsà gbé mwé òrhùè
God pour me joy
“God has brought me joy”
- v. Òsàghákhú
Òsà ghá khú
God will drive
“God will drive away my enemy from me”
- vi. Òsàmàgíóròmwènwé
Òsà má gí oro mwen we
God neg. allow secret me my
“God has kept my secret secret”

2.2. The physical appearance of the child

The physical appearance of the child might be closely observed during the seven days. Some of the things that might be taken into consideration include the baby's size and height, complexion, any deformity, and so on. This observation then culminates in naming the baby. Some of the names pertain to the physical appearance of the baby include:

4. i. Àgúéyòbò
A gwé yó òbó
Nom. Prefix cover at hand “small at birth”

- ii. Àgàdàgúdú
“mighty”
- iii. Ákpúkúrú
À + kpúkúrú
“Small and ugly at birth”
- iv. Ébò
“a child born in a glamorous way”
- v. Ìkpágèlè
Ìkpè àgèlè
Seed bullet
“a child that is small at birth”

2.3. The ‘State of mind’ of the parents

Names referring to the ‘state of mind’ of the parents in Edo culture could be either negative or positive. Such names can refer to the constant imminence of poverty or misfortune, jealousy of neighbours, and co-wives or even ancestral spirit. On the other hand, it can be positive to reflect their joy and happiness in new born babies. Parents also feel elated that a child has been born successfully. They can also express the pride they feel in their beautiful children by giving them certain names. Some of these names include:

- 5. i. Érúbókún
“elegant in beauty”
- ii. Égbámè
Égbé àmè
Body water
“beauty”
- iii. Àgbònmágúmwèngíé
Àgbón mà gú mwén gíé
World neg allow mine laugh
“the world prevents me from my happiness”
- iv. Òdùnámé
Ò dúná mè
Nom. prefix settle me
“It is well with me”
- v. Ònàghísè

Ònà ghí sé
this is end'

"This is where it ends (i.e. end of problem and predicament).

vi. Òsèíkópó

Òsè í kópó
friend neg. plentiful
"real friends are rare"

vii. Ùsèígbówà

usè í gbé òwà
poverty neg. kill house
"poverty cannot overcome the whole house (family)"

2.4. The circumstances of the birth of the child

Various events and circumstances under which the child was born might determine the type of name the child is given. Such circumstances might refer to the physical birth itself, a breech presentation, a difficult labour, or something else unusual. The names may refer to the problems that the mother had during pregnancy. Family circumstances may be referred to; sometimes the circumstances might belong to a wider arena than the immediate family or homestead. Names may refer to events of community or clan importance, festivals, the coronation or demise of a chief or king. It might even be the way and manner the baby was born. Sometimes, the birth follows a long period of childlessness. Such long periods causes a great distress and discomfort not only to the woman and the husband, but also to the extended family. Children born after a long wait have peculiar names. The place and timing of birth also determines the names that are given in Edo land. The position of the child within the hierarchy of children in the family also determines the names to be given. Some of these names include:

6. i. Ábíévbòdé
à bíé vbé òdé
nom born on road
"A child born on the way"
- ii. Àbíèvbéki
À bíé vbé èki
Nom prefix. born in market
"a child born in the market"

- iii. Àzàyí
 “A child who came from his mother’s womb with its leg”
 (breach)
- iv. Èdíguè
 èdé ìgwè
 day a type of festival
 “A child born on the day of Igwe festival”
- v. Àlágbódè
 A lá gbèé òdé
 Nom prefix pass block road
 “the last born”
- vi. Èbósè
 Èbòò sé
 charm ‘effective’
 “a child born as a result of effectiveness of charm”
- vii. Ìkpòbà
 “A child born at the Ìkpòbà river”
- viii. Èdéguà
 èdé èguà
 day yam planting
 “a child born on the day of planting yam seedling”
- ix. Èdébò
 èdé èbò
 ‘day’ a deity
 “a child born on the festival day of community shrine”
- x. Èdékì
 èdé èkì
 day market
 “A child born on the market day”
- xi. Úgbó
 “a child born in the farm”
- xii. Òkpiàvbé
 òkpiá vbèé
 male scarce
 “a male child is scarce”
- xiii. Òzó
 ‘a child who is a warrior who had his placenta around his neck

- xiv. Ítíósà
 Ì tié òsà
 Nom. Prefix call God
 "I call on God" (and He answered my prayers with this child)
- xv. Òdíón
 "senior twins"
- xvi. Óvbókhàn
 "Junior twins"
- xvii. Ògbávbévá
 "The second child"

2.5. The Deities/gods worshiped in the family

According to Jacobs (1974), the faith of the people is reflected in the names they give their children. It may be their faith in God or in the spiritual world generally. In African culture, every family has a god or goddess of its own which they worship. Such god or goddess is seen as the succor who acts as intermediary between man and the Supreme Being. When evils and calamities befall a family, the god or the goddess of the family is appeased through sacrifices. They are of the belief that these gods and goddess have the divine power to provide children for its adherents. Some of these deities and gods that they worship include Ògún (god of iron); Òsún (god of healing); Òlókún (god of sea, wealth, and posterity) and so on. When their prayers are answered, and they have children, they acknowledge the gods through the names they give these children. Some of these names include:

7. i. Ìhàsé
 ìhà sé
 oracle come true + past
 "a child born under the prediction of the oracles"
- ii. Ígbìnàkè
 Í gbinná àkè
 Nom. Prefix. seek protection shrine
 "One who took refuge in Àké shrine"
- iii. Èzìzà
 "a child dedicated to the goddess of the whirlwind"
- iv. Ògúnámèn
 Ògún né àmèn

- God of iron of water (comfort)
 “the comfort from god of iron”
- v. Òkúnbò
 Òkún bó
 ocean favour
 “the ocean has favoured me”
- vi. Òkhùárèsúyí
 òkhùárè sé úyì
 goddess enough respect
 “Òkhùárè is worth respect”
- vii. Ògúnsédè
 Ògún sé èdé
 god of iron visit day
 “A child born under the influence of Ògún shrine”

2.6. Infantile Mortality

The names under this category refer to children who are believed to belong to a group of demons that commonly reside in the trees like the *írókò*. Before they came into the world, they already have chosen the time when they will return back to their mates in the spirit world. These demons are connected with women who loose several children in infancy, especially, after a short period of illness. Special names are given to them with the hope that they will not leave upon their pre-arranged dates. This superstitious belief attempts to explain the high rate of infant mortality of the children in the society. These types of children are called *Ìgbàkhùàn*. The names given to this category of children range in meaning from, attempts to persuade them to stay and not be taken away from the unseen forces to threatening them with severe punishment if they should attempt to go again. Some of these names include:

8. i. Ònàíwú
 ònà í wú
 this neg die
 “this one will not die”
- ii. Sónnàràrè
 se òná ràé
 leave this one alone
 “Leave this one behind”

- iii. Gúmwéndiá
Gun nwem diá
with me to reside at
“Remain with me”
- iv. Ìdiágbònyà
Ì diá àgbón yá
Nom prefix reside at world stay
“I have come to live on earth”
- v. Omódíà
òmó diá
child reside at
“this child has come to stay”

2.7. The various types of objects

Some of these objects that the Edo people name their children after are river; animals, plants, ornaments, birds, moon and so on. It might also be for one reason or the other such as the attributes of animals or plants. Some of these include:

- 9. i. ìkpòbà
“the name of a river”
- ii. ùkì
“moon” (beauty)
- iii. útètè
“mountain” (protector)
- iv. Úgbòlòkò
“bone” (a strong fellow)

3. Edo Names as Words

This section provides evidence to show that Edo personal names are indeed single words and not phrases which are productively derived out of noun phrases and or sentences. The evidence is provided within the model of morphology and syntax interaction. These evidences are: extraction, pronominals, anaphoric binding, behaviours of these names with modifiers and determiners when compared with their noun phrase or sentence counterparts and non-referentiality.

The first syntactic evidence is extraction or what Spencer (1991, p. 185)

called positional mobility. In nominalization, it is impossible to extract some components of the internal structure of a phrase, whereas, as a word it can be moved relatively easily within the sentence.

Bauer (1988) reported that both Latin and classical Greek have greater positional mobility as major lexical constituents may appear in any order. For instance, all the examples in (a) below have the same meaning despite the fact that they have different surface structures.

- | | | |
|---------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 10. (a) | Brutus Caesarem occidit | Brutus killed Caesar |
| (b) | Caesarem occidit Brutus | Brutus killed Caesar |
| (c) | Occidit Caesarem Brutus | Brutus killed Caesar |

Unlike the case-permitted variant in Latin above, Edo, just like Yòrùbá is a case of movement rules (Move-a) which, according to Ògúnkéyé (2002), allows elements of major grammatical categories to be moved for purposes of topicalisation, clefting, etc.

11. [[...x...]]
 (Pulleyblank & Akinlabí, 1988:147)

Consider the examples below:

- | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---|-------|-------------|------------|--------|--------|-------|-----|
| 12. (a) | íràn | mú | òsàgíóbárré | kpá | | | | |
| | They | carry | name | away | | | | |
| | “They carried Òsàgíóbárré away” | | | | | | | |
| (b) | Ò | ghèré | Òsàgíóbárré | né | íràn | mú | kpá. | |
| | It | was | name | that | they | carry | away | |
| | “It was Òsàgíóbárré that they carried away” | | | | | | | |
| (c) | *[òsà] | né | íràn | [gíóbárré] | kpá | | | |
| | Name | that | they | VP | ‘away’ | | | |
| (d) | *[gíóbà] | né | íràn | [òsà] | mú | [] | [ré] | kpá |
| | VP | that | they | name | carry | pt. mk | away’ | |
| (e) | *[giobarre] | né | íràn | [òsà] | mú | [] | kpá | |
| | VP | that | they | name | carry | away | | |

In example 12(a) above, there is no extraction; the extraction in 12(b) is the entire derived word (in this case EPN) which shows that nominalization is truly a syntactic phrase. The reverse is the case in examples 12 (c-e). This

shows that no part of the nominalization can be extracted. This supports Pulleyblank and Akinlabí's claim for Yorùbá that no element internal to a word can be moved by a syntactic operation.

Further syntactic evidence is pronominal and anaphoric binding. In this case, Edo names constitute an island; therefore, it is impossible to replace the nouns within the names with pronouns or even replace the pronouns with names. They may be accepted in the context of phrases and/or sentences which are identical to the names but not in the context of Edo names when they are considered as words. Consider the following:

13. (a) (...Pronoun) X^0
 (b) (...pronoun...)

In 13 (a) it is shown that, while it is possible to have pronouns within the configuration, the model does not allow pronouns to occur within the category of level X^0 . Consider the examples below:

14. (a) Òsàíkhíwúomwàn "God does not keep malice with any person" (as a name)
 (b) *éíkhíwúomwàn "he does not keep malice with anyone"
 (c) *Òsàíkhwúòzò "God does not keep malice with Òzò"

Example 14(b) shows that it is prohibited that pronoun *e* be replaced with Òsà 'God'. In example 14 (c) a name Òzò cannot replace a first person plural pronoun *mwán*. In both cases, it makes the word ill-formed. If we accept the fact that Edo names are derived words of which the structural input is phrasal, then the possibility of having pronouns replacing nouns or vice-versa does not arise. But it is possible in the phrase that corresponds to nominalization for pronouns to replace nouns or vice-versa. This is illustrated below:

15. (a) Òsà í mú òhú ònwán
 God neg. carry malice person
 "God does not keep malice with anyone"
 (b) *e í mú òhú ònwán
 "he does not keep malice with anyone"

- (c) *Òsà í mú òhú Òzó
 “God does not keep malice with Òzò”

Furthermore, while modifiers or determiners alike can be inserted in the phrases when there are additional information is to be given, this cannot be done with personal names that are considered to be single morphological unit. Let us consider the following:

	Personal names	Ordinary S/NP
16 (a)	Òsàhón Òsà hón God hears	Òsà hón èbáàn “God hears now”
(b)	*Òsàhónèbáàn *‘Name’ ‘now’	
(c)	Òkúnpólò “Ocean is great” Ocean big/plenty	mwán òkún kpòlò our ocean plenty “Our ocean is great”
(d)	*mwánòkúnpólò	
(e)	Ògúnbó “One that the god of iron has favoured”	ònà Ògún bó this god favour
(f)	*ònàògúnbó	“God of iron has favoured this”

The above examples, 16. a, c, and e, indicate that as many as other elements can be introduced in ordinary sentences, such is not possible for construction that have been nominalised as personal names in Edo as can be seen in 196. b, d and f above. Additional elements like *èbáàn*, *mwán* and *ònà* that are inserted in these derived words make them ill-formed.

Another syntactic evidence which shows that Edo personal names are words derived out of syntactic phrases is their behaviour with modifiers. Consider these examples below:

17. (a) Ògúsóyén mwén khérhé
 name small
 “Ògúsóyén is small”

Whereas, it is possible for modifiers to modify Edo personal names that are

considered single morphological words, the same is not possible of the corresponding phrases or sentence. Also consider these:

18. (b) àwà khérhé
dog small
- (c) Ògúnámèn khérhé
'name' 'small'
- (d) *Ògún àmèn khérhé
"the comfort from Ogun is small"
- (e) Òbáyágbòn né kágúnkángún
name is tall and thin
"Òbáyágbòn is tall and thin"
- (f) *Òbá yàán àgbón yé kágúnkángún
'king posses world at tall and thin
- (g) Òbásùwàré gùnú
name shut up
"Òbásùwàré kept quite"
- (h) *Òbá zé ùwá rré gùnú
king choose wealth acquire shut up

In example b, above, *khérhé* 'small' qualifies the underived word *àwá*. This is also the case with examples 18c, e and g where names as words are qualified with *khérhé*, modified with *kágúnkángún* and qualified with *gùnú* respectively. However, it is impossible for the corresponding phrases in 18 (d), (f) and (h) to be treated in similar way. The examples below also demonstrate the fact that it is possible for these names to be replaced with pronouns when necessary.

19. (a) ò yé khèrhé "it is small"
(b) ò gùnú "keep quiet"

The above are the pronoun forms of the examples c and g respectively.

Furthermore, these names can be modified by another name in Edo. When this happens, the nominal modifier becomes genitive. Consider the examples below:

20. (a) Ògúnámèn né òkpè
name wine tapper

- “Ògúnámèn the tapper”
 (b) Òmómòsé né òha
 name bride
 “Òmómòsé the bride”
 (c) Òtamere né n’àkpà
 name fool
 “Òtamere the fool”
 (d) Àímíémíén né èwòè
 name follower
 “Àímíémíén the follower”

The following undermentioned corresponding constructions to the above are all ill-formed.

21. (a) *Ògún àmén né òkpè
 god of iron water the tapper
 (b) *Omo mú òsé né òhá
 child carry beauty the bride
 (c) *Òtà má eré né àkpà
 enemy good profit the fool
 (d) A i mie ne e mien né èwòè
 Nom. prefix. neg. see the pron see the follower

Another syntactic evidence to show that names are words that cannot be broken down into pieces is that they are referentially opaque to any external elements. It is not possible to refer to any of its component parts in isolation. As with other nominalised words in the language, we assert here that it is practically impossible to refer to any part of a personal name in Edo; rather, reference can only be made to a whole component of a personal name. (cf: Yassim 1997, p. 96). Let us consider these examples:

22. (a) ì hèén ghé Òsàródíón ghá gwán vbé á ghá nó ó
 I know that Òsàródíón will talk if he is consulted.

The pronoun 'he' *òrén* in the above sentence is referring to the entire component *Òsàródíón*. Both *Òsà* 'God' and *Ordion* 'elder' in the name under reference are opaque. The pronoun *òrén* cannot therefore refer to either of the two nouns in the names. If it happens, however, the construction that will be generated will be ill-formed.

23. (b) **ì hèén ghé Òsá; Ordion ghá gwán vbé a gha nó òré.*
 I know *ghé* name; name will talk if he is to consult
 "I know God; elder will talk if he is consulted".

The morphological evidence for the claim that Edo names are words is obvious when we consider that Edo, just like other natural languages, undergo morphological processes. In the language as we mentioned in chapter four above, some word formation processes like, compounding; reduplication; affixation; and so on are very productive in the language. The assumption is that these morphological processes can only derive a word level category. It is therefore possible for some word derivational prefixes to derive a single word from almost any verb phrase without regards to its internal structure. Most of these verb phrases used as stems for nouns (names) are obtainable only after the operation of syntactic transformations like deletion, adjunction, and replacement for relativization, etc., (Ekúndayò, 1976; Adéníyì, 1997).

We will conclude this section by saying that both morphophonological processes are optional in sentences and phrases while they are mandatory for their personal names counterparts.

4. Conclusion

We have attempted in this work to look at the Edo language with particular reference to the sociology of Edo names. In it, we observed that Edo, just like most other African names attach a lot of importance to naming in its society. The people are of the belief that whatever name or names a child bear will in the long run have lasting effect on the child. Because of this, they are always very careful in what ever name they give to the child. We also looked at the various reasons that motivate these names that are given to these children on the eight days when they are to be given the names. Finally, we provide evidence that Edo names are words that are productively derives from phrases and sentences. Furthermore, mentioned those distinguished factors

between names and sentences and phrases in the language. In conclusion, the work also showed clearly that Edo names are abridged versions of syntactic structures which lexicalize peoples' folk-psychology and their language morphological structures as previously observed by earlier Yorùbá.

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Making good tasks better: Fundamental concerns

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This paper deals with the fundamental issues to be considered in task design within a communicative framework. It starts with examining the definitions of *task* in order to come up with a more comprehensive one for tasks design purposes. It is argued that making informed decisions in task analysis, selection, and design, in addition to merging of its psycholinguistic and communicative rationales, requires accounting for its pedagogical and educational values beyond the standardized language classroom. This issue has not been seriously considered in task design. Accordingly, aspects of the pedagogical and educational value of tasks as an important task design issue is discussed through two sample tasks and raising several key questions with regard to each. These questions relate to the extent to which a task has educational values beyond language learning, degree of learner involvement and personal contribution, the origin of the task-related ideas, teacher/learner roles, meaningful and purposeful language, task staging, and finally the extent to which task performance can create a unique rather than a standardized classroom.

Key words: Task; Task design; EFL; Educational value

1. Introduction

Tasks are basic building blocks in any language learning activity from either a language acquisition or a communicative perspective. Essentially, 'task' is viewed as an important construct by SLA researchers and language teachers. It is both a means of eliciting samples of learner language for research purposes and an instrument for organizing the content and methodology of language teaching (Prabhu 1987). To contextualize this paper, we discuss task design issues within the framework of task-based language teaching. The overall purpose of task is facilitating language learning and ultimately letting learners perform in a way which is in/directly similar to the target language use. Language learning tasks can be either 'target' tasks (similar to the ones used in the real world the outcome of which maybe non-linguistic) or 'pedagogical' which refer to language use transferred to the classroom context (Nunan, 2006).

2. What is a task?

There are many definitions of tasks in different disciplines, a clear-cut definition of which has turned into an issue in itself (Bruton 2002). Task definitions range along a cline of assumptions, which do not entail communicative purpose to those that involve communicative purpose to only those activities that involve communication (Littlewood, 2004). For example, Williams and Burden (1997) define task as “any activity learners engage to further the process of learning a language” (p. 168). Similarly, Breen (1987) defines task as any range of learning activities “from simple and brief exercises to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem-solving or simulations and decision making” (p. 23). Communicative purpose is not an essential criterion whatsoever in these broad definitions. Similarly, Long (1985), taking a non-technical perspective, defines task as the hundred and one things people do in everyday life for themselves or for others, freely or for some reward the completion of which may sometimes not involve language use whatsoever. Thus, painting a wall would be an instance of task here where no language is actually used. This definition is certainly not a pedagogical one. Other researchers’ definitions conceive of tasks as communicative exercises which “provide opportunities for relatively realistic language use focusing the learners’ attention on a task, problem, activity or topic, and not on a particular language point” (Stern, 1992, pp.195-196). This definition refers to task as an activity that involves some communication. Yet, other researchers argue “tasks are always activities where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome” (Willis, 1996, p. 23, my italics for emphasis). This statement defines task exclusively in terms of only activities that involve communication. If an activity does not have a communicative purpose, it is called ‘exercise’ (Ellis, 2000). Nonetheless, task vs. exercise/non-task distinctions is limiting. That is, the status of the range of activities between task and exercise, like information-gap tasks which have proven very helpful for contextualizing language items (Pica, 2005), is yet unknown for many teachers and thus a source of ambiguity. Nonetheless, the definition proposed here shares some common features with the above definitions. That is, tasks are instances of communicative language use in which the users’ attention is focused on meaning rather than form. Tasks should have a sense of completeness, i.e. they need to stand alone as a communicative act, and thus have a coherent and unified beginning, core part, and ending. The learner

should have an active role in task performance and even in task design. Finally, meaning and form are closely related. In fact the role of linguistic 'form' in task-based pedagogy is another important issue. The more focus on form (e.g., in substitution drills, or so-called 'enabling exercises') increases, the more focus on meaning (e.g., creative discussion, called 'communicative task') decreases and vice versa (Littlewood 2004). Of course, we can have other less communicative or more communicative tasks alongside this form-meaning continuum. For instance, limited question and answer is more form-based, while creative role-play is more communicative and meaning-based. The purpose of communicative tasks is to bridge the gap between classroom practice and the outside classroom reality.

We realize that task definitions vary depending on the extent to which they hold a communicative purpose and demand learner involvement. When we look at tasks along a continuum from non-communicative to pre-communicative to authentically communicative, the compartments along this continuum shade into each other, and thus their degree of 'taskness' vary depending on the degree of learner involvement with form and meaning. The more learner involvement with meaning negotiation, the more task-based and less form-focused it is. Contrarily, the less learner involvement with meaning, the less task-based and thus the more form-based it is.

Discussions of tasks mainly focus on some key features which distinguish an event as 'task' from another as 'exercise', or 'activity'. To be called a 'task', it should be meaning-based, goal-oriented, outcome-evaluated, and real-world related. For example, in a simple task about pupils' likes and dislikes about food, the learners are trying to convey their tastes of food (meaning-based); they try to discover to what extent their tastes are similar or dissimilar to and from the others (goal-oriented); their success in conveying their tastes for food to others can be a valid outcome; and this discourse can be approximation of an instance in the natural world (real-world related). Other classroom events where there is less learner involvement and more removed from the real world instances (e.g., gap-filling) are instances of 'exercise' than 'task'.

Task design also involves discussions on how to integrate form and content. This integration is done essentially in two ways (Ellis, 2003b). It can be done during the language learning process when learners are engaged in learning subject content (an integrated approach). Here, the focus is mainly on content

and then form is incorporated into the content from the school curriculum. A second approach is similar to a proportional syllabus where we develop two entirely separate modules—a communicative module and a language-based module. The communicative-based module will occupy the most part of the syllabus using unfocused tasks during which no primary attention to form is paid. Later on, in the intermediate or upper-intermediate levels, more time could be allocated to focused tasks during which more attention could be paid to linguistic form (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, functions).

3. Analyzing tasks

In the shift from traditional to communicatively-oriented syllabi, communicative tasks gain primary focus. The communication task itself is central to the curriculum as both necessary and sufficient, i.e. task transaction is assumed adequate to drive forward language development. Accordingly, class time is mainly devoted to 'rehearsing' communicative tasks which the learners wish or need to carry out in the outside world. Thus, an informed analysis of the components of tasks (Nunan, 1993) and the role they play in learners' communicative practice or language acquisition process is warranted. These components are goals, input, activities, teacher roles, learner roles, and setting.

Goals refer to cognitive and affective aspects of the learners' development. They can be real-world or pedagogic. Teacher goals may be implicit or explicit and there may be a conflict between teachers' and learners' goals. For instance, when the task is asking a person's job and whether he likes it, the teachers' goal may be to develop interpersonal skills, learner feedback, etc., but students may only think about a quick performance of the task to satisfy teacher's requirements (Cameron, 1997).

Input refers to what learners work on which may be linguistic (e.g., a reading passage), non-linguistic (e.g., a set of pictures) or hybrid (e.g., road map). Input factors refer to the complexity of the text, grammatical complexity, interestingness, length of the text, prepositional density, text genre, text structure, topic familiarity, etc. For example, Nemeh and Kormos (2001) discovered that familiarizing learners with the structure of the argumentative task (claims, counterclaims, support) can enable them to communicate more successfully in terms of informational content because it frees learners' attentional resources to pay more attention to informational content. Moreover, "Interestingness" of the input, the ability to grab and hold student

attention is assumed to be more important than the practice of specific language points.

Activities refer to what learners will actually do with the input. It can be a means of rehearsal for genuine communicative interaction, of skill-getting through controlled practice, and of gaining accuracy and fluency in language development.

Learner factors refer to background knowledge, confidence, personality, motivation, learning pace, ability in language skills, cultural knowledge/awareness, and linguistic knowledge. Reda (2000) reports on the low motivation and attitude of the Korean university students. "They were being Koreans by not speaking English" (p. 25). He reports on "how by taking the time to listen to students in a non-structured manner their class behavior became understandable and non-alien" (p.49). Later on, the students moved from 'not trying' to 'trying' to use English to join their peer groups.

Teacher roles refer to teacher function (e.g., as controller, director, counselor, etc.), his degree of control over learning tasks, teacher responsibility as to content and the interactional patterns between teacher and learners (Richards & Rogers, 2001). Rogers and Freiberg (1994) report on how their role as a counselor changed the whole atmosphere of the learning: "if I was truly myself with them, if I tried to understand them as they felt and perceived themselves from the inside, then a constructive process was initiated (p. 43).

Setting refers to the classroom arrangements specified or implied on the task, whether the task is to be carried out wholly or partly outside the classroom (Nunan, 1993). Some conditions in the classroom setting need to be improved to allow for learning to take place so that learners cannot avoid trying to use the language.

4. Designing tasks

Initial selection of tasks is carried out with reference to learner goals and theories of learning. Grading and sequencing are carried out with reference to priority of learner needs and notions of difficulty. Determining difficulty, of course, is a major problem because of the host of factors involved in task design (task, learner, and methodology) as well as the interplay of these for which research seems not to have a definitive answer so far (Ellis, 2003b). Research into learners' performance on tasks essentially identifies task

complexity (attentional and reasoning demands imposed by task structure), task difficulty (learner-related factors), and methodological procedures (e.g., task planning/repetition) as determining factors on learners' performance (Ellis, 2003a). Task characteristics involve:

1. **Input:** input medium (pictorial, written, oral); linguistic complexity (high-low frequency vocabulary, simple/complex structures); cognitive complexity (abstract/concrete information, number of the information elements and their structure, here and now /there and there reference, and the degree of topic un/familiarity).
2. **Task conditions:** participant interaction (one-way/two-way); task demand (single/dual task demand); and discourse mode (monologic/dialogic).
3. **Processes:** cognitive operations (exchanging opinions/information) and the number of stages to be followed to perform each (few/many steps); and the scope (closed/open)
4. **Outcome type:** Oral, written, open, and the discourse mode of it (argumentation, narration, description, etc.).

The other indices of difficulty are learner characteristics which we discussed above, as well as teaching methodology which refers to how the task is presented and worked on, i.e. pretask planning; core task performance, and follow-up. Furthermore, once we merge form into content, then considerations of form sequencing in addition to task sequencing come to the fore. Thus, it seems that grading tasks cannot follow a precise and clear-cut procedure but rather must proceed intuitively in accordance with an assessment of task complexity informed by the criteria considered above and by the designer's experience of how particular groups of learners respond to different tasks. As Prabhu (1987) points out "no syllabus of generalized tasks can identify or anticipate all the sources of challenge to particular learners" (p. 89). Moreover, Skehans' (1998) research on learners' task performance in terms of accuracy, fluency, and complexity reveals that no single, general measure of task performance can be used to determine whether one task is more complex than another. A task may be difficult in terms of one aspect of language use (e.g. accuracy) but relatively easy in terms of another (e.g. fluency).

Considerations of task design start from how well different task types support the enterprise of language learning, their fit with learner needs, and the

learning outcomes they are likely to produce. The point is that the usefulness of a task is determined by its potential to contribute to learning processes and not by its relationship to the content of the curriculum because focus on content is based on being able to predict learning outcome, while focusing on process allows the learners to make their own interpretations of tasks.

4. The value and dimensions of good tasks

To construct good tasks or make good tasks better, upgrading their educational value in an educational context gains major priority. Some attempts have been made to come up with the indices of good tasks. For example, Nunan (1993) tries to develop a questionnaire to determine the goodness of tasks based on the judgments of the participants. Additionally, Candlin (1987) argues that good tasks should among other things:

- promote attention to meaning, purpose, and negotiation.
- draw objectives for the communicative needs of learners.
- allow for flexible approaches to the task, offering different routes, media, modes of participation, and procedures.
- allow for the co-evaluation by the learner and the teacher of the task.
- promote awareness about input and learning processes
- ensure cost-effectiveness and a high return on investment.

Nonetheless, for the present researcher what is missing from the discussions on features of good tasks is the extent to which task completion contributes to the learners' cognitive and personality development, and has wider educational values beyond the language classroom. In task-based instruction, the accomplishment of the task is the focus rather than the language used (Willis, 1990). However, the actual purpose of the task performance is not really the outcome but enhancing the learners' interlanguage, cognition, and personality (Littlewood, 2007). Moreover, on many occasions task completion may not necessarily involve language use. Students are not in a language class to finish a task but rather to improve their language. Thus, "proponents of task-based L2 instruction may need to reconsider completion as a criterion of a language task, since it may not be given high priority by teachers or students in the classroom" (Springer & Collins, 2008, p.56).

To delve into the value issue with tasks, I would like to refer to two tasks that can be appropriate for classroom practice. Then, I would try to compare the two tasks in terms of their contribution to cognitive and personality

development and the extent to which they have educational value and thus create a unique learning experience. The first one is about new film releases to watch and the second one a question poster about weather condition.

Task1. New releases to watch

Students work with their partners. One has some information on a card about the new film releases published in the local tabloid. The other student asks about the information his partner has.

or

Task2. A weather map

The students look at the map of their country and learn about the names of the country provinces/states on it. Then, the teacher draws a sketch of the map on a blank poster in the middle of which he writes 'What's the weather like in your city?' in a circle, and draws straight lines out towards the different angles of the map. Then, he asks the students to raise their OWN questions about weather conditions in different provinces/states, and he writes them horizontally alongside the straight lines. He asks the students find the answers to the questions through asking their peers, their parents, checking the answers on the net, referring to encyclopedias, watching news, etc. Finally, he seeks the answers in later lessons in 10 minutes or so, and he or a student writes the answers in simple English on the board next to the questions raised.

Comparing the two tasks, we need to answer the following major questions about each:

4.1. What is the aim of the task?

The aim of the 'film release' task seems to be to maximize the scope of the communication task rather than begin with integral pedagogical purposes like collaboration and communication. On closer inspection, we find the aim of the first task as purely a language-based one, i.e. to provide practice in question forms. As for the second task, we notice that the answers will be different. We can see that the aim of the task goes far beyond language learning because while the students are practicing language, they are also developing wider educational abilities: drawing on their own knowledge,

making questions and researching, collaborating and negotiating with others. So, rather than devising a task, and then attaching a purpose to it (the first task), it is more appropriate to start with a pedagogical purpose and then design a task (Bruton, 2002.). The poster task was actually produced by the learners with a specified purpose in their minds and then was reconstructed through various activities. That is, purpose precedes action. As Bruton argues “purposes should be the precursor to the selection of particular input and classroom procedures” (p. 281).

4.2. Is the task meaningful and purposeful?

In a communicative approach, we can have some information gap exercises (as in task one) which involve the use of meaningful language. Nonetheless, such exercises do not necessarily entail a purposeful language for a learner (e.g. an educational purpose of enjoyment which is personally significant and relevant to his world), and may not let him grow autonomous. The purposes may be non-linguistic (express opinion, study and research a topic, make a map, etc.). Educational purposes also involve empowering the learner. As Williams and Burden (1997) rightly argue activities need to “empower learners to take control, to become autonomous, and to become better language learners” (p. 180). Thus, the purpose needs to transcend beyond the here-and-now and learners need to be made aware of the way in which the task will have wider relevance beyond the immediate time and place. In addition to a language focus, the weather map task has also educational value since the students will be learning many other things at the same time: library skills, working with others, formulating hypotheses, and so on. These points are missing in the first task. Thus, in addition to creating meaningful language, tasks need to create purposeful language which is pedagogically more valuable.

4.3. Where do the ideas and language come from?

The first task is quite tightly structured and all of the ideas in it are provided by the role cards given to the students. That is, all the learners have to do is simply apply the grammatical rules they have been learning in order to produce questions. The ideas and language are mainly given by the task (‘task-supported’ learning). However, in the poster task, the ideas and the language are mainly provided by the learner (task-based). Thus, they have value even if students are already proficient in question forms.

4. 4. How personally involving is the task?

In task one, the level of personal involvement is minimal, therefore quite low. We can say then that the task produces what Littlejohn (1997) calls a 'standardized classroom'. In the latter task, the learners take control of the task rather than being controlled by it through constructing their own individual answers that may be different from others. So each learner will have their own particular language learning experience. Learners are also personally involved, since it is their questions which are the focus and their answers which are important. Thus, the question poster task is likely to produce a 'unique classroom' in which the outcome of the task will change depending on who the students are. This is in contrast with the standardized classroom of the film release task which takes very little account of who the students are, their culture or their host country.

4.5. What happens to what the students produce?

When the film task is over, the task impact and the precise details of it can be forgotten. It seems like a one-shot effort which is done and over when the practice ends. The poster task, however, completed through learner contributions, can serve as a valuable input for further practice in other courses. It is also an example of a collective educational effort on the part of all those who took part in constructing it.

4.6. What is the role of the teacher and the learner?

We notice that in the film task the students hardly think at all since all the students have to do is apply a grammatical rule to make questions or read information from the cards, but in the weather-map task the students supply almost everything. Moreover, there is a lot of control over what the students say in what order, and how they work. In the weather map task, there is still some control in that the students must ask questions about weather conditions, and some control over how they produce questions and find the answers, but the task gives the students a lot more freedom.

The teacher's role in the film release task is like that of a 'language policeman' or monitor checking that the students are producing correct language, while in the latter task, the teacher's role changes to one of supporting the students and helping them to say what they want to say. This means that "every time the class does the task, the outcome will be different; the task produces a 'unique classroom' shaped by unique individuals who are in it" (Littlejohn

1997, p. 4). A successful teacher understands the learning potential of every task. This is underpinned by his knowledge of English language learning and language use. If the teachers guide the learners and take account of their element of control over tasks and their insight into their learning, it could be a great step forward to empower teachers to undertake their own professional development in selecting tasks and guiding their pupils.

4.7. To what extent does the task have educational value?

As for the value of tasks beyond language learning, we can place their value along the two sides of a continuum (Littlejohn 1997). On the one side are the language specific goals in which the students will mainly be learning the language. So, if these students are already proficient in the language area of the task, then the task will have little value. On the other hand, we have wider educational goals which means that even if the students are proficient in the language area of the task, the task will still have some value. Looking at tasks in this way, we can improve a task if we can give it educational value beyond language learning by using more educational content or by making students explore answers through different channels as in the weather map task.

4.8. Is the task staged?

To increase the language learning potential of a task, teachers need to break it down into manageable parts so that they can fully avail of its language learning potential in each stage. Each stage's language focus may be different from the other stage. Lack of precision and clarity in stating the goals of the task may cause inadequate learner preparation, then minimal pupil participation in the core stage, and abandoning of a task and thus switching to a different activity (Cameron 1997). In the Weather map task we can have a prep stage where the focus is on vocabulary and concepts, a core activity stage with a focus on the task, and a follow-up stage of role-playing or fluency practice.

The theory of task-based learning assumes that tasks stretch, challenge and put the linguistic knowledge of the learners to the test. To accomplish this objective, we believe that discussions of task design and implementation, in addition to psycholinguistic and socio-cultural considerations, would need to take the wider educational value of the tasks into account. This requires practitioners, researchers, and syllabus designers become more seriously

concerned with the issues of accountability and empirical evaluation of different task design parameters.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we tried to discuss some of the issues and concerns that need to be considered by those wishing to incorporate 'task' as a central element in their syllabus design and materials development endeavor. It is apparent that the psycholinguistic motivation for designing and sequencing tasks, which are based on theories and findings of SLA research needs to be supplemented with the communicative real-world rationale for selecting, grading, and sequencing of tasks. Awareness of research from both perspectives can help practicing teachers understand the nature, the scope, and the value of the tasks. This necessitates incorporating a set of strategies into preservice and inservice teacher education programs in order to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to do task analysis. Teachers also need to familiarize themselves with the key components of tasks so that they can make informed decisions. More importantly, in choosing the most appropriate tasks, they need to consider the value of tasks beyond language learning, and promote the educational value of the tasks through greater learner involvement, students' personal contribution, and creating a 'unique classroom'. Therefore, a successful pedagogically relevant program of task-based design and teaching involves merging the findings of psycholinguistic research in planning for good tasks with a socio-cultural perspective that views learners, teachers, and setting as important as the task itself. The latter view also involves 'improvisation' and creativity on the teachers' part. This requires teachers eschew their temptation to adhere to their pre-selected agenda for task selection and design and adopting a more pluralistic view taking the multifaceted nature of tasks into account. Then, they need to spend time analyzing what is required, locate design problems and procedures, and explore various task types, genres, and scenarios (Johnson, 1996). Moreover, task designers need to develop what Johnson calls a 'concrete visualization capacity "which both helps the designer to simulate what learners and teachers would say or think when using the task, and helps them to map out possibilities in a highly concrete way" (p. 130). It may involve designing a questionnaire after the task, analysis of replies, discussing the replies with the class, recording the discussion in a diary and finally finding out what sorts of mismatch arises between teacher intention and learner interpretation.

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The Hidden Curriculum in Children's Literature: The Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

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With the appearance of Rowling's Harry Potter series and their incredible success in the children's world of fiction, various academic readings and analyses of the novels have been made in the last decade. As children's literature contains messages both implicitly and explicitly about social constructions and institutions, there will be tacit teachings on the schooling and learning styles, too, which in the long run can affect the students and even would-be teachers. With reference to previous studies, this essay is intended mainly to analyze the merits and demerits of the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, a school created by Rowling's word magic. Various effective and ineffective teaching practices are mentioned; and different aspects of learning and assessment and their values at the Hogwarts are criticized. Within this educational context, there will be implications for readers of all types: students, parents, teachers, educators and policy makers. Rowling has managed to splendidly portray the role of all participants. Mental and physical training; transfer of one's learning to the real world; peer interaction as a source of learning; a socially motivating competition; leadership; cooperative learning and problem solving situations are some of the issues traceable in these novels. A further implication would be for educators to raise the children's consciousness about these values.

Keywords: Hidden curriculum; Implicit message; Explicit message; Reading comprehension; Transfer of learning

1. Introduction

Joanne Kathleen Rowling published the first *Harry Potter* novel on 30th June, 1997 when no one, including Rowling herself, could imagine what a big success it would be, especially due to the success of the movies and electronic

games made of the original novels as well as the rapid distribution and the effectiveness of global marketing. While the manuscript is said to have been rejected by three British publishers - Penguin, TransWorld and Harper Collins, Bloomsbury Children's Books welcomed the book paying \$14,300 for the rights to the first volume. At a book fair in Italy later that year, Scholastic Books bought the American rights for \$105,000, an unheard of figure for a children's writer with only one book to her name. The sequel - *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* - was published in June 1999, and later that same year, the third book in the series was released, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. By the time her fourth book appeared in 2000 - *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* - the series had become an international phenomenon: the initial print run for her fourth book was 1.5 million copies in the UK and 3.8 million in the US. By 2000, JK Rowling had become the highest-earning woman in Britain, with an income of more than 29 million dollars in the previous year. In March 2001, she was awarded an OBE (Order of the British Empire) by the Queen, for services to children's literature (Southon, 2004).

Three years after the publication of the fourth volume, Potter fans were rewarded for their patience with the release of *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* - launched simultaneously in Britain, the USA, Canada, Australia and in other English-speaking countries at one minute past midnight on 21st June 2003. In Britain alone, it sold 1.8 million copies in the immediate hours following its release; it was estimated that one person in every 28 possessed *The Order of the Phoenix*. In the US, five million copies were sold during the same period. There can be little doubt that Harry Potter is a global literary phenomenon (Bardell, 2005).

2. Review of literature

Rowling conquered the world with *Pottermania*, and various academic readings; various analyses of the Harry Potter novels have been made in the last decade, a few of which are listed here to illustrate the wide range of critics presented so far. While problems in translating J.K. Rowling's novels are not seriously addressed, numerous translations of the works appear day by day in all, including minority, languages. However, a major work quoted in Nygren (2006) is Chaudhuri (2000) who focused on the changes made when translating the British English into American English. While disapproving of this "forced cultural shift" and arguing that the novels be kept in their original language, she believes that the reason for making an American version

(published in the States in 1998) was to make the book user friendly for the American child, sparing him/her any jolt or distress in negotiating alien British terrain. Changes even included the title, so that *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* in Britain became *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* in the USA. There were also vocabulary changes, so that *post* became *mail*, *lorry* became *truck*, *fortnight* became *two weeks*; and going a step further, *crumpets* became *muffins*. Besides, *colour* became *color* and *grey* became *gray* (quoted in Nygren, 2006).

Moreover, the linguistic and stylistic features in them have been the center of emotion to reveal lots of hidden information in these series of novels. Based on the Leech and Short's (1992) framework, Nygren (2006) focused on the stylistics or linguistic features and examined the frequency of reporting verbs, adverbs of manner and adjectives contributing to the depiction of heroic and villainous characters. The presuppositions for Nygren have been that the heroic characters used verbs and adverbs with positive connotations, and the villainous characters used verbs and adverbs with negative connotations, all inspired by the author's quill. Interestingly, the results suggested that the choice of particular verbs and adverbs contributed *only indirectly* to the depiction of the characters, and without context, it was not possible to know if the character was a hero or a villain. By contrast, the choice of particular adjectives did appear to indicate more clearly whether a character was a hero or a villain. Finally, context, rather than the use of particular linguistic features, was suggested as the most important factor in contributing to the portrayal of characters in the novel.

The series has introduced new words into the English language (e.g. muggle, quidditch, etc.) (Booth & Booth, 2003). In a somehow related study, Morris (2001) focused on the etymology of proper nouns in the Harry Potter novels and argued that a character's name can reveal a lot about him or her. Discussing the name of the most malicious wizard, *Voldemort*, Morris explains that the word is made up of parts which explicitly define the character: the morphemes *volde* (taken from old English, is an obsolete version of the word *will*) and *mort* (a term which still exists in modern usage... a word of French origin meaning "dead") (Morris, 2001). He further argues that with these references to death, the combination of the two words *volde* and *mort* "implies a definite characteristic of Voldemort himself. He is the will of death; it is his will that those who oppose him shall die." Having discussed several

proper nouns in the novel, Morris (2001) then contends that the specific use of proper nouns with etymological precedents can be used as a stylistic device to achieve author's ends.

In a deconstructivist study, Mayes-Elma (2005) puts the Harry Potter novels in the focus of her doctoral dissertation and investigates the agency of female characters. Through a critical discourse analysis and a content analysis of the Harry Potter novels, she found the traditional gender constructions of both men and women throughout the text. Active male characters correspond with passive female characters in the background (Mayes-Elma, 2005). She finally concludes that what Rowling presents to the reader in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* is very much in keeping with the dominant discourse on gender: the intelligent take charge of women; women doubt themselves and feel the need to follow men; also, they look for validation from the men in their lives. Focusing on the effect of such literature, she finally presents strategic solutions for the choice of appropriate literature for children and other consciousness raising techniques.

Snir and Levy (2005) investigated the Potterian Economic Model in a critical study. They viewed the public sector as too large and that senior government officials are too busy in rent seeking activities. They also focus on aspects of economy such as government's size and scope, few selected bureaucrats, changes in personnel, superficial reforms, global world order, education and finally conclude that it is not a coherent model that fits neatly one of the standard economic models. Instead, the model appears to combine ingredients from various economic models. For example, many aspects of the Potterian model that emphasize the problems of *inequality* as a shortcoming of the capitalist system have features that remind us of the Marxian model. At the same time, however, the books frequently adopt a public choice point of view by portraying the large Potterian government as infested with rent-seeking bureaucrats who limit the spirit of free entrepreneurship and therefore, the ability of individuals to climb up the social ladder. Also, the Potterian model has a trivial but interesting feature that characterizes a New Keynesian model: the price of the *Daily Prophet* from Rowling (1998) to Rowling (2003) remains rigid at one bronze Knut. Yet, the Potterian economy enjoys full employment, although this may be the result of the government being the main employer who ensures full employment in the traditional Keynesian spirit.

Previous studies tend to fall into various groups: issues of translation (Chaudhuri, 2000 quoted in Nygren, 2006), creation of names (Morris, 2001), a critical discourse analysis of gender relationships (Mayes-Elma, 2005), the linguistic features (Nygren, 2006) and finally a study of the Potterian Economy model (Snir and Levy, 2005); and the scope of the studies are really diverse. While words by themselves or a number of linguistic devices and features do nothing to affect the readers, what is represented to them is but words! Stephens (1999; p. 59) contends that authors intentionally make use of each word to capture the essence of that word to direct its power to a desired end. Bennett (2005), on the other hand, criticizes J. K. Rowling's over-use of adverbs and adjectives and believes that Rowling has intentionally resorted to the abundant use of these elements to convey some extra meaning to her target group of readers.

However, in spite of all the attention given to the literary worth of the novels, there has been very little analysis of the primary locus of the action, the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, as an educational institution. Transactions between Rowling and her readers take place within a complex network of social realities by means of language. Using lexical building blocks and a linguistic cement – the magic register - to convey that desired message to her readers, Rowling is a powerful architect. She creates a school: the Hogwarts! Not out of red bricks but by words alone! Possibly, however, she knew that it was not solely the combination of words which captured the world; rather, the constructions within the work contributed to successful communication. And this is her *word magic*, as Stephens (1999) refers to this potentiality of language in making present the felt experiences of people living in other places and enabling the reader to feel it life-like. Therefore, what counts here, are not the linguistic features but their employment by the author to construct a new society with unique social relationships in children's fiction. In particular, the existing relationships in the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, the norms dominant in this school and their extension to the real world outside the novel may be of more significance.

3. Children's Literature as a Vehicle for Change

Whether we like it or not, whether we intend it or not, what children read or what is read to them in any form of literature will influence their worldviews. Being adults, writers often communicate adult-created messages through

literature to children willing to accept them without reason. These messages will be models of future habits and styles. Other than what parents read to or recommend their children, they are also exposed to school curricula loaded with culturally communicated messages, even from subjects other than literature. According to McLaren (1994; p. 191), the *hidden curriculum* in schools is just as important, if not more so, than the *explicit curriculum*; the hidden curriculum “deals with the tacit ways in which knowledge and behavior get constructed, outside the usual course materials and formally scheduled lessons”. Mayes-Elma (2005) quotes Schmidt (2001) who even insists on children’s literature to be used in schools and in classrooms in order to transform society. By extension, analyzing the hidden curriculum gives us insights into the ideologies and interests that are embedded within our society. Giroux (1983) also reminds us that schools need to critique their hidden curriculum just as they critique, as mandated by law, their explicit curriculum. Educators have a responsibility to do this.

The widespread invasion of Harry Potter books into the children’s world – or even the opposite, i.e. children’s maddening welcome of Harry Potter into their world – has been a cause of concern from a social and educational perspective. In this paper, we will have a critical look at the schooling system in the Hogwarts School where Harry Potter, his friends and teachers are involved in educating children from age 11 to 17. The school itself, its headmaster and the strange curriculum and teaching styles have been the focus of debates.

As children’s literature may contain many messages about gender, race, and class, both implicitly and explicitly, the hidden messages, or hidden curriculum, can contain tacit teachings on the schooling and learning styles, which in the long run can affect the students and even would-be teachers. Therefore, such literature need to be critically deconstructed and “unmasked” so as to prevent further perpetuation of destructive practices and beliefs and to enhance those which are useful. Such deconstruction work can happen on a number of levels: academics as a means to advance theory, teachers as a means to unpack the hidden curriculum, and students themselves a way to learn to “read” the word and to model the good and to avoid the bad. This discussion of the Harry Potter phenomenon, how it has become entrenched in consumerism, and the critiques of Harry Potter to date, shows how this piece has become a cultural icon. Deeper analysis of this widely-read and influential

piece of children's literature is really useful and needed; such deconstructions may be able to make more explicit what is "read" by children and adults alike as they enjoy the magic of Harry Potter.

4. The English school story

Houghton (2000) believes that Harry Potter's immense popularity has conferred cult status on J. K. Rowling's novels, and critics have compared them to classic fantasies and another venerable genre: *the English school story*. There are basic elements to this genre. Normally, the setting is a school for boys or girls; the hero or heroine is usually a new student who feels like an outsider at school. The new student may be a 'scholarship kid' who attended a despised 'village school' rather than a preparatory school or may be a wealthy and privileged child who seems to be 'stuck up.' Sometimes the new student is an orphan or comes from an unhappy home. The new student may also be from Scotland. The arrival of the hero or heroine at school is often complicated in some way. For instance, a teacher or relative, who is supposed to explain the traditions of the school, is prevented from meeting the new student. As a result, the new student inadvertently breaks a school rule upon arrival, a mistake that causes a chain of misunderstandings as the story progresses. In most cases he or she is popular, possessing superior talent, usually athletic, and an open, honorable nature that earns the immediate admiration of nearly everyone at the school and the devoted loyalty of one best friend. In these cases, however, the new student is viewed with suspicion or dislike by at least one teacher. This teacher's mistrust becomes a serious problem when the new student must maintain a secret to protect a friend or dependent. Keeping the secret gives the new student the appearance of acting against the best interests of the school when in fact he or she is trying to save the school from a threatened danger. Sports play an important role in the development of the plot; competition for prize papers or academic honors usually plays a lesser role. The crisis of the plot most often occurs when the hero or heroine becomes dangerously ill, usually as the result of saving the life of another student. At this time all misunderstandings are resolved, and the true worth of the hero or heroine is made clear (Houghton, 2000).

According to descriptions of Houghton (2000), Harry has been brought up by his aunt and uncle, who are Muggles not Wizards, a fact that earns him the derision of his fellow student and arch-rival, Draco Malfoy. Because of his

Muggle upbringing, Harry is completely unacquainted with Hogwarts's customs, such as shopping for his wand and schoolbooks in Diagon Alley or catching the Hogwarts Express at invisible platform nine and three-quarters. Despite his apparently humble background, Harry is the son of the famous wizards Lily and James Potter; as the only survivor of their encounter with the evil wizard Voldemort, Harry finds, when he arrives at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, that he is already something of a celebrity. His fame is not an advantage, however, as he must struggle with his studies and with the enmity of one of his teachers, Professor Snape. Despite these difficulties, Harry enjoys school, discovering that he is an excellent Quidditch player and enjoying, for the first time in his life, the fun of getting into scrapes with his housemates. He earns the loyalty of his friends by standing up for less fortunate students, such as the accident-prone Neville Longbottom, and by rescuing Hermione Granger, who has had reason to dislike him. With the help of the studious Hermione and the chess-playing skills of his best friend, Ron Weasley, he manages to prevent the corrupt Professor Quirrell from getting his hands on the Sorcerer's Stone, saving not only Hogwarts but the entire wizarding world from Voldemort's wicked machinations.

The English school story enjoyed its greatest popularity from the middle of the nineteenth century until the beginning of the twentieth, when the First World War altered forever the way of life recorded on its pages. The girls' stories survived until the middle of the twentieth century, because the girls' schools were established at a later date. During its heyday, the school story might have been formulaic and predictable, but it offered a satisfying experience to its readers, equally believable to children who attended public schools and those who wished to. We don't need to wonder why J. K. Rowling revived such an eminently entertaining genre with her Harry Potter novels. Now we can ask, what is the biggest difference between Hogwarts and the basic fictional schools? Nothing, just Hogwarts is co-ed! The similarity is that Harry's biggest concern is the evil wizard Voldemort, otherwise known as 'He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named' and he must worry about his classes, his teachers, his team practices, and the rivalry between his house, Gryffindor, and its arch-rival, Slytherin at the same time.

5. The Hogwarts

The Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry is a fictional school of magic that is the main setting of the Harry Potter novels by J. K. Rowling. There are

several teachers (called professors), each specializing in a single subject. Some subjects are compulsory, while others are optional. Students are required to add at least two optional subjects to their syllabus beginning in their third year. After taking their Ordinary Wizarding Level (O.W.L.) exams at the end of their fifth year, they decide which classes to continue to the Nastily Exhausting Wizarding Test (N.E.W.T) level for the next two years at Hogwarts. As a fictional school traceable in the real world to somewhere in Scotland (!), the Hogwarts seems to enjoy the features of a real school though different in nature. The curriculum consists of seven obligatory and eight optional courses. Transfiguration, Defence against the Dark Arts, Charms, Potions, Astronomy, History of Magic, and Herbology are the main courses. While, Arithmancy, Ancient Runes, Divination, Care of Magical Creatures, Muggle Studies, Occlumency, Flying, and Apparition are optional.

6. A British school

Within this wizardry school, there are different ages all together in one school. Interestingly, the older ones help take care of the younger ones, and the younger ones learn from the older ones. Harry does not attend a junior high school where all the students are grouped by age. Unlike the U.S. system, which often requires students to make two major transitions -- from elementary to junior high and then to high school -- the Hogwarts (British) model mandates only one institutional change (Booth and Booth 2003) . The fact that Rowling begins her series with Harry's 11th birthday is entirely appropriate for a series that takes place within a British-type school system. That is the year when English pupils make the transition from primary to secondary education. For Harry, this move is especially symbolic, as he not only moves from one educational level to the next but also passes from the world of muggles to the world of wizards. Once Harry enters the second level, he stays there until he is finished with secondary school. Hogwarts is based on the British model. Consequently, the seven volumes planned for the series will neatly see Harry through his secondary years. Therefore, what comes next is a discussion of how this type of schooling will be helpful of harmful to the readers as they will develop a model of school ingredients in their mind to refer to later on in their real lives.

7. Students' scaffolding

Top students lead their groups and if the inexperienced kids need help, they help them. Even though every house works hard together to win

competitions, it is important to have a leader. Learning process through peer interaction, including peer help and evaluation, is dominant. These interactions are especially helpful when there are peers who are older or more knowledgeable to help guide the learning of the younger, less experienced students. It represents a line of thinking similar to that of Lev Vygotsky, who postulated that learning includes a strong social element and is best accomplished when peers are working together to solve a problem. A good example of Vygotsky's concept of "scaffolding" is the British school tradition of prefects, in which more experienced, older peers help younger students throughout the year (Booth & Booth, 2003).

When Harry, Ron, and Hermione entered Hogwarts, they needed regular guidance from the prefects and older students. They needed this guidance in every aspect of student life, including academic work, dining hall behavior, and understanding and mastering the school sport, the *quidditch*. However, as time passed, the three needed less help from the prefects in negotiating the culture of Hogwarts. Nonetheless, the prefects occasionally did attempt to step in when they sensed that the three were unable to extricate themselves on their own.

8. Teachers' scaffolding

Likewise, many of the better teachers provide the social climate necessary for constructivism according to the Vygotskian notion of peer cooperation and teacher/student scaffolding. The examples below illustrate the desire students have to learn in cooperation with one another and to help their peers when they make mistakes (such as blowing things up in the lab). The Vygotskian notion of teacher scaffolding is present in *Professor Flitwick*. He helps the students if they are having trouble. For example, Professor Flitwick understands that Neville always seems to have a lot of problems. So he takes the time to read over the instructions for him and explains it to him in a way that Neville can understand. But then he encourages him and other students to do things right. He even compliments them.

9. Teachers at Hogwarts

Booth and Booth (2003) contend that while the recent emphasis on national exams has forced a more standardized curriculum on schools in England, teachers have historically enjoyed a greater degree of pedagogical freedom in

the classroom than have their European counterparts. This is also the case at Hogwarts, where teachers generally have control over their own classrooms regarding teaching methodology and textbook choice. This can result in high-quality teaching, but it also carries the danger of leaving the quality of instruction open to criticism. It must be noted that the classroom setting is hardly the only place where effective learning happens at Hogwarts. However, there is another aspect to this. Although teachers have the most experience with students and understand their capabilities, they are not involved in the “power” decisions. Often times, teachers are said to have control over their classrooms, but they don’t have control over the curriculum, policies and procedures; and it is the principal who has the veto power; therefore, teachers’ overall control is minimal (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, and Taubman, 2002).

10. Good Teachers and Experiential learning

Professor Sprout is a good teacher because she lets the students experiment on plants. They do not just watch her doing the experiments herself. She always warns them first about the dangers involved with working with the deadly plants. But she still lets them do it even though some of the kids might make some mistakes. *Professor McGonagall* is also a good teacher because even though she is strict, she keeps the class interested by letting them experiment with transfigurations (like turning a match into a needle). She first demonstrates the transfigurations; the students then get a chance to practice. *Madame Hooch*, the physical education teacher, is also good because she lets the students practice the sports for themselves. Even though the students sometimes might not get it right away (like flying broomsticks), she lets them make their own mistakes, sometimes get a little hurt, and figure it out.

Common to these teachers and their teaching styles is the active, constructivist pedagogical approach to learning rather than a more direct instruction. However, the student-centered approach and its benefits for learning are quite complex. First, hands-on experience and real-life activities are vital to learning. Each of these professors gives the students the opportunity to experiment and practice the topics that are to be learned. The students are not given plastic plants or make-believe broomsticks, but real-life materials to be used in real-world situational learning. This approach is

often preferred by students in comparison with the boring, teacher-centered strategies employed by other professors.

The descriptions of the three assumed-to-be-good teachers also illustrate the strengths of both cognitive and social constructivist approaches to the learning process. The benefits of demonstration and modeling as well as notions from social cognitive theory are obvious (Lorin, 2004). Also the need for teachers to provide guidance and cognitive apprenticeship to strengthen the individual skills of their students can be inferred (Booth & Booth 2003). In the novels, it is certainly felt helpful by the readers that a teacher first demonstrates an activity, e.g. turns a feather into a pen; then, as the students experiment with their own wands, animals, potions, and other wizardry devices in the cognitive construction of witchcraft, they can model their actions on what they have observed (Lorin, 2004).

11. Ineffective Teachers

A prejudiced teacher, Professor Snape is often considered ineffective because he is only nice to the students in his house (Slytherin). And if anyone does something wrong, he punishes them by giving them, say, a detention. He does not even let them explain themselves. When Professor Snape teaches, he just talks at the students, on and on, and does not let them say much. He is characterized with several features of poor teaching, some of which have to do as much with attitude and style as with specific pedagogical practices. Ned Flanders (quoted in Booth & Booth, 2003) has discovered in his analysis of classroom interaction that a teacher with an indirect style is one who accepts children's feelings, uses praise and encouragement, and uses pupils' ideas. By contrast, a teacher with a direct style is one who "tends to lecture, to give directions, and to criticize pupils." Research has found that an indirect style leads to a higher level of school achievement and creates a more positive student attitude toward school and academic work. Unfortunately, Snape seems to exhibit all the negative traits of the direct approach to teaching, most notably with his seeming enthusiasm for criticizing his students in a manner intended to wound.

Certainly, not every teacher at Hogwarts manages to successfully engage his or her students in constructivist, meaningful learning experiences. For instance, Professor Gilderoy Lockhart always talks about himself on and on. He even gives his class a quiz about himself. He doesn't really teach them. He

says he's so good, but then he doesn't really know how to do things. Also, Professor Bins is boring, and that is why the students do not like to go into his history class. According to Hogwarts folklore, he has failed to notice that he is dead: he simply got up from his chair in the staff-room one morning and left his body behind. Bins' lessons consist of his own reciting and dictating notes to his students: he does not seem to mind (or notice) that the class rarely pays attention (with the exception of Hermione Granger). All he does is talk on and on. The only time it was exciting was when Hermione asked an interesting question, which shocked the professor because all the students finally listened. Rowling has re-created the stereotypically boring history teacher in Professor Bins, who continues to live so deeply in the past that he "was their only ghost teacher [who] hadn't noticed he was dead" (*Booth & Booth, 2003*). Bins epitomizes ineffective teaching, as his routine has not varied in the slightest since the day he died, and he reads from his notes in a flat drone like an old vacuum cleaner. Bins can be considered as an example of direct but counterproductive instruction. While there is a time and place for the lecture method, good teachers know when to use it, how to alternate it with other teaching methods, and how to craft an exciting lecture that both engages the students and leaves them wanting more.

12. Approaches to learning

Learning happens to be relevant and useful to real life. The three heroes of the series constantly find themselves in the process of discovery learning, in which they experience real problems for themselves and must discover how to solve each one without the aid of teachers or other authorities at school. However, all schools should provide their students with the proper support that will guide them through the "process of knowledge-getting." And in truth, Harry, Ron, and Hermione certainly become experts in the process of knowledge-getting as the stories progress. What Harry, Ron, and Hermione learn in real life (about Voldemort and stuff) is also very important, and they have to do it by themselves. Even though they might learn more important things by solving the big problems in their real lives, they do use the spells that they have learned in class in order to help solve the mystery. As in the second book, they learn about the poly-juice potion. After that they are able to figure out how to transfigure themselves into other people and then secretively find out information. Even though Professor Snape is a bad teacher, they did learn something from him which was useful later. They also

learned levitations, luminations, and the disarming spell, which are just examples of some things they learned in a classroom but then used in real life.

The three heroes exhibit many of the traits that research on cooperative learning has found to be effective. First, each member naturally takes on a specific role within the group. Harry often assumes the role of the leader, but contrary to what Mayes-Elma (2005) believes, he does not monopolize it as all three are equally highly motivated to work and learn. He often reflects on their progress more than do Ron and Hermione, but this is largely because he often has more information than the others and thus is able to think things through productively. Hermione takes on the role of academic investigator or what some researchers refer to as the "coach," as she continuously slips into the library to conduct background research. She also plays the vital role of the tough inquisitor of the other two, in which capacity she steers them (especially Harry) away from serious pitfalls. While Ron frequently employs specific skills, such as his mastery of wizard's chess in the first book, he also very often takes on the role of an "encourager" and is the one who guides the problem-solving process by asking the right questions. This seemingly instinctive group work of Harry, Hermione, and Ron illustrates the concept of cooperative scripting (Booth & Booth, 2003). The real-life problems that this heroic triangle must solve in each book are perfect examples of learning involving problems in real-life settings (real to the wizard world). When the three are faced with a mystery, they naturally take on the investigation as a cooperative activity. While they may have been slow to join forces during the first book, their increasing ease at slipping into their cooperative roles is facilitated by their success at problem solving.

Rowling has ingeniously included within this small group many of the elements that are beneficial in cooperative work. Heterogeneous groups tend to be more successful in developing varied ideas and investigating problems from different perspectives. Harry, Ron, and Hermione's group is mixed in regard to gender, socioeconomic status (one of Ron's most important characteristics is that he is from a low-income family), ethnicity (as demonstrated by the classifications of "pure bloods" and "mudbloods"), and academic achievement (the overachiever Hermione and the average Harry and Ron). The students' varied backgrounds, abilities, and skills contribute significantly to their ability to perform independent work fueled by individual motivation toward the achievement of their group goal.

13. Academic testing

The importance of academic testing at Hogwarts is remarkable. Not only do Hogwarts students spend a great deal of time studying for year-end exams at every grade level, they must also take the standardized Ordinary Wizardry Level exams (O.W.L.s) when they are 15 years of age. These exams, similar to the Ordinary level (O-level) exam in the British system, determine one's access to higher learning and direct students toward particular professions. When *Weasley* twins score on their O.W.L.s less than expected and suffered the consequences both at home and at school, the importance of the exam was made quite clear. But it is not surprising that some students do not like such tests because they feel that they do not really measure one's real abilities. Majority feel that it is better to take tests and compile papers and presentations throughout the course because they test what you just learned on that chapter, but if you wait until later you might forget about it all.

Each house (*Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin*) at Hogwarts is like a family. There is a competition, and there are members in each house to help one another work together to win that competition. The house helps them along the way. This can be considered as a corollary to the multi-age structure of Hogwarts too. The structure of a family succeeds because the wiser, more experienced family members guide the less experienced ones. Furthermore, enthusiasm for fun competition - a system in which everyone works together toward a common goal - is in line with the research on cooperative learning and goal orientation (Lorin, 2004). First, the Hogwarts method of awarding "house points" for individual academic and behavioral achievements is a good example of a group contingency program that motivates all to do well, as all the students of each house benefit from each individual's successes. Hogwarts students realize that individual achievement will also bring rewards and glory to their "house"; likewise, individual failings will hurt the common cause. The students' efforts culminate in the annual awards banquet, at which the house with the most points at the end of the year is honored. Rewarding reinforces a cooperative goal structure that research has shown to contribute to success (Lorin, 2004).

14. Shortcomings of the teaching system

1. Gender bias is found in schools through daily interactions between teachers and students. Sadker and Sadker (1994) found that teachers

interact differently with boys than with girls; teachers call on, help, and ask more probing questions of boys more often than girls. Teachers also expect boys to perform better in math and science; whereas, girls are expected to perform better in reading, writing, and social studies. Miller (1996) stated that teaching in and of itself is gender-sensitive. Not only do teachers treat boys and girls differently, but they are treated more differently than other professionals. Sadker and Sadker (1994) found that teachers expect more from boys than girls; they call on boys more often in school and hold them to higher levels than girls in subjects such as math and science. In the Potterian world, Hogwarts and wizardry is characterized by traditional gender constructions, as our schools are. Teachers, who have traditionally been women, are the ones in schools that enforce the rules, while principals and superintendents, traditionally men, are the ones who *make and break* the rules in schools (Mayes-Elma, 2005). Also, it seems that the book suffers the idea of intelligence bias in that female characters are portrayed as lacking innate gifts. For instance, Minerva McGonagall and Hermione Granger are the main critics of Divination – an optional subject but a complicated one requiring high talents– which deal with predicting the future. Female figures are introduced as those without sufficient intelligence and hence disliking the subject.

2. Critics of the Harry Potter books point out that the main characters who are supposed to be good are consistently and regularly portrayed as breaking ethical rules (often lying, cheating and stealing). They also regularly break school rules against behaviors like going out at night, using magic in the Muggle world, and so on. Such unethical behavior is almost never punished and it's rare for the characters to agonize even a little bit over their decisions. If rules stand in the way of what they want, they break the rules and don't give them a second thought. This, however, is also how the evil characters behave. It's true that the evil characters ignore the rules in order to achieve evil ends (like dominating others), while the good characters ignore the rules in order to achieve good ends (like stopping the evil characters), but their behavior in pursuit of those ends marks them as more similar than is appropriate. A truly good person would follow the rules and use good to stop evil, not behave the same as the evil characters. Evil should not be fought with evil because once you get used to using evil, even for ostensibly good ends, it's hard to stop.

Children who read the books are thus being taught the wrong lessons about ethics and ethical behavior. In fact, the characters themselves use the worse behavior of their evil opponents as an excuse for their own immorality. Rowling is claimed to have made Voldemort, Pettigrew, and the Death Eaters so repulsive that the immoral deeds of Harry triangle have an appearance of benevolence, fun, and virtue. The result is a tacit acceptance of less evil characters as simply good ones. Also there has been a call for banning the books in school libraries on the grounds that they glorify wizardry and are therefore anti-Christian (Cline, n.d.a.).

15. Conclusion

Harry Potter incredibly penetrated into the children's fictional world through Rowling's amazing quill. She used the English School story genre, added her word magic to the world of magic and created a wonderful social institution: the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Target readers are children and adolescents, who are perceived to model what they see and feel in their own way. In addition to the religious and ethical concerns (Cline, n.d.a/n.d.b.) dominant with the appearance of Potter phenomenon, concerns have been voiced on the children's modeling of the Hogwarts norms and its teachers' and students' behavior. In this paper, we started with from the impact of literature on children's worldview, reviewed some important literature and had a close look at the structure of the Hogwarts, a school seeming to be similar to the British school.

In this fictional school, almost everything looks real. But how is it possible? Except for elements like ghost teachers, idiosyncratic creatures and magical transfigurations, the school is a copy of real schools, with nice and caring teachers as opposed to inexperienced boring teachers. Ark (2001) believes that Academics at Hogwarts are a curious mix of practical experience and rote learning. Like a real school, the Hogwarts suffers the top-down decision making system where policy makers – here the Ministry of Magic - are responsible for designing the curriculum and educational policies while teachers are only delivery machines. While the curriculum is dictated to some extent by the Ministry of Magic, each instructor is given considerable leeway in exactly what they teach and how they go about it. Even some of the instructors at Hogwarts are very poor teachers indeed and would never survive in a Muggle school (Ark, 2001). However, despite this kind of top-down dominance, the teaching methodology is far from being uniform; there

are varieties of teaching styles from teaching-centered (e.g. professor *Snape* and professor *Bins*) to student-centered methods (e.g. *professor McGonagal*, *professor Sprout* and *Madame Hooch*). As in other schools, students at the Hogwarts are assessed on their knowledge and magic expertise continuously and cumulatively. Their individual and group progress count for their annual House achievement as well as their individual promotion to upper levels. Also, after taking their Ordinary Wizarding Level (O.W.L.) exams at the end of their fifth year, they decide which classes to continue to the Nastily Exhausting Wizarding Test (N.E.W.T) level for the next two years at Hogwarts.

Within this educational context, there will be implications for readers of all types, from students, parents and teachers, as well as educators and policy makers. Rowling has managed to splendidly portray the role of students. They are shown to be involved in both mental and physical training; they transfer what they have learned to the real world to solve problems. What is stressed throughout the book, however, is the peer interaction as a source of learning from the older experienced peers. Their contributions to the group achievement are appreciated. A socially motivating competition is shown to make them work harder. Therefore, the positive aspects worthy of learning for student readers are, then, group leadership toward a common goal through peer interaction and cooperation in a competitive social climate. Students may transfer their learned knowledge to active problem solving situations in their real life.

However, parents and teachers are to have an active role in informing the readers on how to model good strategies and behaviors and to avoid harmful ones. In the Harry Potter novels, it is claimed that the heroic triangle frequently violate the school rules to achieve their personal ends. This should be explained to students, by teachers and parents alike, that all such misconducts are treated and punished later in the novels. Breaking the rules is forbidden in any form; but the novels are just narratives and informed readers are to follow the story to the end to see how the evil is punished and the good is rewarded. Therefore, the outcomes of such violations are to be highlighted too. Furthermore, parents and teachers are responsible for deconstructing (in Mayes-Elma's 2005 terms) the story and discussing the possible pitfalls from ethical aspects. Ark (2001), however, criticizes the education provided to the students at Hogwarts as a scattered and incomplete

one; students learn Potions and Transfiguration rigorously and completely, studying both the theory and implementation in a carefully planned way. On the other hand, their training in Defence Against the Dark Arts is very inconsistent, with at least one entire school year being taught with no practical lessons at all after the first day, and much of their time in Care of Magical Creatures have been a complete waste, unless they plan to become flobberworm ranchers once they leave school or to work with illegally-bred Blast-Ended Skrewts (Ark, 2001).

Student teachers, in particular, may learn invaluable lesson, while enjoying the fiction, from two opposite types of teachers and their respective treatment of the students. Teachers' core instructional skills, their questioning and feedback, their creativity, flexibility and enthusiasm (Conn, 2002), guiding the students toward meaningful, discovery and cooperative learning through real-life activities (Booth & Booth, 2003), attention to peer interaction and leadership practice within groups, establishing a comfortable social climate to enhance learning, student and teacher scaffolding and finally timely and accurate feedback about the students' performance (Conn & Elliot, 2005) all can be sources of reflective learning for young, ambitious teachers.

Last, but not least, is what remains to educators and policy makers. Teachers are at the forefront of the teaching profession and in direct contact with learners; their understanding and impressions form the learning processes and their experiences from the world of learners will be really invaluable for policy makers to make reforms and for educators to empower their trainee teachers with beneficial techniques and strategies mirrored from the real world. However, all such changes will be possible only if a bottom-up process of information is adopted for decision making, i.e. from learners to teachers and from teachers to the top level decision makers.

In general, Rowling seems to have achieved her success through her talent in writing, knowing the children's world, and using a real magic in constructing a life-like fictional school with a plausible schooling system: its teachers, students, methods of teaching and assessment, and its rough modeling of a real schooling system – the British School. But what she has done is only through the magical use of simple words!

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Assessment in a multilingual world: English as an International Language (EIL)¹

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Although first language theories were applied to ESL/EFL pedagogy with relative success rates, their application to EIL (English as an International Language) does not seem to lead to success for a number of reasons. Firstly, EIL users are of more various sociocultural backgrounds than ESL/EFL users. Secondly, theories of competence and proficiency in EIL are not so mature to be operationalized in language testing. However, rudimentary but valuable steps are taken in this regard especially through empirically-based studies (e.g., Seidlhofer (2001), Mauranen (2003) and Jenkins (2000)). In order to find a fair, scientifically reliable and valid basis for assessment, the aim of EIL, its diversity range and a proficiency model applicable to most, if not all, EIL users must be established before we develop an assessment model for a multilingual world.

Keywords: English as an International Language (EIL); Assessment; Multilingual world

1. Introduction

Researchers all agree that changes in curricula would not come about unless complete revisions occur in global tests, thus stressing the role of assessment in ELT—including EIL. And the major dilemma here is convergence to the Native-Speaker model, which cannot be denied as a valid model for most EIL

¹ This paper has been recognized as the Most Stimulating Perspective on the Role of Assessment in a Multilingual World by the University of Cambridge ESOL/ALTE 3rd International Conference, Cambridge (10-12 April 2008).

speakers (Ketabi and Shomoossi, 2007; Lyldyz, 2007). Although this model is considered a barrier for successful EIL communications by its sociocultural richness, the core of the language is likely to minimize and get vastly out of control without the NS dominance over the systems of grammar, lexis and pronunciation. However, overemphasis on the correct grammar and pronunciation in ELT examinations (Jenkins, 2006) has been a threat for EIL users, who are potentially able to communicate even with superficial flaws in their speech. The fact is that almost all NSs have occasional slips of tongue and pen in their production while they find it difficult to tolerate typical non-native speech. But the focus should be on successful communication as the aim of interactions.

In such cases, it is not surprising to see two NNSs communicating with one another successfully when one says, "*Two coffees*" and the other bring him "*two cups of coffee*". But NS-NNS communication stops when the utterance of "*John kicked the bucket*" baffles the NNS, while John died yesterday and not able to kick--an example of *linguicism* (Ammon, 2000). Such participant creativities are expected from EIL users. This bears a double-sided problem with bearings for NSs:

- First, the NS language should be adjusted to accommodate NNS creativity;
- second, NSs should be more tolerant of EIL users' divergent errors.

2. Argumentation

A testing dilemma also appears for designers and teachers. What should be privileged in tests: the success of communication or the testees' convergence to NS norms? No doubt, the latter will bias the NS community, while the number of NNSs sidelines them as a minority in the global context.

So what can examination boards do? Is a sudden change needed in their views of language proficiency? Do they have to ignore the English as Native Language (ENL) and abide by the unmanageable variations of EIL? Do they have to start a new enterprise of extensive exporting English teachers, textbooks, and testers? Do they have to research large corpuses of EIL samples from all over the world? Jenkins (2006) proposes a corpus-based approach to solve the problem but that is not possible in the short run;

neither in the long run can it work since the changes you register today will alter tomorrow due to the fast unmanageable nature of EIL encounters.

However, as a humanistic approach, the core of the English language can be preserved to avoid its pidginization; also, studies can be conducted to explore (relative) universals of communication strategies (Jenkins, 2006) (e.g., speech acts applicable to various cultures). Raising intercultural consciousness can also be carried out to enhance the information interlocutors have of one another (e.g., Cummins' 1980 BICS). The final product will be *localized sociocultural norms and values plus core English*, which all move towards a unified EIL under the wing of *English* as far the grammar and phonology are concerned. Under these circumstances, the ultimate focus of assessment can be *achieving mutual intelligibility*.

Another advantage of such a model is its theoretical basis (e.g., Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983), where competence is divided into four categories: (a) grammatical, (b) sociolinguistic, (c) discourse, and (d) strategic. Absence of a *unified and well-governed* linguistic competence can lead to diversity rather than unity unless the linguistic competence is controlled by a NS-governor. While Nunn (2005) warns us of the potential for neglecting the linguistic competence in EIL settings, users' linguistic competence can be controlled with strategic NS supervisions over the EIL enterprise—the case might seem imperialistic but the outcome is far from it after one or two decades!

By the same token, the problem of teaching which *World English* (Iyldyz, 2007) would no longer arise, like the choice made between the US or UK English which are different but none inferior to the other. The problematic area for testing EIL, however, lies in the *sociolinguistic* competence which is of higher variation; the other three competences may be included in language test batteries with democratically stated objectives. This requires educating both NSs and NNSs in using universal strategies and adjusting their language with their interlocutors.

The important point might still be the fairness of test tasks: to abandon the *heretic NS competence* in favor of the *EIL competence*. Since score are often given on the basis of performance - imperfect realization of competence—test tasks should be designed in a way that target-language-use (TLU) tasks are the nearest simulations of EIL contexts rather than copies of ESL/EFL tasks.

Also, variety of tasks with reasonable complexities should be designed by powerful test designers to cater for a variety of testees. Performance assessment and the issue of validity must be reconsidered to achieve the highest levels of democracy for stakeholders in testing. Such considerations are expected to have reasonable impact and washback too. Authenticity of EIL test tasks also requires a comprehensive analysis of the widely varying real-life tasks assigned to EIL users. Minimizing the distance between test tasks and the real-life tasks can be considered as a primary goal. This can also guarantee the consequential validity of the tests to some extent. Such analyses would help in constructing a model of *EIL competence and proficiency* as well as in developing curricular or content validity.

3. Conclusion

In sum, the success of assessment in a multilingual world with an emphasis on testing EIL may benefit from *maintaining the core English and supervision of NS-boards* over EIL development. It can also motivate *changes in curricula and textbooks* which stress successful *communication* as the final aim in EIL encounters. Researchers may also focus on the periphery to *investigate the nature of EIL competence*; otherwise, EIL will move out of control. Finally, it should be reminded that this much assertion in providing solutions expects controversy, characteristic of scholarly research.

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