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## Vocabulary Recall Improvement through Acronyms: A Case Study of Iranian Advanced EFL Learners



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### Abstract

#### Available online

#### Keywords:

Acronym,  
EFL Learners,  
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Strategy, Memory  
Strategy,  
Vocabulary Recall

This study aimed at investigating the effects of using acronyms on improving vocabulary recall among Iranian EFL learners. To this aim, 20 advanced EFL learners were selected and randomly assigned to two groups; namely, experimental and control. The data collection instruments were a vocabulary test consisting of some multiple-choice items and a questionnaire for exploring the participants' perceptions of using acronyms for improving vocabulary recall. Eighty target words chosen from a textbook entitled, *General English Language* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), authored by Jafari, were also provided as the materials of the study. The vocabulary test was administered to the participants as pretest and posttest prior to and after the treatment. The findings revealed that using acronyms had a significant effect on improving vocabulary recall among the learners in the experimental group. Moreover, the participants in the experimental group had positive perceptions of the effects of using acronyms on improving vocabulary recall. The findings of this research are beneficial for those who are concerned with English learning and teaching including learners, teachers and researchers.

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## Introduction

During the past three decades, the world has experienced different radical changes. These changes cover a wide range of political, technological, social, and cultural changes respectively. These changes lead people to new needs in order to be adapted to new conditions. The language learning and teaching is one of the most important requirements which have been produced due to these changes. Certainly, the second or foreign language plays a significant role in today's world and affects people's lives. People all over the world are trying to learn English as a second or even a third language in order to study at an English medium university or living in a foreign country (Kafipour & Yazdi, 2014).

Moreover, knowledge of words and their meaning is a crucial component of language proficiency for both first language acquisition and second language learning (Alipour, 2020; Salehi, 2017). In fact, "vocabulary knowledge plays a basic role in acquiring other skills of each language" (Fakher Ajabshir, 2011, p. 46). According to Salehi and Jafarigohar (2011, p. 125), "foreign or second language learners may use different strategies to acquire the vocabularies in the target language. Given the importance of this fact, language researchers have sought to classify vocabulary learning strategies applied by foreign and second language learners". Therefore, there is a need to use the most efficient memory strategies for vocabulary recall.

One way for improving vocabulary recall among EFL learners is using memory strategy. According to Salehi and Jafarigohar (2011), "memory strategy instruction is an essential part of any foreign or second language program. There are a large number of mnemonic strategies depending on how they are classified, and their possible range extends beyond the learning of vocabulary" (p. 123). Moreover, Zheng (2010) stated that students of different levels use strategies in different ways. Advanced learners are more creative and have a better and more solid knowledge in vocabulary. Students at low levels are more limited in their usage of vocabulary knowledge. In fact, Rahimy and Shams (2012) suggested that "Memory strategy use was portrayed both in short and long-term retention. The next most frequently used strategies were cognitive and compensation strategies respectively" (p. 145). On the other hand, "some of the most popular mnemonic strategies are pegs, imagery, loci, acronyms, physical response, rhymes, keywords, spatial grouping, chaining, acrostic, and image-naming" (Salehi & Jafarigohar, 2011, p. 123).

Fazeli (2010) claimed that “pedagogically assumed abbreviations and acronyms in learning and testing of vocabulary procedures can be developed in order to have easier and better learning and longer retention of meaning aspect of vocabulary learning procedure for the learners” (p. 411). Izura and Playfoot (2012) conducted a study in relation to the use of acronyms for vocabulary recall ability on 120 learners. The results of their study showed that using acronyms was a useful process for better vocabulary recall.

### Literature Review

According to Yeates (1999), “acronyms are a type of abbreviation made up of the initial letters or syllables of other words” (p. 1). In fact, Yeates (1999) suggested that “acronym lists are available from a number of sources, but these are static; they list acronyms current in some domain at the time of compilation or officially in use in a domain or organization” (p. 2). As Hock and Noice (1987) stated, “letters in briefly presented masked letter strings were detected more accurately when the strings were three-consonant acronyms than when they were non words” (p. 485).

Since the acronyms are found in the text with their definitions, the probability that they are correct is quite high; they can be used to build a database of acronyms automatically and locate instances of these acronyms in the current document or other documents. These extracted features can also be used to enhance retrieval and/or identify associations and relationships to be used for a hypertext browsing system (Gilbreth & Taghva, 1999).

With the advent of learner-centered and communicative teaching methodologies, language learning strategies in general and mnemonic strategies in particular have been brought to the fore as interesting topics warranting much research. At the same time, vocabulary has been much studied following the emergence of communicative approaches to language teaching (Namaziandost et al. 2020). Salehi and Jafarigohar (2011) investigated the effectiveness of mnemonic strategies on teaching English vocabulary to Iranian high school students. The participating subjects included all male Iranian high school grade one students studying in a non-profit high school in Tehran. Based on the results obtained from a Nelson test of English language proficiency which was conducted at the beginning of the study, 60 homogeneous students were chosen from among 105 learners. To assure the novelty of to-be-instructed words, a vocabulary pretest was also administered. The participants were then classified into an experimental and a

control group each comprising 30 students. The participants in experimental group were instructed to employ the three vocabulary mnemonic strategies of imagery, physical response, and spatial grouping, whereas the students in the control group were suggested to use the repetitive method of learning new words by memorizing a Persian equivalent for each word (i.e. rote learning). The results of the posttest data analysis confirmed the superiority of the experimental group over the control group.

Nilforoushan (2012) examined the effect of teaching vocabulary through semantic mapping on the awareness of two affective dimensions, evaluation and potency dimensions of deep vocabulary knowledge as well as the general vocabulary knowledge of EFL students. Sixty intermediate EFL female adult learners participated in this study; they were chosen from 90 students through Preliminary English Test and a general vocabulary knowledge test. They were thus randomly divided into two groups, experimental and control, each consisting 30 students. As for the treatment, modifiers describing people's characteristics were taught in the text and through semantic mapping, whereas these words were taught by usual vocabulary instruction in control group. At the end, students took a vocabulary achievement test and a test of awareness of evaluation and potency dimensions of deep vocabulary knowledge. The findings showed that teaching vocabularies through semantic mapping significantly improved learner awareness of the two dimensions.

Banisaeid (2013) examined the relationship between memory strategies and vocabulary recall and also comparative effects of memory and cognitive strategies training on intermediate EFL learners' vocabulary learning. She classified students into two experimental groups. In order to omit the words learners, know, a pretest of vocabulary was held. In the first experimental group, 30 students received instruction by memory strategies (keyword and semantic map) in word learning and in the other experimental group, another 30 students were under instruction through cognitive strategies in order to learn the same new English words (flashcards and repetition). The course lasted for 11 sessions (two-hour sessions per week). Finally, the data were gathered by a teacher-made test as the posttest including 60 open ended items. The results indicated that there was no significant difference between the effect of cognitive and memory strategy instruction on intermediate EFL learners' word learning. Generally, the findings showed that instruction by



memory strategies and cognitive strategies respectively improved using memory and cognitive strategies.

Nemati (2009) investigated the effects of teaching by memory strategies on experimental group comparison to control group, in which students were taught the meaning of new vocabulary items through giving synonyms and mini-contexts. The results are studied in the students' short-term and long-term retention. The participants of the study were 310 Indian female pre-university students. The findings showed that experimental group was better both in short-term and long-term scores resulting in the superiority of memory strategies in short-term and long-term retention.

Besides, Sozler (2012) examined the effects of strategy training on vocabulary development among secondary school students. The participants were 26 students studying in an Austrian public secondary school located in the lower part of Austria. An achievement test and a questionnaire were used as pre, post and long-term retention tests to measure the effect of the memory strategy training on the participants' vocabulary development. The findings showed that using memory strategies as a vocabulary learning technique was more effective than using word lists to improve vocabulary level.

One method to acquire new words is keyword method that could help students retain those words in long-term memory. Gruneberg and Pascoe (1996) investigated the effectiveness of the keyword method for receptive and productive foreign vocabulary learning in the elderly people. They found that 40 female elderly participants significantly enhanced their receptive and productive learning of 20 Spanish words, in comparison to a control group who received no treatment.

Brahler and Walker (2008, as cited in Siriganjanavong, 2013) classified their subjects into three groups, namely, the keyword method, rote memorization, and the combination of both. The results showed that students in the keyword group significantly improved in comparison to the other two groups in terms of recall. In other words, the keyword group could recall the medical terminology better than rote memorization group or the mixed method group. In Brown and Perry's (1991, as cited in Siriganjanavong, 2013), the results showed that students in the keyword group got a higher score in the immediate test, and its effect on low-proficiency students was greater; however, the students in the combined keyword-semantic strategy could remember the words better than using only one strategy in the 9-day delayed test.

The present study aimed to answer the following research questions:

**RQ1.** Does using acronyms significantly affect Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary recall?

**RQ2.** How do Iranian EFL learners perceive the effects of using acronyms on improving vocabulary recall?

### **Method**

Twenty Iranian female advanced EFL students were selected from those studying in Shahrekord Payame Noor University. They were randomly assigned to two groups of experimental and control each comprising 10 students. All the participants were at the age range of 20 to 25 years old and they were native speakers of Persian language. The study included 10 weeks of training, one session a week and each session lasting for 45 minutes.

The main data collection instruments were a 40-item vocabulary pretest/posttest and a questionnaire for exploring the participants' perceptions of using acronyms for improving vocabulary recall. In order to examine whether the students were homogeneous, the Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was conducted at the beginning of the study. Eighty target words chosen from a textbook entitled *General English Language* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) authored by Jafari (2013) were also provided as the materials of the study. Prior to conducting the main study, a pilot study was administered to 10 advanced EFL learners in order to check the reliability of the test. To ensure the validity of the test, two experts in TEFL were invited to check it.

In the first session of the treatment, a vocabulary pretest was conducted to examine the participants' ability to recall the vocabulary items. In each session, 10 words with their synonyms were taught to the students. The participants in the control group received the usual vocabulary instruction whereas in the experimental group these vocabulary items were taught through acronyms. At the end of each session, the synonyms of the words were also asked from the students. In the last session, the participants were given a vocabulary posttest consisting of some multiple-choice items to compare the participants' vocabulary recall ability in the control and experimental groups. A questionnaire was also distributed among the participants in the experimental group to examine their perceptions of using acronyms for improving vocabulary recall. After the data were collected, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the obtained data.

## Results

### Addressing Research Question One

The first research question was posed to investigate if using acronyms significantly affects Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary recall. To find answers to this question, paired-sample *t*-test and an independent-sample *t*-test were conducted by the researcher.

Table 1 shows the mean scores and standard deviations of the participants in the experimental group on the pretest ( $M = 13.7$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ ) and the posttest ( $M = 18.95$ ,  $SD = .86$ ). The mean score of the participants on the posttest was greater than their mean score on the pretest. To understand if this difference was statistically significant or not, a paired-sample *t*-test was conducted.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics of the Experimental Group*

		Mean	<i>N</i>	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	13.700	10	1.2737	.4028
	Posttest	18.950	10	.8644	.2734

As Table 2 below shows, there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the participants on the pretest and the posttest since the *p* value was lower than .05 ( $p < .001$ ). Therefore, using acronyms had a significant effect on the participants' vocabulary recall.

**Table 2**

*Results of the Paired-Sample t-Test for the Experimental Group*

		Paired Differences					<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest –	-							
	Posttest	5.2500	.5401	.1708	-5.6363	-4.8637	30.741	9	.000

Table 3 below shows the mean scores and standard deviations of the participants in the control group on the pretest ( $M = 13.55$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ) and the posttest ( $M = 13.75$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ). The mean score of the participants on the posttest was slightly greater than their mean score on the pretest. To understand if this difference was statistically significant or not, a paired-sample  $t$ -test was conducted.

**Table 3**

*Descriptive Statistics of the Control Group*

		Mean	<i>N</i>	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	13.550	10	1.3218	.4180
	Posttest	13.750	10	1.2304	.3891

As Table 4 shows, there was a not significant difference between the mean scores of the participants on the pretest and the posttest since the  $p$  value was greater than .05 ( $p = .373$ ). Therefore, using the traditional method did not have a significant effect on the participants' vocabulary recall.

**Table 4**

*Results of the Paired-Sample  $t$ -Test for the Control Group*

		Paired Differences					<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
1	Pretest - Posttest	-.2000	.6749	.2134	-.6828	.2828	-.937	9	.373

Table 5 shows the mean scores and standard deviations of the participants in the control group ( $M = 13.75$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ) and the experimental group ( $M = 18.95$ ,  $SD = .86$ ). It is obvious that the participants in the experimental group outperformed on the posttest. To make sure that this difference was statistically significant, an Independent-Samples  $t$ -test was conducted.

**Table 5**

*Descriptive Statistics of the Two Groups on the Posttest*

	<b>Groups</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>
Posttest	Control	10	13.750	1.2304	.3891
	Experimental	10	18.950	.8644	.2734

As Table 6 below shows, there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the participants in the control group and in the experimental on the posttest since the  $p$  value was lower than .05 ( $p < .001$ ). Therefore, using acronym had a significant effect on the participants' vocabulary recall. The results are also illustrated in Figure 1.

**Table 6**

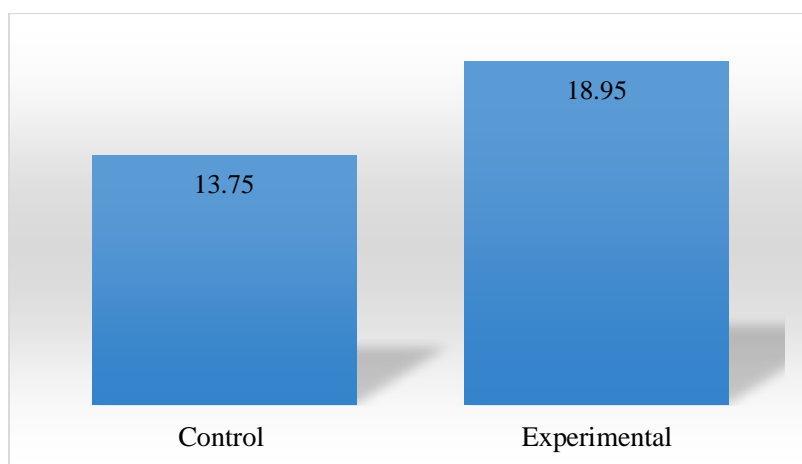
*Results of the Independent-Samples  $t$ -Test*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		$t$ -test for Equality of Means						
		<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig.</i> (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	<i>Std.</i> Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper	
Posttest	Equal variances assumed	1.550	.229	- 10.785	18	.000	-5.2500	.4868	-6.2727	-4.2273

Equal							
variances	-	15.840	.000	-5.2500	.4868	-6.2828	-4.2172
not	10.785						
assumed							

**Figure 1**

*Mean Scores of the Groups on the Posttest*



### Addressing Research Question Two

The second research question was posed to investigate how Iranian EFL learners perceive the effects of using acronyms on improving vocabulary recall. To answer this research question, a questionnaire was administered to the participants in the experimental group.

Table 7 shows the mean score and standard deviation of the participants' answers to the items of the questionnaire ( $M = 4.38$ ,  $SD = .59$ ). The obtained mean score was greater than the criterion mean score (3.00). The one-sample  $t$ -test was conducted to make sure this difference was statistically significant.

**Table 7***Descriptive Statistics of the Questionnaire*

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
Questionnaire	10	4.385	.5850	.1850

As Table 8 shows, there was a statistically significant difference between the obtained mean scores and the criterion because the  $p$  value was lower than .05 ( $p < .001$ ). Therefore, the participants had significant positive perceptions.

**Table 8***Results of the One-Sample t-Test*

Test Value = 3.00					
<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Lower	Upper
Questionnaire	7.4869	.000	1.3850	.967	1.803

**Discussion and Conclusion**

The findings showed that the mean score of the participants on the posttest in the experimental group was greater than their mean score on the pretest. Therefore, using acronyms had a significant effect on the participants' vocabulary recall. According to Fazeli (2010), "acronym strategy is an easy applicable strategy for learners to code the meaning of new vocabularies, especially when they find difficulty in learning them" (p. 415). The findings of this study put remarkable emphasis on the effectiveness of using acronyms on vocabulary recall. Thus, the hypothesis stating that using acronyms does not significantly affect Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary recall can be certainly rejected.

The results of the study suggest that vocabulary learning strategy training can bring about positive effects in students' learning. In fact, the majority of the participants in this study reported using a greater number of strategies and using more frequent strategies. The findings also revealed that strategy training can affect students' strategy choice differently, depending on the level of their vocabulary (Lai, 2013).

Based on the results of the questionnaire, it was clear that using acronyms helped learners to recall vocabulary easily. Therefore, acronyms can be helpful for vocabulary recall. Moreover, they can motivate learners to recall vocabulary better. As the findings of a great number of previous studies indicated, acronyms as a memory strategy play a central role in the process of learning a foreign language and it is a useful process for vocabulary recall. Therefore, L2 teachers are strongly proposed to apply acronyms in L2 classes to help learners recall vocabulary better and increase their motivation and self-confidence. Generally, acronyms are beneficial for vocabulary recall among advanced EFL learners.

This study predominantly focused on the application of acronyms for vocabulary recall among Iranian EFL learners; therefore, there are some suggestions for further research as follows:

1. More studies can be conducted to investigate the same independent variable in relation to other language sub-skills.
2. The same independent and dependent variables can be examined involving learners with different proficiency levels.
3. Since this study was limited to only female EFL learners, similar studies can be conducted with other participants including both male and female ones.

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## Translation of Culture-Specific Items from English into Persian: A Case Study of *The Secret Garden*



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### Abstract

#### Available online

#### Keywords:

Children's literature books, Culture, Culture-specific items, Translation strategies, Vinay and Darbelnet's model of translation

In this study, the main purpose was to analyze the culture-specific items in three Persian translations of an English literary work, *The Secret Garden*. In order to achieve this objective, Newmark's taxonomy of culture-specific items and Vinay and Darbelnet's model of translation were used for identifying and classifying the translation strategies of culture-specific items applied in the three Persian translations of the book. To do so, first, the CSIs were extracted from the source text. Then, the translation strategies applied in culture-specific items of the three Persian translations were detected, compared and analyzed. The obtained results showed that the 'equivalence strategy' was the dominant translation strategy, and 'particularization' and 'adaptation' were the least frequently-used strategies. This finding has practical implications for translators, teachers of translation, and translation students.

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### Introduction

When it is focused on cultural elements, there are translation problems due to the cultural gap between the source language (SL) and target language (TL). Snell-Hornby (1988) states that the translation problems not only depend on the source text (ST), but also depend on the translated text; therefore, one of the important goals of the children's literature is to familiarize readers with the cultures of all around the world. According to Lathey (2006), translation is used as a means for children to learn about cultural differences and attain the best children's writers across the world; hence, translating children's books is not an easy task because sometimes there are no close equivalents for some of the culture-specific items in the target text (TT). With regard to the close relationship between culture and translation, Snell-Hornby (1988) states that the translatability of a text is relied on the culture, time, and place of the source and target text readers. Armstrong (2005) also noted that a complete translation could be done by a bilingual and bicultural translator. Moreover, Brogger (1992) claims that "language and culture are inextricably interwoven and interdependent" (Cited in Risager, 2007, p. 132). He then asserts, "culture is language and language is culture".

On the other hand, one of the important aspects of children's literature is that it not only entertains readers, but also it broadens their minds and points of view; therefore, translating children's literature books is not an easy task. In addition, language and culture are interrelated in the literary works in a way that conveying the message is not possible without transferring the cultural concepts to the readers. So, children's literature is important because it makes children learn about their own culture and other people's culture. Shavit (1986) asserts that two principles should be considered in translating children's books: Adjusting the source text for the purpose of making it useful for children and adjusting the plot, characterization, and language for the purpose of making it comprehensible for children.

Therefore, this study is intended to investigate how translators deal with translating culture-specific items in a children's literature novel in order to suggest some procedures for translating such items. The main purpose of the present thesis was to investigate the culture-specific items of the three Persian translations of an English novel, *The Secret Garden*, based on Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) model of translation. This novel was one of the children's literature book and

its readers were children. Since literature or children's literature had an important role in familiarizing readers with different people, ideas, and cultures, translatability of culture-specific items (CSIs) was always a major concern of translation theorists and translators; therefore, the researcher aimed to study the culture-specific items of this novel from three points of view to overcome these kinds of problems. First, the researcher determined the procedures used by the Persian translators in translating culture-specific items. Then, the researcher investigated the procedures used more by different translators in this novel. Finally, the researcher examined the results for choosing certain procedures of rendering culture-specific items in this novel. To achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions were posed:

**Q1:** Which procedures have been used by different Persian translators in translating culture-specific items of *The Secret Garden* as a children's book?

**Q2:** Which procedures have been used more frequently in translating culture-specific items of *The Secret Garden* as a children's book?

**Q3:** What are the results for choosing certain procedures of rendering culture-specific items of *The Secret Garden* as a children's book?

## Literature Review

### Children's Literature

Anderson (2006, p.57) defines children's literature as all books written for children, "excluding works such as comic books, joke books, cartoon books, and non-fiction works that are not intended to be read from front to back, such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other reference materials". Although most children's literature is written for children, many classic books written for adults are now thought as works for children, such as Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. On the other hand, some works of fiction written or marketed for children are also read and enjoyed by adults, such as Pullman's *The Amber Spyglass* and Hadden's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. In addition, Knowles (1966, p.2) states that "children's literature is any narrative written and published for children".

### **Culture-Specific Items**

Considering the importance of culture-specific items, "finding the best equivalent for culture-specific items (CSIs) is one of the main concerns for each translator" (Maasoum, 2011, p. 1767). Therefore, culture-specific items or culture-bound terms refer to those items which have no direct equivalents in the target language culture. Aixela (1996, p.58) defines culture-specific items as "those textually actualized items whose functions and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the non-existence of the referred item or of its different inter-textual status in the cultural system of the reader of the target text". He keeps on that culture-specific items (CSIs) are linguistic items which make translational problems for translators as a result of the differences in cultural understanding.

Nord also (1997, p.34) uses the term "cultureme" for culture-specific items and defines it as "a cultural phenomenon which is present in culture X, but not present (in the same way) in culture Y". In addition, Gambier (2007) states that these culture-specific items refer to different aspects of life such as education, history, art, literature, law, place names, foods and drinks, sports and national leisure time activities.

### **Classification of Culture-Specific Items**

Newmark (1988, p.95) classifies culture-specific items into five categories: Ecology (flora, fauna, winds, and etc.); material culture (artifacts, food, clothes, house, towns, and transport); social culture (work and leisure); organizations, customs, and ideas (political, social, legal, religion, or artistic); and gestures and habits. Aixela (1996, p.59) classifies culture-specific items into two groups: Proper nouns and common expressions. Proper nouns consist of names and nicknames, but common expressions refer to objects, institutions, habits, and opinions of each culture. Vlahov and Florin (1980, as cited in Tellingner 2000) classify culture-specific items in the following way: Geographical (geographic formations, man-made geographical objects, flora, and fauna); ethnographic (food and drink, clothing, places of living, furniture, pots, vehicles, names of occupations, and tools); art and culture (music and dance, musical instruments, feasts, games,

rituals, and their characters); ethnic (names of people and nicknames); and socio-political (administrative-territorial units, offices and representatives, ranks, and military realia).

### **Strategies for Translation of Culture-Specific Items**

Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) state two kinds of strategies for translating culture-specific items: General and specific strategies. General strategies are borrowing (It means using words from other languages); calque (This procedure is a literal translation at the phrasal level); literal translation (It is a word by word translation); transposition (It is a change in the form of words); modulation (It is a change in the viewpoint); equivalence (It means using different words in the target text with the same situation intended in the source text); and adaptation (It is a rendering of a source language text into a target language text based on the culture of the target language), but specific strategies are amplification (In this kind of strategy, a translator uses more words than the source text to express the same idea); reduction (It is the use of less words than the source text to express the same idea); explicitation (It is the use of explicit terms for the implicit terms in the source language); implicitation (It is the use of implicit terms for the explicit terms in the source language); generalization (It is a use of a more general term for a specific term in the source language); and particularization (It is a use of a specific term for a general term in the source language).

In 1996, Aixela proposes 11 strategies for translation of culture-specific items which are as follows: Repetition (In this strategy, the translator does not render the source language items as much as he can do); orthographic adaptation (It is the use of expressing the original reference in a different alphabet from the one target reader uses); linguistic translation (In this strategy, the translator chooses a very close reference to the original text and increases its comprehensibility by offering a target language version which still belongs to the cultural system of the source text); extra-textual gloss (It is a process of using the above-mentioned procedures and giving some information about the meaning or implications of the culture-specific items); intra-textual gloss (This strategy is the same as the extra-textual gloss, but it is included as an indistinct part of the text in order not to disturb the reader's attention); synonymy (It is a strategy of finding a close equivalence for the culture-specific items in the source text); limited universalization (When the culture-specific item is too obscure for the readers, it will be replaced with a term which is closer to the target culture reader); absolute universalization (It is the same as limited universalization,

but the difference is that there is no better culture-specific items to be replaced with a term belonging to the source culture; So, any foreign connotations will be omitted and a neutral reference will be selected for readers by using functional or descriptive equivalence); naturalization (The culture-specific item is brought into the inter-textual corpus felt as specific by the target language culture); deletion (When the culture-specific items are ideologically or stylistically unacceptable, they can be omitted by translators); and autonomous creation (It is a process of setting some non-existent cultural references in the source text).

### **Studies Conducted on the Culture-Specific Items in Abroad**

In this part, two studies of translating CSIs in abroad were elaborated. These studies were about the analysis of translation strategies on two English novels from English into Albanian. The materials of these studies were two children's literature books which their names were *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Gulliver's Travels*. The researchers only extracted the CSIs comprising of measurement units, monetary items, foods, and drinks. The researchers also used the domesticating and foreignizing translation strategies of Venuti as a framework for translating CSIs in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Gulliver's Travels*. Venuti's theory was included of substitution, omission, and lexical creation as domesticating strategies and borrowing, literal translation, definition, and addition as foreignizing strategies. First, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* with its four translations was studied; therefore, the researchers found 43 CSIs and understood that the first translator rendered 17 items with substitution, two items with omission, one item with lexical creation, two items with borrowing, 15 items with literal translation, and six items with addition. So, the first translator had a tendency toward foreignizing strategies. The second translator rendered 18 items with substitution, four items with omission, four items with borrowing, 12 items with literal translation, and five items with addition. So, the second translator had a tendency toward domesticating strategies. The third translator rendered 17 items with substitution, three items with omission, five items with borrowing, 13 items with literal translation, and five items with addition. Therefore, the third translator had a tendency toward foreignizing strategies. The fourth translator rendered 20 items with substitution, two items with omission, two items with lexical creation, two items with borrowing, 15 items with literal translation, and two



items with addition. Therefore, the fourth translator had a tendency toward domesticating strategies.

Second, *Gulliver's Travels* was investigated. The researchers identified 342 CSIs and realized that a translator rendered 61 items with substitution, 14 items with omission, 23 items with lexical creation, 90 items with borrowing, 144 items with literal translation, three items with definition, and seven items with addition. These findings showed that the translator used the literal translation as the most frequent strategy and the definition as the least strategy for the purpose of translating the CSIs of *Gulliver's Travels*. Therefore, the translator had a tendency toward foreignizing strategies in rendering the CSIs of *Gulliver's Travels*.

### **Studies Conducted on the CSIs in Iran**

In this part, some studies conducted toward translation of CSIs in Iran were elaborated. One of the studies done on the translation of CSIs was about the translation strategies applied in Persian renderings of CSIs in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. In this study, Esmaeili, the researcher, investigated five Persian translations of the whole chapters of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Toofan (1982), Panahi Khorasani (1992), Karami Far (1993), Bahrami Harran (1995), and Dehmishegi (1995). She used Newmark's (1988) proposed taxonomy for classifying and translating CSIs. This study showed that Toofan who first translated this novel used cultural equivalence more than other strategies with 19 cases (58 percent) and was more consistent in translating CSIs of this novel than other translators. Toofan was also the only translator whose major applied strategy was above 55 percent. Moreover, he did not make any mistakes in his translation and added footnotes for six items.

Panah Khorasani (1992), the second translator, applied functional equivalence as the major strategy with 10 cases (33 percent) and his translation was the worst because he made three mistakes in his translation. In addition, he omitted one item and added a footnote for only one case. He also used transference strategy for translating four items into Persian language. Karami Far (1993), the third translator, used transference and functional equivalence more than other strategies with nine and eight cases (34 and 30 percent), but he did not translate nine items. Moreover, he used two footnotes for two terms and did not make any mistakes. Bahrami Harran (1995), the third translator, used functional equivalence and transference as major strategies with nine and seven cases (29 and 22 percent). He also made three mistakes in his translation and did not add any

footnotes for any CSIs in his translation. Therefore, the only positive point of this translator was that this translator did not omit any terms. Dehmishegi, the fourth translator, used transference more than other strategies with 10 cases (35 percent) and made no mistakes in his translation. He also omitted seven items and did not add any footnotes for any CSIs in his translation.

The second study done on the translation strategies of CSIs was about the translation strategies applied in translating Jalal Al-Ahmad's *By the Pen* by Ghanoonparvar (1988). Daghighi, the researcher, used Newmark's (1988) theories for classifying and translating CSIs from Persian into English and found out that Ghanoonparvar (1988) translated 50 items with transference, 26 items with naturalization, 14 items with cultural equivalent, 146 items with functional equivalent, 12 items with descriptive equivalent, 99 items with componential analysis, 115 items with synonymy, 29 items with through-translation, three items with compensation, one item with modulation, one item with paraphrase, 60 items with note, and 61 items with couplet. Daghighi's study showed that functional equivalent was the most frequent strategy and modulation and paraphrase were the least frequent strategies for rendering CSIs in *By the Pen* by Ghanoonparvar (1988); therefore, the researcher understood that functional equivalent could be regarded as the most effective strategy in translating the CSIs of the literary books because it made such texts more comprehensible and tangible for readers of the target text.

The third study done on the translation strategies of CSIs was about the translation strategies used in translating an English novel, *Unaccustomed Earth* (2008) by three Persian translators, Emami (2008), Bajelan (2008), and Haghighat (2008). In this study, Sheshnavi, the researcher, used Pavlovic and Poslek's (1999) categorization and Davies' (2003) model for classifying and translating the CSIs of an English novel, *Unaccustomed Earth*. This study showed that Emami (2008) translated 52 items with perseveration of meaning, 16 items with omission, 39 items with globalization, and 19 items with localization; therefore, Emami (2008) used perseveration of meaning as the most frequent strategy and omission as the least frequent strategy. Bajelan (2008), the second translator, rendered 47 items with preservation of meaning, 25 items with omission, 35 items with globalization, and 11 items with localization; therefore, she used preservation of meaning as the most frequent strategy and localization as the least strategy. Haghighat (2008), the third translator, rendered 49 items with preservation of meaning, three items with omission, 16 items with globalization, and 16 items with localization; therefore, he used preservation of

meaning as the most frequent strategy and omission as the least strategy. Finally, the researcher reached to this conclusion that the preservation of meaning was the major strategy in all these three translations.

To these one can add more empirical studies on culture-specific items in translation and how the quality of the translations are evaluated and assessed (Amiri Shalforoosh and Heidari Tabrizi, 2018; Azin and Heidari Tabrizi, 2016; Elekaei, Faramarzi and Heidari Tabrizi, 2016; Heidari Tabrizi, 2008, 2021, in press; Heidari Tabrizi and Pezeshki, (2015); Heidari Tabrizi, Riazi and Parhizgar, 2008; Jalalpour and Heidari Tabrizi, 2017; Karimi, Heidari Tabrizi and Chalak, 2016; Khalouzadeh, Heidari Tabrizi and Chalak, 2013; Moeinifard, Heidari Tabrizi and Chalak, 2014; Montazer and Chalak, 2017; Shamsavarzadeh and Heidari Tabrizi, 2020; Valipour, Heidari Tabrizi and Chalak, 2019; Yazdani, Heidari Tabrizi and Chalak, 2020).

## Method

### Design of the Study

The research design of this thesis is a descriptive method. A descriptive method is a kind of research method which concerns with describing the characteristics of a particular individual or a group. Therefore, studies rely on specific predictions, narration of facts, and the characteristics of an individual or a group are examples of a descriptive method. In a descriptive method, first, the objectives of the study will be specified with precision to ensure that the data collected are relevant. Then, the researcher should take out some samples and make statements about the population based on the sample analysis. In addition, a researcher's data analysis should be checked with at least two or more than two persons who are specialized in the study in order to ensure that the data analysis is done honestly and without prejudice.

### Raters

After identifying the culture-specific items of the source text and deciding about the type of their translation strategies, two graduated master of art students of translation studies were selected as inter-raters and were asked to validate the researcher's selected strategies for translating CSIs based on the framework of the study.

## Materials

In this study, the researcher chose the whole chapters of an English literary work, *The Secret Garden* (1910) as the corpus of the study because this literary work was full of culture-specific items and no Persian translator studied on this novel. Therefore, the researcher used three Persian translations of this kind of novel to compare the CSIs of the source text with its translated texts. In this study, these three Persian translations done by Arjang (2003), Mahdavian (1996), and Reyshahri (1993) were explained in details in the following parts. Moreover, in this study, Dekhoda (1994), Moeen (2006), Oxford Learner's dictionary (2012), and Merriam-Webster's dictionary (2009) were used as the sources for finding the meanings of the words in Persian and English.

## Data Collection Procedure

To examine the CSIs in the children's literature books, *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett (1910) along with its three Persian translations was selected as the primary source text. In this study, the researcher worked on the whole chapters of this novel and extracted CSIs based on Newmark's (1988) taxonomy which was ecology (Animals, plants, local winds, mountains, plains, ice, and etc.); material culture (Food, clothes, housing, transport, and communication); social culture (Work and leisure); organizations, customs, and ideas (Political, social, legal, religious, and artistic), and gestures and habits. In addition, the researcher only studied on the lexical and phrasal level of the CSIs of *The Secret Garden* (1910).

## Data Analysis Procedure

After collecting the CSIs based on Newmark's (1988) categorization of CSIs, the researcher detected the translation strategies applied by three translators in rendering CSIs into Persian and classified them based on the general and specific translation strategies of Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) model of translation which was a valid, reliable, and practical model for translating CSIs. Though Vinay and Darbelnet's model of translation is an old model, it is still used in translation of culture-specific items. Moreover, Vinay and Darbelnet's model of translation is a comprehensive model consisting of seven procedures for rendering the culture-specific items.

Then, the occurrences of each translation strategy were calculated in three Persian translations of *The Secret Garden* in order to show which strategy was used more or less by each translator.

## Results

### The Frequency and Percentage of CSIs in The Secret Garden

As presented in Table 1, 179 CSIs were extracted from the corpus of the study. From among these, 92 samples were related to ecology; 55 samples were related to material culture; 12 samples were related to social culture; 18 samples were related to organizations, customs, and ideas; and two samples were related to gestures and habits. Specific samples of CSIs in each category were shown in the following tables. Therefore, the most culture-specific items were related to the ecology category.

**Table 1**

*The Frequency and Percentage of CSIs in Each Category*

Cultural Category	Frequency	Percentage
Ecology	92	%51
Material Culture	55	%31
Social Culture	12	%7
Organizations, Customs, and Ideas	18	%10
Gestures and Habits	2	%1
Total	179	%100

### The Frequency and Percentage of Strategies Used by the Three Persian Translators

As it was shown in Table 2, Arjang, the first translator, used eight loan translation, 20 calque, 100 equivalence, three adaptation, 29 amplification, six reduction, 15 generalization, and five particularization for translating the culture-specific items of *The secret Garden* (1910). Therefore, she applied equivalence as her major strategy for translating the culture-specific items. She also made 22 mistakes in translating CSIs and did not translate seven CSIs. In addition, there was no consistency in Arjang's translation because she translated mole into *موش* in one part and *موش کور* in

another part. In general, she was better than the two other translators because she translated more precisely and omitted less items.

Mahdavian, the second translator, applied 85 cases for equivalence, 14 cases for loan translation, four cases for adaptation, 25 cases for generalization, one case for particularization, 27 cases for amplification, 11 cases for reduction, and 15 cases for calque. In addition, he translated 25 CSIs in a wrong way which were less than Reyshahri's mistranslations. Moreover, there was not any consistency in Mahdavian's translation because he translated the deserted garden into باغ ویران in one part and باغ متروک in another part. He also used an equivalence strategy more than other strategies for translating the culture-specific items because he wanted to make the translation more tangible for the target readers. On the other hand, he did not translate nine CSIs and translated most of the CSIs in their general forms. For instance, he translated bonnet into کلاه instead of its exact equivalence which was کلاه بی لبه.

Therefore, Mahdavian's translation (1996) was more precise than Reyshahri's translation (1993), but his translation was less precise than Arjang's translation (2003). Reyshahri, the third translator, used different translation strategies for translating the CSIs of *The Secret Garden* (1910) which were as follows: Seven samples of Loan, eight samples of calque, 55 samples of equivalence, 13 samples of amplification, 15 samples of reduction, 30 samples of generalization, and two samples of particularization. Therefore, she used an equivalence strategy as her major translation strategy for rendering the CSIs of this novel. She also made 31 mistakes in translating CSIs and did not translate 46 CSIs. Her translation was worse than the two other translations because she omitted and mistranslated most of the items and translated 30 items in their general forms. For instance, she translated cloak into لباس which its exact equivalence was شنل.

**Table 2**

*The Frequency and Percentage of Strategies Used by the Three Persian Translators*

Translators	Arjang's (2003) Translation		Mahdavian's (1996) Translation		Reyshahri's (1993) Translation	
Strategies	Frequen cy	Percenta ge	Freque ncy	Percent age	Freque ncy	Percent age
Calque	20	%11	15	%8	8	%6

General Strategies	Loan	8	%4	14	%7.5	7	%5
	Equivalence	100	%54	85	%47	55	%42
	Adaptation	3	%2	4	%2	0	0
Specific Strategies	Amplification	29	%15	27	%15	13	%10
	Reduction	6	%3	11	%6	15	%12
	Generalization	15	%8	25	%14	30	%23
	Particularization	5	%3	1	%0.5	2	%2
Total		186	%100	182	%100	130	%100

Specific samples of strategies used by each translator were discussed in the following part:

### Loan Translation

Loan translation is a word or phrase borrowed from another language. In the following part, some instances of loan translation applied by the three Persian translators were shown.

**Table 3**

#### *Loan Translation*

Number	CSIs	Arjang's (2003) Translation	Mahdavian's (1996) Translation	Reyshahri's (1993) Translation
1	The Blue Cow Inn	مهمانسرای گاو آبی	مهمانخانه بلوکاو	-
2	Marmalade	مربا	مارمالاد	-

First, The Blue Cow is the name of an inn. Therefore, Arjang translated this item in a calque strategy because she translated this item in a literal form, but Mahdavian translated this item in a loan translation strategy because he translated this item based on its source language form.

Second, based on a Merriam-Webster dictionary (2009), marmalade is a sweet jelly which contains pieces of fruit. Therefore, Arjang translated this item in a general form, but Mahdavian translated this item in a loan translation strategy.

## Calque

Calque means translating a phrase in a literal form. In the following part, some examples of calque strategy were shown.

**Table 4**

### *Calque*

Number	CSIs	Arjang's (2003) Translation	Mahdavian's (1996) Translation	Reyshahri's (1993) Translation
1	Kitchen-Gardens	باغچه آشپزخانه	باغ آشپزخانه	باغ مطبخی
2	Apple-Tree	درخت سیب	درخت سیب	درخت سیب
3	Water-Rats	موشهای آبی	موشهای آبی	موشهای آبی

In the above samples, the three translators rendered these noun phrases in a literal form. In consequence, they used calque strategy for translating these items. For instance, water-rats consisted of two nouns were rendered based on these two nouns.

## Equivalence

Equivalence means replicating the same situation as in the source text with using completely different words. In the following part, some of the examples of an equivalence strategy were indicated.

**Table 5**

### *Equivalence*

Number	CSIs	Arjang's (2003) Translation	Mahdavian's (1996) Translation	Reyshahri's (1993) Translation
1	A Carriage	کالسکه	کالسکه	درشکه
2	Lovely Young Fowl and Bread Sauce	جوجه لذیذ و نان سس مالیده	خوراک جوجه با سس	غذا
3	Priest	مرد خدا	کشیش	کشیشی



First, according to Merriam-Webster dictionary (2009), a carriage means a large vehicle with four wheels which carries people. These three translators rendered this item based on its equivalence meaning in the target language.

Second, a lovely young fowl and bread sauce was a noun phrase which Arjang translated in a calque strategy, but Mahdavian translated in an adaptation strategy because a lovely young fowl and bread sauce was like خوراک جوجه با سس in Iran to some extent. On the other hand, Reyshahri translated this item into غذا and in a general way because غذا was used for different kinds of foods.

Third, with regard to Merriam-Webster dictionary (2009), a priest is a person who has the authority to lead or perform religious ceremonies. Therefore, Mahdavian and Reyshahri translated this item based on its equivalence in Iran, but Arjang translated this item in a general form because مرد خدا was referred to many concepts like priest, imams, prophets, and every religious person.

### Adaptation

Adaptation means rendering a source language text into a target language text based on the culture of the target language.

**Table 6**

*Adaptation*

Number	CSIs	Arjang's (2003) Translation	Mahdavian's (1996) Translation	Reyshahri's (1993) Translation
1	Rice Pudding	شیر برنج	پوره برنج	برنج
2	Buttered Toast	نان برشته کره مالیده	نان کره ای	نان و کره
3	Marigolds	گل سرخ هندی	گل های همیشه بهار	-

First, according to Merriam-Webster dictionary (2009), rice pudding is a sweet food consisted of rice, milk, and sugar. This item is like "شیربرنج" in Iran, but its texture is totally different from it. Therefore, Arjang translated this item based on an adaptation strategy. On the other hand,

Mahdavian and Reyshahri translated this item in a wrong way because "پوره برنج" and "برنج" were not the equivalence of rice pudding.

Second, buttered toast is like "نان کره ای" in Iran, but its texture is totally different from it. Therefore, Mahdavian translated this item in an adaptation strategy, but Arjang translated buttered toast in a calque strategy because buttered toast was a noun phrase and she translated this item in a literal form. Finally, Reyshari translated this item in a wrong way because her translation was not an equivalence of buttered toast.

Third, according to Oxford dictionary (2012), a marigold refers to a plant of the daisy family with yellow, orange, or copper-brown flowers cultivated as an ornamental. Arjang translated this item in a wrong way, but Mahdavian translated this item in an adaptation strategy because "گل های همیشه بهار" were related to Iran culture. In Iran, "گل های همیشه بهار" were referred to flowers remained alive in all seasons.

### Generalization

Generalization is a use of a more general term for a specific term in the source language. In the following part, some of the instances of the generalization strategy were shown.

**Table 7**

#### *Generalization*

Number	CSIs	Arjang's (2003) Translation	Mahdavian's (1996) Translation	Reyshahri's (1993) Translation
1	Treacle	شیره	شیره قند	-
2	Orchard	باغی	باغ میوه	باغ میوه

First, according to Merriam-Webster dictionary (2009), treacle means molasses. Therefore, Arjang translated this item based on its general form because its exact meaning was شیره قند. On the other hand, Mahdavian translated this item more precisely and based on its equivalence strategy in Iran.

Second, based on Merriam-Webster dictionary (2009), an orchard means a place where fruit trees are grown. Therefore, Mahdavian and Reyshahri translated orchard based on its equivalence meaning in Persian, but Arjang translated this item based on its general form in Persian because باغی was used for different kinds of gardens in Iran.

### Particularization

Particularization means a use of a specific term for a general term in the source language. In the following part, some of the instances of the particularization strategy were shown.

**Table 8**

#### *Particularization*

Number	CSIs	Arjang's (2003) Translation	Mahdavian's (1996) Translation	Reyshahri's (1993) Translation
1	Evergreens	شمشادها	گیاهان همیشه سبز	چمن ها

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary (2009), an evergreen means a plant (As a pine or a laurel) having leaves that stay green through more than one growing season. Therefore, Arjang translated this item in a particularization strategy because شمشاد was one kind of evergreens in Iran. On the other hand, Mahdavian translated evergreens in a literal form; therefore, he translated this item in a calque strategy. Finally, Reyshahri translated this item in a wrong way because چمن was not in a group of evergreens.

### Amplification

Amplification means using more words than the source text to express the same idea. In the following part, some of the examples of the particularization strategy were indicated.

**Table 9**

#### *Amplification*

Number	CSIs	Arjang's (2003) Translation	Mahdavian's (1996) Translation	Reyshahri's (1993) Translation
1	Boxing	تمرین مشت زنی	تمرین بوکس	تمرین بوکس

The three translators rendered boxing into two words; therefore, they used an amplification strategy for rendering this item into Persian language.

### Reduction

Reduction means using less words than the source text to express the same idea. In the following part, some of the examples of the particularization strategy were shown.

**Table 10**

#### *Reduction*

Number	CSIs	Arjang's(2003) Translation	Mahdavian's(1996) Translation	Reyshahri's(1993) Translation
1	The Private Hotel	هتل دنجی	هتلی	هتلی
2	Daughter of Pigs	دختر خوک	دختر خوک	خوک
3	Lilac Bush	بته گل یاس	بوته ای	بوته ای

In the first sample, Mahdavian and Reyshahri translated the private hotel into one word; so, they used a reduction strategy for rendering this item.

In the second sample, Reyshahri translated daughter of pigs into one word; therefore, she used a reduction strategy for rendering this item into Persian language.

In the third sample, Mahdavian and Reyshahri translated a lilac bush into one word; therefore, they used a reduction strategy for rendering this item into Persian language.

### Discussion

The results of the study show that the three Persian translators have used equivalence strategy more than other strategies in order to translate a text in a fluent way and make the translated text more comprehensible and tangible for the readers. In this study, the researcher also compared this study with similar studies on Persian translations of culture-specific items in another English literary

texts and found out that the most Iranian translators preferred to render the culture-specific items based on the message of the literary works in order to make the text more tangible and authentic for the target readers. For instance, Esmaeili who examined Toofan (1982), Panahi Khorasani (1992), Karami Far (1993), Bahrami Harran (1995), and Dehmishegi (1995)'s translations of the whole chapters of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* based on Newmark's (1988) taxonomy understood that Toofan (1982) used cultural equivalence more than other strategies, Panahi Khorasani (1992) applied functional equivalence more than other strategies, Karami Far (1993) used transference and functional equivalence more than other strategies, Bahrami Harran (1995) used functional equivalence and transference as the major strategies, and Dehmishegi used transference more than other strategies.

In addition, Valipoor, Heidari Tabrizi, and Chalak studying Irving (1985)'s English translation of the second chapter (Surah) of the Holy Quran, *Baqara (The Cow)* based on Venuti's (1995) framework realized that domestication was the dominant strategy. Therefore, this study which its goal was to examine different strategies applied by the three Persian translators in rendering the culture-specific items in an English literary work, *The Secret Garden* according to Vinay and Darbelnet's model of translation showed the following conclusions based on the above results.

Q1: Which procedures have been used by different Persian translators in translating CSIs of *The Secret Garden* as a children's book?

According to the obtained results, Arjang and Mahdavian have both used adaptation, calque, loan, particularization, generalization, amplification, and reduction strategies for rendering the culture-specific items of *The Secret Garden* (1910) from English language into Persian language, but Reyshahri (1993) has applied all the translation strategies of Arjang (2003) and Mahdavian, except the adaptation strategy.

Q2: Which procedures have been used more frequently in translating culture-specific items of *The Secret Garden* as a children's book?

According to the above results, equivalence strategy was the most frequently used strategy in Arjang's (2003), Mahdavian's (1996), and Reyshahri's (1993) translations of rendering culture-specific items of an English literary novel, *The Secret Garden* (1910).

Q3: What are the results for choosing certain procedures of rendering culture-specific items of *The Secret Garden* as a children's book?

Based on the results of the study, Arjang, Mahdavian, and Reyshahri used equivalence strategy as their major strategy in translating the CSIs of an English literary work, *The Secret Garden* (1910) to make the translation more comprehensible and tangible for the target readers. In addition, these three translators used calque strategy for phrases which there were no equivalence for in the target culture. Furthermore, Arjang and Mahdavian used an adaptation strategy for the CSIs which there were an equivalence for in the target culture. These three translators also used a loan translation for the CSIs to make the target readers familiar with the source culture. They also used reduction and generalization strategies in order to make the perception of the target text easier for the target readers. Finally, they used amplification and specification strategies in order to make the translated text more comprehensible for the target readers.

### Conclusion

From the above results, the researcher understood that translating a source text into a target text was difficult without considering cultural knowledge because culture would help people to perceive the world around them better; therefore, it was a translator's task to regard different things to make these worlds closer to each other. In addition, translators should be aware of both source and target languages and use translation strategies when translating CSIs.

Furthermore, there are different translation models for rendering CSIs from a source language into a target language. One of the most important models of translation in this domain is referred to Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) model of translation. The results of this study showed that the three Persian translators used equivalence as their major strategy in order to make their translations more comprehensible and authentic for the target text readers. The researcher also probed that some of the translation strategies were used more and some of them were used less; therefore, choosing an appropriate strategy should be done based on the context, purpose, and situation by the translators. Moreover, the researcher understood that the three Persian translators were not consistent in their translations and this might be due to the lack of equivalence for rendering the CSIs in this novel.

This study has different implications for the translators. For instance, a translator should consider the aim of the translation when using different strategies for translating the CSIs. He or she should also figure out that his or her translation has the same function in the target culture like other translations of this kind of novel. Therefore, the findings of this study are useful for

translators, translation teachers, and students of translation studies because they present different translation strategies for dealing with cultural obstacles in translating the CSIs in children's literature books from SL into TL. In addition, this study will improve translators' ability to render CSIs more precisely. As a result, it will widen translators' point of view toward translating children's books.

Moreover, translating children's literature books based on the source culture is better than translating these kinds of books based on the target culture because children will learn more about other cultures and communities. Similar to other studies, the present study is restricted by many factors. The first difficulty of this study is that there is lack of reliable sources for extracting the CSIs of this literary work. The second obstacle of this study is that there are different models of translation such as Newmark (1988), Aixela (1996), Ivir (1987), Graedler (2000), and Klaudy (2003)'s models of translation for rendering the CSIs from SL into TL, but this study only examines the translation of culture-specific items based on Vinay and Darbelnet (1958)'s model of translation. The third obstacle of this study is that there are different taxonomies for classifying the CSIs such as Aixela (1996), Thriveni (2001), and Armelino (2008) for classifying the culture-specific items, but this study only categorizes the culture-specific items based on Newmark's taxonomy of culture-specific items. The final limitation of this study is that this novel is translated by five Persian translators, but only three translations of this novel are applied in this study.

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## Impact of Dialogue Journal Writing on EFL Learners' Self-regulation and Reading Comprehension Performance



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### Abstract

#### Available online

#### Keywords:

Journal Writing,  
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learners

Dialogue journal writing is an activity by which language participants can make a bond of written communication with their teachers and practice various aspects of the target language. This feature can make dialogue journal writing a learner-centered instrument to improve learners' proficiency in different aspects of language. With this in mind, the present study explored the impact of dialogue journal writing on self-regulation and reading comprehension performance of EFL learners in a language institute. To this purpose, an experimental pre-test, post-test research design was used. The participants of the study were 60 pre-intermediate participants who were divided into experimental and control groups of equal size (30). At the end of the treatment, the participants took a post-test and post-questionnaire of self-regulation and the scores were recorded carefully. The results of the study indicated that the employment dialogue journal writing has a significant impact on Iranian EFL learners' reading comprehension skill and their self-regulation.

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## Introduction

Dialogue journal writing is considered as an activity through which language learners try to create a unity of written communication with their teachers' help and practice various aspects of the target language continuously. This feature makes dialogue journal writing a learner-centered instrument to improve learners' proficiency in various aspects of language. Furthermore, dialogue journal writing is a research instrument to recognize teachers' views on teacher education (Baily, 1990), participants' responsibility for their learning (Porter, Goldstein, Leatherman, and Conrad, 1990), learners' ideas on learning (Myers, 2001), language learners' strategies (Halbach, 2000), and to affect learners' reflection (Hashemi and Mirzaei, 2015). Self-regulation is a psychological concept that attracted many educational researchers' attention (Zimmerman, 1990). It is defined as self-generated thoughts, behavior, and feelings that are planned and cyclically adapted regarding performance feedback to obtain self-set objectives (Zimmerman, 1989). Also, Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) referred to such processes as setting goals, selecting and using strategies, planning strategically, self-monitoring one's effectiveness and self-evaluation while remembering and learning knowledge and academic skills (Zimmerman, 2008). In other place, Schunk and Zimmerman (1997) viewed SRL as an approach to make learners autonomous and behaviorally, motivationally and meta cognitively active. It can also enable learners to take responsibility for their own learning and problem-solving. The process of making learners autonomous indicates that self-regulation is an ability that can be improved. Teachability of self-regulation can be observed in Palincsar and Brown (1984), who showed that self-regulatory strategies and processes can be instructed, and teachers can train their participants in self-regulation. More importantly, it has been confirmed by some research (e.g. Perels, Gurtler, and Schmitz, 2005; Perry, Hutchinson, and Thauberger 2007; Stoeger and Ziegler, 2008). Reading skill is considered as a significant part of the learning process which involves the reader's variables which lead to the reading process and comprehension would be the result of it. In Anderson's (2001) definition, reading is an important skill to master EFL and ESL learners. Reading skill is an important activity in any EFL class, because it is a pleasant activity, a source of information, and a means of increasing linguistic knowledge (Mori, 2004). Given that, EFL participants need to improve some strategies in doing significant task of EFL reading comprehension (Grabe, 2004). Considering different EFL reading

strategies and their positive impacts on reading comprehension achievement (e.g., Block, 1986; Carrell, 1988), researchers have spotlighted self-regulation and SRL strategies as complementing the reading strategy instruction in improving First Language (L1) reading comprehension (e.g., Souvignier and Mokhlesgerami, 2006). Despite different research on dialogue journal writing and self-regulation, not many studies have explored its effect on self-regulation and reading comprehension skill. Accordingly, the present study tries to bridge this gap through examining the effect of dialogue journals writing as an outside classroom task, on self-regulation and reading comprehension performance of EFL learners. There are a lot of problems in teaching reading that the language teacher has to pay attention to them. One of these problems refers to the lack of self-regulation that the language learners need to organize their views and ideas in a logical manner. It may display itself for different reasons as lack of enough skill and knowledge, lack of trained teachers, and poor training and instruction can be only some of the problems that may lead to failure (Hashemnezhad, 2012). Keyuravong and Maneekhao (2006) believed that participants have become accustomed to the traditional classroom setting that the teachers possess all the knowledge and give it to the participants. Teacher-centered activities as lecturing to the class remain a well-known way of English teaching in educational setting especially in in the language classes of primary and secondary schools (Chatranonth, 2008). As Jarvis and Atsilarat (2004) stated, in spite of the official endorsement regarding a move towards a learner-centered classroom, most of the teachers of school still focus and practice the traditional teacher-centered methods which is characterized by memorization and rote learning of target language rules. Mastering reading and its skills is the great objective for Iranian language learners. However, not every language learner achieves the skill to read comprehensively, effectively, and fast enough to enjoy the task. On the one hand, it takes a long time for language learners to read long passage and on the other hand, they fail to understand the passage meaningfully and deeply. In this area, the poor ability can be referred to many sources, one of which is using inefficient and poor teaching strategies that teachers employ in the reading classes. Besides, the techniques may be too mechanical or too much emphasize is given to the form, but not meaning. Therefore, not enough attention is given to the roles of the participants and their personality in teaching and learning (Grabe, 2004). That is to say, focusing on teacher-centered methods and paying too much attention to language forms may lead teaching reading in low efficiency and gradually make it as a salient skill for Iranian learners

who want to master English. Research on self-regulation revealed several related positive results containing higher academic achievement, better workplace performance, better relationship quality, and a greater sense of well-being. Moreover, studies on self-regulation concluded that self-regulation is associated with more positive social relationships, greater social competence, and greater empathy and social skills (Mayer, 2011). As most EFL teachers are not aware of employing various strategies for self-regulation in the language classrooms, they might not apply the effective strategy and may get disappointed. Also, little is known about the self-regulation that are most useful in contexts where learning is a priority (Ghonsooly and Ghanizadeh, 2011). Considered as a technique in presenting learner-centered pedagogy with a socio-cultural notion, dialogue journal writing offered constant reading and writing interaction. This technique provides opportunity for learners to use this technique as a communicative method, and teachers can enhance their awareness in learners' desires and concerns. Also, continuous writing/reading activity in dialogue journal offered participants the opportunity to practice language and this practice results in fluency (Holmes and Moulton, 1997). However, Lee (2004) reported that even though many researchers have provided evidences and acknowledged the potential advantages of dialogue journal, this tool is not employed extensively in second language learning. Thus, more research-based studies are needed to explore dialogue journals' effectiveness in improving participants' reading performance. That is to say, to the author's best knowledge no study has been conducted to date to examine quantitatively on the effect of dialog journal writing on self-regulation and reading comprehension performance of EFL learners in language institute. To come to a closer identification of the mentioned problems, the researcher focused on dialogue journals writing in order to explore the effectiveness of it on both the EFL learners' self-regulation and reading comprehension performance.

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Based on the given objectives, the following questions were addressed in the present study:

**RQ1.** Does teaching through dialog journal writing affect EFL learners' reading development?

**RQ2.** Does teaching through dialog journal writing affect EFL learners' self-regulation?

### Literature Review

Empirical findings on journal writing have been found to play the role of data collection technique in language learning studies. Myers (2001), motivated by Baily's (1990) comment on re-reading the journal entry to obtain maximum benefit, explored the extent to which exchanging of and reflecting on each other's journals, hence building a written dialogue, can help learners recognize their language learning objectives. He concluded that such reflections based on Jamesian 'stream of thought' can increase learners' perceptions about strengths and weaknesses in terms of vocabulary, learning strategies, thinking skills and writing creativity. Another line of dialogue journal study focuses on the usefulness of journals as a writing tool in mastering writing recount text. Through using experimental design, it was revealed that inserting dialogue journal writing activity can enhance learners' performance in writing recount texts (Hidayat, 2011). While the studies mentioned above focused on dialogue journal writing as a research and writing tool, some studies tried to view journal writing as a classroom writing activity. A pioneering study in this regard was conducted by Marefat (2002) in which she asked 80 Persian speaking undergraduate English major participants who were taking their writing course to spend 5-10 minutes at the end of each session and write their comments, reactions and feelings about the session. Content analysis of the journals revealed the areas of interest and difficulty which could be led to syllabus revision. Marefat's study prompted other researchers to consider dialogue journal writing as a beneficial activity for writing courses.

Wafa, Syafei, and Riyono (2010), implementing experimental design, concluded that dialogue journal writing was an effective activity to develop participants' writing. Similar results were found by Tuan (2010) who investigated the possibility of simplifying writing complexities by engaging learners in writing journals. He found that post-test writing scores gained by learners who kept journals for thirteen weeks increased by 24.67%, while the writing scores of learners with no such writing activity increased by only 7.32% compared to their performance in pre-test. More specifically, the writing speed, measured by "the number of words produced within a limited length of time" (p.84), of the participants who wrote dialogue journals improved significantly in comparison with those who did not. In addition, the thirteen week of journal writing practice brought about a noticeable decrease in the average number of mistakes made by the participants

(64.46%) though such change was not observed in the participants who did not keep journals (29.70%). Dialogue journal writing has been compared to other approaches to writing instruction by different writing scholars.

In another study, Ezati, Ocheng, Sentamu, and Sikoyo (2010) implemented a study to explore the role of journal writing in enhancing participant teachers' learning during school practice. It analyses data from 22 participant teachers' journals and 23 questionnaires. The study focuses on the areas that participant teachers reflected on most, the nature of their reflection and the extent to which previous experiences informed their subsequent reflection and learning. Findings showed that participant teachers frequently reflected on handling indiscipline issues, procedures and outcomes of supervision, but less on their own learning. Inadequate reflection on their learning suggests that journal writing has not yet sufficiently promoted participant teachers' professional growth. Generally, the examination and cultural orientation in the Ugandan society influence participant teachers' journal writing. In the same year, Guvenc (2010) conducted a study to investigate the effects of cooperative learning and learning journals on teacher candidate participants' self-regulated learning. Eighty-four university participants (52 girls and 32 boys) participated in this research. A quasi pre-test/post-test experimental design with control group was utilized. Both groups were taught by cooperative learning. The experimental group wrote their reflection in learning journals. The research has concluded that there is a difference between the experimental and control groups in favor of the participants of the experimental group who have been affected more positively on self-efficacy for learning and performance, elaboration, organization, critical thinking, and meta-cognitive control strategy dimensions of self-regulated learning.

Hemmati and Soltanpour (2012) found a greater gain of grammatical accuracy in writing as well as overall writing performance in participants who were exposed to reflective learning portfolios (RLP) than those who wrote dialogue journals during a fourteen-session treatment. The authors discussed that RLP necessitates intentional reflection scaffolding by a collaborator while dialogue journal writing requires incidental learning in which the instructor responds without referring explicitly to the errors. Therefore, the greater efficacy of RLP in this study could have been due to the greater efficacy of intentional learning over incidental one.



Foroutan, Noordin, and Hamzah (2013a) compared email dialogue journal writing with its paper-and-pencil counterpart in enhancing writing performance. Using quasi-experimental design, they concluded that email journal writing outperformed the paper-and-pencil version not only in overall writing but also the language use aspect. However, they reported no significance difference between the two groups regarding content, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics. A great disadvantage of their study is lack of inter-rater reliability index of writing test scores which can make their findings unreliable. In another study, Foroutan, Noordin, and Hamzah (2013b) compared the effect of dialogue journal writing with task-based writing on EFL learners' writing skills and its components. Using experimental method, they found significant improvement between pre- and post-tests in terms of content, vocabulary, organization, and language use, while no significant development was observed in overall writing performance. When the mean scores of each subcategory of writing performance were compared, it was found that task-based writing outperformed dialogue journal writing regarding organization and language use, while dialogue journal writing could result in better performance in terms of content and vocabulary. It should be mentioned that such comparisons could be done more accurately and with a more reliability if Solomon design (with two experimental and one control group) was utilized. This way, the researchers would be able to check if either of the methods were effective in improving writing performance. Most recently, Dabbagh (2017) conducted a six-month study on the effectiveness of dialogue journal writing with 84 intermediate Iranian learners. The experimental group was asked to write weekly journals and then received feedback on its content from the instructor while the control group experienced conventional instruction. The results indicated a significant difference between the experimental and control group, which confirmed the benefits of dialogue journals on the participants' improvement in overall writing performance.

## **Method**

### **Design of the Study**

An experimental pre-test, post-test research design was used to conduct the present study. The use of the dialog journal writing is the independent variable and reading development of the learners and their self-regulation are considered as the dependent variables of the study.

### **Participants**

Sixty English pre-intermediate learners were the participants of the study. They were teenagers of both genders whose age ranged from 16 to 18 and had already studied English for 2 years in a language institute. The selection of the participants was done through convenient sampling in which the participants are chosen based on their availability.

### **Instrumentation**

In order to gather the needed data, three instruments were employed in this study: placement test, pre- and post-test reading, and pre- and post-questionnaire.

### **Procedure**

To conduct the study, at first 66 EFL learners were chosen as the participants from an English language institute. Then, to homogenize them a placement test was administered and 60 participants whose scores fell within  $\pm 1$  standard deviation from the mean score, were selected as the participants. They were then divided into two groups two control and experimental groups and a reading test was administered as pre-test. Also, a pre-questionnaire was distributed among the participants of the experimental group to obtain their views about the effectiveness of dialogue journal writing on self-regulation. Next, treatment was implemented in twelve, 60-minute sessions. The experimental group was required to read a short story each session. Then, the author asked a journal question in order for the participants to reflect on their journals. The journal questions varied from day to day but focused on important elements from the story including characters, setting, and plot. The participants were required to write about important themes from the story and analyze characters and character actions. After completing their written responses, each participant switched journals with another participant. This way, the participants had the opportunity to read each other's responses and respond to their journal entry. Then, the dialogue journals were returned to their original owners and the participants discussed what they wrote and their reactions to the responses of the others. This allowed them to think about what they were reading and reflect on what they read. It also exposed participants to other interpretations of the text they might not have considered. This reading instruction continued for four weeks. To produce the dialogic effect, the instructor commented on each journal entry to which the participants replied in a conversational manner. Following Taagart and Wilson (2005), the instructor did not correct

the participants' errors and mistakes in terms of grammar, punctuation and spelling. However, the instructor wrote back in the learners' journals and provide feedbacks on the content or message of their journal entries. On the other hand, the control group received the conventional method of the teaching reading skill. In fact, the control group did not receive any additional reading instruction in the form of oral discussions or the use of dialogue journals. After the treatment, a post-test of reading comprehension skill was run and all of the participants participated in it. The format of post-test was similar to the pre-test. After conducting the post-test, all the papers were corrected and the scores were written next to the pre-test scores for analyzing and identifying the possible differences between the two tests (pre- and post- tests). In the final step, post-questionnaire of self-regulation was given to the experimental group to investigate the participants' self-regulation through using dialogue journal writing.

### Results

The results obtained from the analysis of the data showed that the mean scores of the control and experimental groups have increased in the post-test. However, the difference between the means of the pre- and post-test in the experimental group is noticeable. In other words, as table 1 below indicates. the mean of the post-test in the experimental group has increased more than the mean score of the control group.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics of T-Tests*

<b>Paired Samples Statistics</b>					
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>
<b>Control Group</b>	Pre-test	16.07	30	2.732	0.475
	Post-test	16.13	30	2.272	0.435
<b>Experimental Group</b>	Pre-test	16.10	30	2.725	0.485
	Post-test	17.05	30	2.225	0.499

Table 2 below shows the differences between standard deviation and mean scores sample and the correlation.

**Table 2***Paired Sample T-Test*

Group / Test		Paired Differences							
		Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
					Lower	Upper			
Control Group	Pretest-Posttest	-0.10	1.31	0.40	-0.62	0.28	-1.32	29	0.03
Experimental Group	Pretest-Posttest	-1.25	1.78	0.14	-2.42	-1.09	-4.21	29	0.00*

The scores of the tests in the experimental and control groups displayed the different means. In other words, as Table 1 shows, the mean scores of pre-test and post-test in the control group are reported as 16.07 and 16.13 respectively. The difference between the two means is 0.06, which indicates a slight difference between them (Table1), while the difference between the mean score of the experimental group is remarkable. According to received data, the mean of the pre-test in the experimental group is 16.10 and the mean of the post-test is 17.05. Therefore, a significant difference between them is considerable, which is 1.05. Furthermore, p-value in control group is 0.03, but in the experimental group is 0.00 which shows the mean score of the experimental group has changed significantly (Table 2). In this part descriptive statistics analysis was conducted in order to examine the items of pre-questionnaire towards participants' self-regulation.

**Table 3***Descriptive Statistics of Pre-Questionnaire*

Items	Very Like me	Like me	Neutral	Not Like me	Not very like me
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)

1. I plan out projects that I want to complete.	10.0%	23.3%	16.7%	30.0%	20.0%
	3	6	2	12	7
2. If an important test is coming up, I create a study plan.	6.7%	13.3%	26.7%	33.3%	20%
3. Before I do something fun, I consider all things that I need to get done.	3	3	1	11	12
	10.0%	10.0%	3.3%	36.7%	40.0%
4. I can usually estimate how much time my homework will take to complete.	3	3	5	14	5
	10.0%	10.0%	16.7%	46.7%	16.7%
5. Once I have a goal, I can usually plan how to reach it.	4	5	2	12	7
	13.3%	16.7%	6.7%	40.0%	23.3%
6. I keep track of how my projects are going.	3	6	2	12	7
	10.0%	20.0%	6.7%	40.0%	23.3%
7. I know when I'm behind on a project.	2	4	7	9	8
	6.7%	13.3%	23.3%	30.0%	26.7%
8. I track my progress for reaching my goal.	3	7	5	9	6
	10.0%	23.3%	16.7%	30.0%	20.0%
9. I know what my grades are at any given time.	3	6	2	12	7
	10.0%	20.0%	6.7%	40.0%	23.3%
10. Daily, I identify things I need to get done and track what gets done.	2	4	4	12	8
	6.7%	13.3%	13.3%	40.0%	26.7%
11. I remember all the things I need to accomplish.	4	5	2	7	12
	13.3%	16.7%	6.7%	23.3%	40%
12. I do what it takes to get my homework done on time.	4	6	2	11	7
	13.3%	20.0%	6.7%	36.7%	23.3%
	0	1	8	11	10

13. I make choices to help me succeed, even when they aren't the most fun right now.	0.0%	3.3%	26.7%	36.7%	33.3%
14. As soon as I see things aren't going right, I want to do something about it.	1 6.7%	2 3.3%	5 16.7%	10 40.0%	12 33.3%
15. I keep trying as many different possibilities as necessary to succeed.	2 6.7%	4 13.3%	8 26.7%	10 33.3%	6 20%
16. I have maintaining my focus on projects that take a long time to complete.	2 6.7%	4 13.3%	4 13.3%	12 40.0%	8 26.7%
17. I'm good at finding different ways to get what I want.	2 6.7%	5 16.7%	4 13.3%	12 40.0%	7 23.3%
18. I think about how well I'm doing on my assignments.	2 6.7%	5 16.7%	3 10.0%	13 43.3%	7 23.3%
19. I feel a sense of accomplishment when I get everything done on time.	4 13.3%	5 16.7%	2 6.7%	7 23.3%	12 40%
20. I think about how well I've done in the past when I set new goals.	3 10.0%	3 10.0%	5 16.7%	14 46.7%	5 16.7%
21. When I fail at something, I try to learn from my mistake.	2 6.7%	4 13.3%	4 13.3%	12 40.0%	8 26.7%
22. I usually decide to change and hope for the best.	3 10.0%	3 10.0%	5 16.7%	14 46.7%	5 16.7%

The above table analyzed the items of the pre-questionnaire. As the table shows, half of the participants (50%) did not plan out their projects that they want to complete. Also, more than half

of them (53.3%) did not create a study plan for important test. Moreover, most of them (76.7%) did not consider all things that they need to get done. Once again, more than half of the participants (63.4%) could not estimate how much time their homework would take to complete, and could not usually plan how to reach a goal. Also, the nearly same percentage (63.3%) did not keep track of how their projects are going. More than half of the participants (36.7%) did not know when they were behind on a project, and 63.3% of the participants did not know about their grades. Again, more than half of the participants (66.7%), could not identify things they need to get done and track what gets done. In addition, 63.3% could not remember all the things they need to accomplish and exactly 60% of them did not do their homework done on time. Also, exactly 70% of the EFL learners could not make choices to help them succeed, and 73.3% did not want to do something about the things that were not going right. Besides, more than half of the participants (53.3%) did not keep trying as many different possibilities as necessary to succeed, and 66.7% did not focus on projects that take a long time to complete. Furthermore, most of the participants (63.3%) were not good at finding different ways to get what they want, and about 67% of them did not think about how well they were doing on assignments. As the previous item, 63.3% of the respondents did not feel a sense of accomplishment when they get everything done on time, and 63.4% did not think about how well they had done in the past. Finally, 66.7% of the participants did not try to learn from their mistakes, and also 63.4% did not decide to change and hope for the best.

Figure 1 below indicates the average of the participants' views on the items of pre-questionnaire. More than half of the participants (51.34%) selected the options of "not like me" and "not very like me". However, less than half of them (35.33%) selected "like me" and "very like me" options, and 13.33% of the participants selected the "Neutral" option.

### Figure 1

#### *Average Analysis of All Items of Pre-Questionnaire*

Not very Like me	Not Like me	Neutral	Like me	Very Like me
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Descriptive statistics analysis was conducted in order to evaluate the items of the questionnaire related to dialogue journal writing method on EFL learners' self-regulation. Like the pre-questionnaire, all the statements measured in a 5-point Likert scale (5), ranging from "Not very

like me" to "Very like me". Mean score, standard deviation, and percentage of each item were used in order to investigate every question. These results were displayed in the following tables and figures.

**Table 4***Descriptive Statistics of Item One*

Item	VL	L	N	NL	NVL
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1. I plan out projects that I want to complete.	9	12	0	5	4
	30.00%	40.00%	0.00%	16.67%	13.33%

Mean	SD	Variance	Min	Max	Confidence Level (95.0%)	Count	Sum
3.65	4.6368	21.5	0	12	5.75735	5	30

**1. Very like me; 2. Like me; 3. Neutral; 4. Not Like me; 5. Not very like me**

As the above table indicates, most of the participants (70%) believed that they plan out projects that they want to complete. Whereas, 30% of them did not plan out their projects, and nobody gave the neutral answer to this item.

**Table 5***Descriptive Statistics of Item Two*

Item	VL	L	N	NL	NVL
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
• If an important test is coming up, I create a study plan.	11	12	1	4	2
	36.67%	40.00%	3.33%	13.33%	6.67%

Mean	SD	Variance	Min	Max	Confidence Level (95.0%)	Count	Sum
3.2	5.1478	26.5	1	12	6.39185	5	30



The second item analyzed the study plan for important test. As the table shows, almost 77% of respondents stated that if an important test is coming up, they create a study plan. While exactly 20% of them indicated their disagreements on the proposed item. Also, 3.33% of them had neutral idea.

**Table 6***Descriptive Statistics of Item Three*

Item		VL	L	N	NL	NVL	
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	
• Before I do something fun, I consider all things that I need to get done.		9	9	0	5	7	
		30.00%	30.00%	0.00%	16.67%	23.33%	
Mean	SD	Variance	Min	Max	Confidence Level (95.0%)	Count	Sum
4.1	3.7416	14	0	9	4.64588	5	30

Based on the above table, 60% of the participants said that before they do something fun, they consider all things that they need to get done. However, 40% of them displayed their disagreements on this item and nobody showed the neutral idea on this item.

**Table 7***Descriptive Statistics of Item Four*

Item		VL	L	N	NL	NVL	
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	
4. I can usually estimate how much time my homework will take to complete.		14	11	0	3	2	
		46.67%	36.67%	0.00%	10.00%	6.67%	
Mean	SD	Variance	Min	Max	Confidence Level (95.0%)	Count	Sum
2.9	6.1237	37.5	0	14	7.6036	5	30

As seen in table, data analysis highlighted that nearly 83.5% of respondents could usually estimate how much time their homework would take to complete. Whereas, a low percentage of

them (16.67%) of them demonstrated their disagreements on the mentioned item. Nobody stated the neutral perception on the sixth item.

**Table 8**

*Descriptive Statistics of Item Five*

Item	VL	L	N	NL	NVL		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
5. Once I have a goal, I can usually plan how to reach it.	14	8	0	5	3		
	46.67%	26.67%	0.00%	16.67%	10.00%		
<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Confidence Level (95.0%)</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Sum</b>
3.25	5.3385	28.5	1	14	6.62867	5	30

In table 8, descriptive analysis toward making plans illustrated that most of the EFL learners (nearly 73.5%) reported once they have a goal, they can usually plan how to reach it. Whereas, a low percentage (26.67%) of them could not plan to deal with it, and nobody had neutral idea on the mentioned item.

**Table 9**

*Descriptive Statistics of Item Six*

Item	VL	L	N	NL	NVL		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
6. I keep track of how my projects are going.	13	6	2	4	5		
	43.33%	20.00%	6.67%	13.33%	16.67%		
<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Confidence Level (95.0%)</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Sum</b>
3.35	4.1833	17.5	2	13	5.19425	5	30

In table 9, data analysis remarked that 63.33% of the participants stated that they keep track of how their projects are going. While, 30% of them disagreed and strongly disagreed with the above statement, and 6.67% indicated their neutral ideas toward this item.

**Table 10***Descriptive Statistics of Item Seven*

Item	VL	L	N	NL	NVL		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
7. I know when I'm behind on a project.	8	10	3	4	5		
	26.67%	33.33%	10.00%	13.33%	16.67%		
<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Confidence Level (95.0%)</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Sum</b>
3.9	2.9154	8.5	3	10	3.62004	5	30

Based on the related table, exactly 60% of the participants considered that they know when they are behind on a project. However, 30% of them showed their disagreements toward this item, and 10% of them had a neutral idea toward the above question.

**Table 11***Descriptive Statistics of Item Eight*

Item	VL	L	N	NL	NVL		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
8. I track my progress for reaching my goal.	12	11	1	4	2		
	40.00%	36.67%	3.33%	13.33%	6.67%		
<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Confidence Level (95.0%)</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Sum</b>
3.15	5.1478	26.5	1	12	6.39118	5	30

The above table reflected the attitudes of the participants on the given item. As it can be seen, a great percentage of them (76.67%) declared that they track their progress for reaching their goal. However, 20% of them indicated their disagreement on the item, and 3.33% of them had a neutral idea on it.

**Table 12***Descriptive Statistics of Item Nine*

Item	VL	L	N	NL	NVL
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
9. I know what my grades are at any given time.	7	10	2	5	6
	23.33%	33.33%	6.67%	16.67%	20.00%

Mean	SD	Variance	Min	Max	Confidence Level (95.0%)	Count	Sum
4.15	2.9154	8.5	2	10	3.62004	5	30

As it can be seen, more than half of the participants (56.66%) claimed they know what they grade are at any given time, but 36.67% did not aware of the mentioned item. Also, 6.67% of them indicated their neutral opinion.

**Table 13***Descriptive Statistics of Item Ten*

Item	VL	L	N	NL	NVL
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
10. Daily, I identify things I need to get done and track what gets done.	11	11	2	3	3
	36.67%	36.67%	6.67%	10.00%	10.00%

Mean	SD	Variance	Min	Max	Confidence Level (95.0%)	Count	Sum

3.3	4.5825	21	2	11	5.69001	5	30
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Descriptive analysis of the above table illustrated that almost 73.5% of participants mentioned that every day they identify things they need to get done and track what gets done, but a low percentage of them (20%) did not agree on the above statement. Also, 6.67% had a neutral attitude.

**Table 14***Descriptive Statistics of Item Eleven*

Item	VL	L	N	NL	NVL		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
11. I remember all the things I need to accomplish.	7	13	1	4	5		
	23.33%	43.33%	3.33%	13.33%	16.67%		
Mean	SD	Variance	Min	Max	Confidence Level (95.0%)	Count	Sum
3.85	4.4721	20	1	13	5.55289	5	30

The analysis showed that most of the EFL learners (66.66%) remember all the things they need to accomplish, but 30% of them disagreed and strongly disagreed on the proposed item. A low percentage of them (3.33%) had a neutral opinion.

**Table 15***Descriptive Statistics of Item Twelve*

Item	VL	L	N	NL	NVL	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	
12. I do what it takes to get my homework done on time.	13	10	0	4	3	
	43.33%	33.33%	0.00%	13.33%	10.00%	
Mean	SD	Variance	Min	Max	Confidence Level (95.0%)	Count

							Sum
3.2	5.3385	28.5	0	13	6.62867	5	30

To analysis the above item, 76.66% of the participants do what it takes to get their homework done on time. In other words, only 23.33% did not observe the statement, and nobody illustrated the neutral perception.

**Table 16**

*Descriptive Statistics of Item Thirteen*

Item	VL	L	N	NL	NVL
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
13. I make choices to help me succeed, even when they aren't the most fun right now.	10	9	0	6	5
	33.33%	30.00%	0.00%	20.00%	16.67%

Mean	SD	Variance	Min	Max	Confidence Level (95.0%)	Count	Sum
3.85	3.9370	15.5	0	10	4.88843	5	30

Moreover, as the above table revealed, 66.33% of them noted that they make choices to help them succeed, even when they aren't the most fun right now. However, 36.67% noted they did not enough support in the class.

**Table 17**

*Descriptive Statistics of Item Fourteen*

Item	VL	L	N	NL	NVL
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
14. As soon as I see things aren't going right, I want to do something about it.	9	9	1	5	6
	30.00%	30.00%	3.33%	16.67%	20.00%

Mean	SD	Variance	Min	Max	Confidence Level (95.0%)	Count	Sum
4	3.3166	11	1	9	4.11813	5	30

According to the above table, exactly 60% mentioned that as soon as they see things aren't going right, they want to do something about it. Whereas, 36.67% of them remarked their disagreement on the above statement, and 3.33% had a neutral idea.

**Table 18**

*Descriptive Statistics of Item Fifteen*

Item	VL	L	N	NL	NVL
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
15. I keep trying as many different possibilities as necessary to succeed.	11	9	0	4	6
	36.67%	30.00%	0.00%	13.33%	20.00%

Mean	SD	Variance	Min	Max	Confidence Level (95.0%)	Count	Sum
3.75	4.3011	18.5	0	11	5.34059	5	30

As it can be understood from the table above, a high majority responded (66.67%) keep trying as many different possibilities as necessary to succeed, but 33.33% of them stated that they did not try, and nobody had neutral idea on the given item.

**Table 19**

*Descriptive Statistics of Item Sixteen*

Item	VL	L	N	NL	NVL
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
16. I have maintaining my focus on projects that take a long time to complete.	9	9	0	5	7
	30.00%	30.00%	0.00%	16.67%	23.33%

Mean	SD	Variance	Min	Max	Confidence Level (95.0%)	Count	Sum
4.1	3.7416	14	0	9	4.64588	5	30

According to the above table, exactly 60% maintaining their focus on projects that take a long time to complete, whereas, 40% of them remarked their disagreement on the above statement, and nobody had a neutral idea.

**Table 20**

*Descriptive Statistics of Item Seventeen*

Item	VL (1)	L (2)	N (3)	NL (4)	NVL (5)
17. I'm good at finding different ways to get what I want.	9 30.00%	12 40.00%	0 0.00%	5 16.67%	4 13.33%

Mean	SD	Variance	Min	Max	Confidence Level (95.0%)	Count	Sum
3.65	4.6368	21.5	0	12	5.75735	5	30

As the above table shows, exactly 70% of the participants mentioned that they are good at finding different ways to get what they want, but 30% showed their disagreements on the mentioned item, and nobody had neutral idea.

**Table 21**

*Descriptive Statistics of Item Eighteen*

Item	VL (1)	L (2)	N (3)	NL (4)	NVL (5)
	9	9	0	5	7



18. I think about how well I'm doing on my assignments.		30.00%	30.00%	0.00%	16.67%	23.33%	
<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Confidence Level (95.0%)</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Sum</b>
4.1	3.7416	14	0	9	4.64588	5	30

Data analysis toward the above statement indicated that exactly 60% of the participants think about how well they are doing on their assignments, while 40% of them did not think about their homework, and nobody had neutral opinion.

**Table 22**

*Descriptive Statistics of Item Nineteen*

<b>Item</b>	<b>VL</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>NL</b>	<b>NVL</b>		
	<b>(1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>(5)</b>		
19. I feel a sense of accomplishment when I get everything done on time.	8	10	3	4	5		
	26.67%	33.33%	10.00%	13.33%	16.67%		
<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Confidence Level (95.0%)</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Sum</b>
3.9	2.9154	8.5	3	10	3.62004	5	30

The above table indicated that 60% of the respondents feel a sense of accomplishment when they get everything done on time. However, 30% of them showed their disagreements toward this item, and 10% of them had a neutral idea.

**Table 23**

*Descriptive Statistics of Item Twenty*

<b>Item</b>	<b>VL</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>NL</b>	<b>NVL</b>
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	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
20. I think about how well I've done in the past when I set new goals.	9	9	0	5	7		
	30.00%	30.00%	0.00%	16.67%	23.33%		
Mean	SD	Variance	Min	Max	Confidence Level (95.0%)	Count	Sum
4.1	3.7416	14	0	9	4.64588	5	30

The above table analyzed the participants' views on how well they have done in the past. As the related table highlighted, more than half of them (60 %) mentioned that they think about how well they've done in the past when they set new goals. but, 40% of them displayed their negative view on this item and nobody showed the neutral idea on this item.

**Table 24**

*Descriptive Statistics of Item Twenty-one*

Item	VL	L	N	NL	NVL		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
21. When I fail at something, I try to learn from my mistake.	12	11	1	4	2		
	40.00%	36.67%	3.33%	13.33%	6.67%		
Mean	SD	Variance	Min	Max	Confidence Level (95.0%)	Count	Sum
3.15	5.1478	26.5	1	12	6.39118	5	30

The above table analyzed the participants' fail at something. As the table shows, a most of the participants (76.67%) uttered hat when they fail at something, they try to learn from their mistake. but, 20% of them indicated their negative attitude on the item, and 3.33% of them indicated their neutral idea on it.

**Table 25**

*Descriptive Statistics of Item Twenty-two*

Item	VL	L	N	NL	NVL
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
22. I usually decide to change and hope for the best.	14	11	0	3	2
	46.67%	36.67%	0.00%	10.00%	6.67%

Mean	SD	Variance	Min	Max	Confidence Level (95.0%)	Count	Sum
2.9	6.1237	37.5	0	14	7.6036	5	30

Finally, the last item analyzed the participants' decisions and hopes. According to the data, a great percentage of the EFL participants (83.5%) reported that they usually decide to change and hope for the best. While, a low percentage of them (16.67%) did not decide to change, and nobody showed neutral idea on the item. Additionally, the following table, analyzed mean, variance, SD of all the items of the questionnaire. That is to say, the table illustrated the scale statistics of the 22 items of the questionnaire.

### Discussion

The questions guiding the research are evaluated here. The first search question explored the impact of employing dialog journal writing on EFL learners' reading comprehension.

#### ***Q1. What is the effect of dialog journal writing on EFL learners' reading development?***

Descriptive statistics illustrated the participants' improvement in reading comprehension ability by implementing dialogue journal writing method. Based on the related table (4.1), the means of participants' scores in the control group were 16.07 and 16.13 in pre-test and post-test. However, in experimental group the mean of pre-test is 16.10, and the post- test is 17.05. In fact, the EFL learners of the experimental group had better performance in reading comprehension post-test (16.13<17.05). Findings of the study proved that there was statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre and post-test. Due to the careful analysis, the first null hypothesis "using dialog journal writing does not have any significant effect on EFL learners' reading development" is completely rejected here. It is worth mentioning that the results of the present study are in contrast with the results by Baker (2014). The study analyzed the impact of dialogue journals on participant achievement in the area of reading comprehension

for fourth graders. The measurement tools for this study were the 2012-2013 Baltimore County Fourth Grade Fall and Winter Benchmark Assessments. The null hypothesis was supported for this study as there was no significant gains made by the group using the dialogue journals. However, the results of the present study are partial in line with the study by Dabbagh (2017). He explored the effect of dialogue journal writing on a language skill (writing performance). Participants were the EFL intermediate learners who were selected based on their performance on Oxford Placement Test and divided randomly into experimental and control groups. Findings of independent sample t-test located a significant difference between the experimental and control group regarding the overall writing performance, as well as the sub-components of content, organization, and vocabulary in the post-test. Moreover, the results of the present study support previous studies by different researchers as Lagan (2000) and Uduma (2011) which indicates the importance of dialogue journal writing in enhancing the quality of writing performance. In addition, findings of this research confirm the findings of the studies by Peng, (2007); Larrotta, (2008); Tuan, (2010); Wafa et al., (2010). This might be traced back to the three fundamental features of dialogue journal writing, namely the freedom in choosing the content to write about, writing a lot about those interested topics in a stress-free environment, and the dialogic individual feedback by the teacher (Mlynarczyk, 2013).

### ***Q2. What is the effect of using dialog journal writing on EFL learners' self-regulation?***

In the previous chapter, descriptive statistics illustrated the participants' attitudes by 22 items on the effectiveness of using dialogue journal writing on participants' self-regulation. Based on the achieved results of the post-questionnaire, more than half of the participants of the experimental group knew when they are behind on a project, planed out projects and they created a study plan in an important test. In their ideas, they consider all things before they do something and they kept track of how their projects are going. Also, they focused on projects that take a long time to complete, thought about how well they are doing on their assignments and wanted to do something as they see things aren't going right. Most of the participants thought about how well they have done when they set new goals and felt a sense of accomplishment when they get everything done on time. Moreover, the participants remembered all the things they need to accomplish, tried as many different possibilities as necessary to succeed and made choices to help them succeed. In

addition, a high percentage of them identified things they need to get done and could usually plan to reach a goal as well as tracked their progress for reaching their goal. They also reported that they were good at finding different ways to get what they want, and tried to learn from their mistake. Finally, a great percentage of the participants could estimate how much time their homework would take to complete and they did their homework done on time. More importantly they usually decided to change and hope for the best. Considering the above discussion, the second null hypothesis on "using dialog journal writing does not have any significant effect on EFL learners' self-regulation" cannot be accepted here. The findings of the present study are compatible with some of the previous studies as Jado (2015). The study investigated the effect of using learning journals on self-regulated learning among a sample of 61 pre-service teachers. Self-regulated learning and reflective thinking scales were applied after verifying their psychometric properties on the study sample. The results revealed that there are remarkable differences between the means of the responses on the domains of the reflective thinking scale in the pre and post-tests in favor of the experimental group. The findings also showed that there are significant differences among the means of the responses on the domains of self-regulated learning in the pre and post-tests in favor of the experimental group. Similarly, in a study by Maftoon and Tasnimi (2014) investigated the effect of self-regulation on EFL learners' reading comprehension. 149 Iranian EFL language learners were selected based on their performance on TOEFL PBT test and randomly put into two experimental and control groups. The results concluded that self-regulation has a significant effect on reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. Also, the findings of this study are similar with a study by Zarei et al., (2016) which evaluated the relationship between self-regulated learning strategies and reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. The participants were asked to respond to the Self-Regulation Trait Questionnaire. The results showed that from among the six components of self-regulated learning strategies, only planning and effort components were significant predictors of reading comprehension.

### **Conclusion**

Dialogue journal writing method presented the advantages over the ordinary method in improving reading comprehension skills. Analysis of the data in previous chapter illustrated that this difference was due to the mentioned method of teaching since the researcher previously controlled

all extraneous variables. This large effect can be attributed to instructional activities, techniques and teaching aids which aimed at developing reading comprehension skill. Additionally, these differences were due to the fact that dialogue journal writing method emphasized on group and pair work and the teacher's assistance which was removed gradually. Furthermore, the result was also attributed to the positive interaction and participation of the participants themselves who showed motivation and because they were given enough assistance and support by the teacher at the beginning stages until they proved mastery. In conducting the present study, the experimental group showed a noticeable improvement from the pre-test to the post-test, this is likely due to the dialogue journal writing instruction they received. In fact, the treatment group which received additional reading instruction incorporating the use of dialogue journals indicated greater gains than the control group receiving traditional reading instruction. Accordingly, the study concluded that using dialog journal writing have significant effect on EFL learners' reading development.

Moreover, received data from the post-questionnaire proved that using dialog journal writing has a significant effect on the EFL learners' self-regulation. The results of this research highlighted the importance of dialogue journal writing in EFL self-regulation and reading instruction. In fact, dialogue journals provide regular practice which can lead EFL readers to make connections to what they are reading on their topic of interest. As the results of the study indicated, such a repeated practice can result in development of participants' reading performance. Applying dialogue journal writing improves what teachers hope to gain by directing their attention on introducing the facilitation of learners' understanding and conceptualization of learning. As Herbert et al., (2013) mentioned, extended writing improved reading comprehension better than question answering on measures where comprehension was examined using an extended writing activity. These activities prepared learners for recalling information from the text when they had to write about the text for a longer period of time. Also, using writing journals provide learners with a particular means of self-representation (Pavlenko, 2002). In Ivanic's (1998) idea, they provide opportunities to negotiate socially available possibilities for selfhood. Reading instructors are suggested to add dialogue journal writing as a right practice outside the class to help participants promote their language skills especially in a meaningful context. Taking the results of the present study into account, a number of implications seems possible for the practice of teaching reading skill. As a

part of the study, the researcher gathered information about the impact of implementing journal writings on reading comprehension and self-regulation at language institute

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## Communicative Language Teaching Method (CLT) and Final Examination of Iranian EFL Learners



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### Abstract

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) aims at improving students' abilities to communicate in a foreign language that has been accepted and employed by numerous EFL teachers. The current research attempted to probe the effectiveness of CLT method as a communicative approach on EFL learners' achievements in the final examination. It also aimed at exploring the EFL learners' attitudes towards the use of CLT method in their language classes. A total number of 60 female students of elementary level was selected based on convenience sampling. A pre-test was administered to the participants at the beginning of the term to ensure that they had the same language background. Then, they were randomly assigned as experimental and control group (30 students in each group). Communicative activities were employed with the experimental group while control group was exposed to traditional, non-communicative teaching method. The research lasted a term approximately six weeks. At the end of the experiment, a post-test (final exam) was assigned to both groups to determine whether CLT method had positively affected the EFL learners' achievement in final examination. In the last session, CLT questionnaire was published among experimental group to explore their views (positive or negative) towards CLT method. By conducting this study, it was found that CLT method had a positive effect on the students' achievements in final examination. The experimental study has also illustrated the positive students' attitude toward this communicative teaching method.

### Available online

### Keywords:

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Communicative Competence, Communicative Activities, Final Examination

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### Introduction

One of the most accepted trends in the field of foreign language teaching is the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which was introduced in the 1970s. CLT applicability to English as a foreign language (EFL) context has recently been debated extensively. The emergence of CLT occurred at the time when language teaching was looking for a change. Due to the unsatisfactory traditional syllabus that failed to improve students' ability to use language for communication, linguists attempted to design a syllabus to achieve the communicative goals of language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Based on Taylor (1983), a communicative classroom requires an atmosphere which encourages students to exercise their own initiative in communicating and in which communication can take place comfortably. Communicative activities have an important role in creating opportunities for learners to use the language for communicative purposes. Totally, communicative activities are "fluency-based activities" (Trait, 2001, p.1) which encourage meaningful and purposeful interaction between students, where they bridge an information or opinion gaps, ask for or give real information and find out the other students' ideas (Harmer, 2003). Since CLT was first introduced with the purpose of engaging learners in authentic communication to improve their communicative competence, those students play a decisive role in determining the level of success CLT may achieve (Chung & Huang, 2009). Understanding the beliefs, preferences, attitudes and needs of the next generation is inevitable if EFL instruction is really behind empowering students culturally and linguistically (Savignon, 2007). Seeking learners' attitudes and views of CLT as a widespread framework in shaping current definitions of the goals set for EFL teaching is quintessential to help students attain these objectives (Savignon & Wang, 2003). Additionally, some scholars (Horwitz, 2006; Wenden, 2008) agreed that an investigation of students' attitudes can lead to more effective in- and out-of-class language learning behaviors as well as greater self-knowledge and autonomy. Nonetheless, students' perceptions toward and beliefs about communicative language teaching have not received the due attention especially since "most studies look at students' attitudes about language learning in general; few focus on students' attitudes about instructional practices in particular" (Savignon, 2007, p. 225). Therefore,

by implementing CLT method in a language institute, the present work sets to explore Iranian EFL learners' attitudes towards the results of final examination.

The goal of communicative approach lies in activities which aimed at developing students' ability to use language to interact with people in real situations. Regarding its noticeable effectiveness, the communicative syllabus has recently been adopted in Iran (Riazi & Razmjoo, 2006). However, due to the unsatisfactory traditional syllabus that failed to facilitate learners' ability to use language for communication, linguists attempted to design a syllabus to achieve the communicative goals of teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Also, it is evident that activities done in pair and group maximize students' interaction and facilitate students' contribution to each other's learning, and if these types of activities are done appropriately, they decrease difficulties of implementing CLT (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Although many teachers are convinced of the importance of being able to communicate in a language as an important part of language learning, it is also supposed that they may find it difficult to rationalize the use of CLT in a final test preparation. Furthermore, inappropriate teaching methodology and poor resources has negatively impact learners' achievement. The students need to have time to apply their knowledge practically rather simply than memorize it, and be able to demonstrate what they have learned in real life situations. That is, taking final exams to understand learner's achievements should be so designed that to prepare them for real life. In order to do this, it is important that language teachers teach English communicatively in English as much as possible (Mowlaie & Rahimi, 2010). It should be noted that the teachers should provide students with many chances to exchange and negotiate ideas about the test contents, with the teacher as a facilitator promoting their communication. More importantly, finding easier and better method of teaching as CLT, and making learners motivated and interested in EFL classes would be worthwhile.

Focusing on teacher-centered methods and paying too much attention to language forms may lead teaching reading in low efficiency. Unfortunately, in the majority of classroom interactions, teacher is decision-maker about what kind of activities should be performed. Also, in most classes the teacher is mainly the decision-maker and has the right to teach grammar and vocabulary, thus students have no opportunity to practice what has been taught in the class or to learn sub-skills via communicative activities (Biria & Tahririan, 2001). In many language classes, teachers use their own methods to teach, which may incorporate a variety of teaching methods from the Grammar-

Translation to the Audio-Lingual, but none are Communicative. As it can be seen, most of the Iranian English learners, even after graduation, have problems in the appropriate use of grammar and vocabulary (Avanaki & Sadeghi, 2013). The problem of the study was further supported by the findings of some related studies as Rahimi and Naderi (2014), Anani Sarab, Monfared, and Safarzadeh, (2016) which emphasized the fact that communicative methods are neglected in the secondary classes, which leads to the observable shortage in EFL students' ability to communicate. In fact, lack of using communicative activities cannot improve students' achievement and leads to students' failure in final evaluation (Vaezi & Abbaspour, 2014). To come to a closer identification of the mentioned problems, the researcher implemented CLT method and communicative activities which provided students with a plenty of chances to exposure to communicative tasks in order to examine the effectiveness of the method upon the students' achievement in final examination. Employing such a new method of teaching and learning may provide a solution to the mentioned problems of lacking effective communication. To state specifically, this paper investigated the effect of CLT method as a communicative approach on EFL learners' achievements in the final examination. It also aimed at exploring the EFL learners' attitudes towards the use of CLT method in their language classes. In order to meet the research objectives, the following research questions have been formed.

**RQ1.** What is the effect of CLT method on EFL learners' achievements in the final examination?

**RQ2.** What is the EFL learners' attitudes towards the use of CLT method in EFL learners' language classes?

### **Review of Literature**

Ozsevik (2010) investigated sixty-one Turkish teachers of English teaching at primary and secondary levels by conducting a series of semi-structured and informal interviews and an online questionnaire. The results revealed that Turkish EFL teachers, while aware of the achievements, observe many difficulties in implementing CLT in their classrooms. The results also suggest that despite showing keen interest in change and being eager to be identified with CLT, Turkish teachers are not rather optimistic about the complete adoption of CLT, and thus feel that only by overcoming the difficulties from those four sources, and by establishing more favorable conditions for the implementation of CLT can teachers truly benefit from CLT in their English classrooms.

In other study, Asassfeh et al., (2012) addressed 1525 EFL school learners' attitudes and perceived implementation of traditional Form-Focused Instruction (FFI) and communicative Meaning-Oriented Instruction (MOI) of English. The data were collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and referential statistics. Results showed that students' preferences associated with MOI were relatively higher. Female learners held relatively higher preference and reported significantly higher exposure to MOI. Compared to private-school learners, public-school learners held higher preference for and more involvement MOI. Low-proficiency learners reported higher preference to, and more practice of, FFI. These results were discussed, and recommendations were set accordingly. Along the same line, Rahimi and Naderi (2014) investigated the relationship between EFL teachers' attitudes towards CLT and perceived difficulties of implementing CLT in language classes. The results of the descriptive statistics showed that EFL teachers had positive attitudes towards CLT in general and group work in communicative classes in particular. Further, while EFL teachers generally did not find much difficulty in implementing CLT in language classes, they found the difficulties the educational system creates as a major obstacle to use CLT. Moreover, CLT attitudes and perceived difficulties of CLT implementation were not found to be related; however, when subscales of CLT attitudes and perceived difficulties questionnaires were considered, three correlations were found to be statistically significant. Moreover, Humphries and Burns (2015) showed that there are some barriers to the implementation of CLT as an ELT curriculum innovation in Japan. They believe that the main barriers to the implementation of CLT as an innovative curriculum are related to (a) minimizing the importance of the expectations and beliefs of the teachers (b) not providing opportunities for teachers to understand CLT principles underlying the textbooks and (c) not developing opportunities for problem-solving meetings between teachers and school managers.

Anani Sarab et al., (2016) have investigated Iranian teachers' perception of CLT principles and practices through a survey of 75 secondary school teachers in the context of the newly introduced English language curriculum developed based on CLT principles. Based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative data using a semi-structured questionnaire supplemented with interviews with a smaller group of teachers, the results of the survey revealed that a change in classroom arrangements is required before CLT can be practiced in secondary school English classes in Iran. The results also showed that the employment of CLT procedures at

the local level is at its beginning stages and might take time to take root. The conclusion is that for the suggested changes in the curriculum to be implemented and realized in English education in Iran, the findings of more comprehensive surveys complemented with observation of teachers' instructional practices is required to inform the change implementation. In a more recent study by Aalaei (2017), the effect of the implementation of CLT method analyzed on speaking and listening skills of Iranian third year secondary students. A quantitative study was conducted on two randomly selected intact classes as experimental and control group. Different communicative activities were used with the experimental group while the control group used traditional method such as the audio-lingual method. At the end of the experiment, a post-test was assigned to both groups to determine whether the CLT had positively affected the students' speaking abilities. A final self-report questionnaire invited participants to evaluate their perception towards CLT. The students have to rate each item according to their opinions. It was found that the CLT had a positive effect on the students' listening and speaking skills. This was proved through the higher mean scores that the experimental group obtained in the post-test. Also, most of the students of the experimental group indicated their positive views on the CLT.

## Method

### Research Design

According to Mackey (2006), quantitative research starts with an experimental design in which a hypothesis is followed by the quantification of data and some sort of numerical analysis is carried out. In the present study, the effectiveness of CLT method was analyzed through the scores of students' final exam in terms of numerical data. The study is an experimental one, therefore, quantitative method was chosen for the design of this research to answer the research questions. The dependent variable of the study is the students' achievement in final examination, and the independent variable is using CLT method, a device to engage the learners of the experimental group in communicative activities.

### Participants

The population of the study was composed of 60 female students of elementary level. They have already passed starter level. The age of the learners varied from 13 to 15. They were studying in



four classes of a Language Institute in Kerman. All the participants were native speakers of Persian that participated in the class for 4 hours a week. Based on Dörnyei (2007), sample is a group of participants whom the researcher examines to determine the result of any particular study. Convenience sampling method was used to select the participants from four intact classes. Convenience sampling is a type of nonprobability sampling in which people are sampled simply because they are "convenient" sources of data for researchers.

### **Instrumentation**

Three instruments were employed in this study; language proficiency test as a pre-test, final exam as a post-test, and a related questionnaire on CLT method.

### **Pre-Test (Language Proficiency)**

Before the treatment session began, all of the participants took part in Basic Oxford Test of elementary level. It is a standardized, reliable and valid test. It was used to check the homogeneity of the students in terms of their language proficiency level. The test was comprised of grammar, vocabulary and two short passages of reading comprehension questions with multiple-choice format. Out of 65 students, 60 of them whose scores on the language proficiency test fell within  $\pm 1$  standard deviation of the mean score, labeled as the elementary EFL learners and attended in the present project. It is worthy to note that, the students' scores of this test were written by the researcher and considered as the pre-test scores too. As mentioned above, the test covered all the parts of final examination as grammar, vocabulary and passages of reading comprehension, so it could be regarded as the pretest. Also, both tests were presented with the same format of multiple-choice questions.

### **Post Test (Final Exam)**

To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher used a posttest as final exam to collect the data. The posttest administered for both the Experimental Group (EG) and Control Group (CG) to investigate the students' achievement in final examination. Posttest was extracted from the students' textbook; American English File 1 (elementary level) which was standard and valid test. The format of posttest was as same as the pre-test, included 20 questions of grammar and

vocabulary with three reading comprehension passages (20 questions). Totally, the test was comprised of 40 multiple-choice questions and the scores were calculated out of 20. The purpose of the pre-test was to identify the two groups' level before using the treatment, and the aim of post-test was to compare the results of the pre-test with the results of the post-test after the treatment (Implementing CLT Method).

### **Questionnaire**

After carrying out the treatment, a standardized questionnaire adopted from Komol and Suwanphathama (2020) was distributed to the experimental class. The questionnaire consists of 20 close-ended items in this questionnaire. The questionnaire explored the students' views towards CLT and implementing communicative activities (e.g., the use of role-play, pair work, group discussion activities and language video) for improving students' grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension skill. The students were asked to rate the matters based on a five-point scale ranging from 5 (Strongly agree) to 1 (Strongly disagree). It should be noted that the questionnaire was made valid and reliable by the researcher, and the reliability of the questionnaire was analyzed through Cronbach's Alpha which is reported as .79. It is worthy to note that, the original English questionnaire was translated into Persian to ensure that the participants easily follow its items and then it was translated back into English to ascertain that the translated one had the same interpretation. In addition, validity, just like reliability, is a positivist requirement. It means that a valid instrument should gather what it supposed to gather or it is actually measuring what it is intended to measure. For validity of the questionnaire, two experienced professors as the experts in this field observed the items before it was administered, and they did not report any irrelevant points. They have also reported high validity in fulfilling the research objectives.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

For conducting this study, at first four intact classes of 65 students of elementary level were chosen by the researcher from the language institute where she was teaching English for some years. During Covid-19, the students were able to receive virtual learning, also they were allowed to participate in the class by observing all the protocols. Fortunately, all the students preferred to attend in the class. The students had already finished starter level. Then, the students participated

in Basic Oxford Placement Test for homogenizing. Regarding the obtained scores, 60 of them were selected. In other words, among 65 EFL learners, 60 of them were chosen by researcher based on the mean of scores. It should be noted that the scores of this test were also regarded as the pre-test scores. So, the papers were corrected carefully and the scores were recorded by the researcher. After that, the researcher randomly put them in two groups as the control and experimental groups. Treatment as one of the most important steps of the present work, started after the completion of the pre-test. The treatment implemented in 16 sessions (one term) and the timing of each session was 90 minutes. As mentioned before, one group consisted of 30 students served as the experimental group benefited from CLT techniques. The researcher modeled the strategies for the students of the experimental group and gave them enough practice on how to use them in the language class.

The CLT method targeted students' grammar and vocabulary as sub-skills along with their reading comprehension skill. In experimental class, the students practiced the mentioned sub-skills and reading skill according to the principles of this communicative method. For teaching vocabulary, communicative activities and materials engaged students in the classroom communication included games, discussions, stimulating pictures and role play. In fact, role-play is to create the presence of a real-life situation in the classroom. It gives students an opportunity to practice communicatively in various social contexts and in different social roles. The language applied in this activity is varied, regarding the students' status, attitudes, mood, and different situations. For teaching grammar, games such as cue cards and personalization as name of characters in the role-play were applied. Cue cards used in simple activities as students work in pairs. The teacher prepared 10 cards for them and gave the students guidance as to the sort of questions they should ask and the students work in pairs. First, the students put the cue cards on the table and looked at the pictures for two minutes. Second, the teacher turned the cards face down and shuffled them. Third, the first student took a card and looked at it, without showing it to her partner. Then, the partner had to guess which picture it is by asking questions, and finally the winner would be the one who guessed the most pictures. These activities provided supplementation to the traditional exercises and made a lesson more relaxed and memorable. When playing the game, students practice forms unconsciously by way of communication. A successful

communicative activity helps to generate the target language unconsciously but at the same time makes students enjoy what they are doing.

The researcher adopted communicative activities as discussion and group work for teaching reading comprehension skill. Group Work promotes learner autonomy by allowing students to make their own decisions in the group without being told what to do by the teacher. It also increases the number of talking opportunities for each individual student (Harmer, 2007). In the reading classes these steps in group-work activities were followed. The teacher placed the students of the experimental group into pair groups. At first, there was a warm-up about 6-8 minutes for students as warm-up activities are essential in the English classroom. It served to review language from a previous lesson and prime the class for a new topic. It was the activity used to encourage students' involvement and permeate the development of the whole lesson. The teacher then asked the student pairs to work together to answer the questions from the reading texts. After that, the representative student from each group gives the answers orally and also writes them down on the white board. Finally, the teacher checked their answers and corrected if they were not true. As mentioned above, the other group regarded as the control group and received no treatments, but they participated in pre and posttests. However, in this group, the researcher followed the traditional method of teaching. In fact, teacher-centered training was applied in the control group and the communicative activities were ignored completely. In each session, the teacher read the new text and then several students were asked to read each paragraph of the text again. At the end of each paragraph, meaning of the new words was identified by the teacher. Also, the teacher explained the grammar points directly and wrote down all the points on the board. After that, the students had to do the activities and exercises of the text individually. Finally, the students read their answers to the class, and if they were incorrect, the teacher would correct them directly and the students took all the notes.

The other group which consisted of 30 students, was regarded as the control group and received no treatment. In fact, the researcher followed the ordinary grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension teaching in this group. Fortunately, none of the students were absent during the treatment, and this factor would increase the reliability of the results. After the treatment, the final phase of present research was conducting a post-test, and all of the students participated in it. The format of post-test was similar to pre-test, including grammar, vocabulary and some reading

comprehension parts. Eventually, all the papers were corrected and the scores were written next to the pre-test scores for analyzing and identifying the possible differences between the two tests (pre- and post- tests). In the last session, the translated questionnaire addressed to the experimental group to investigate their attitudes to this strategy. After completing the questionnaires by the students of EG, all the data were gathered for analyzing and interpreting.

### **Data Analysis**

Analysis involves working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others (Zikmund, 2000). In data collection stage, the scores of the tests were taken for analyzing. Actually, after running in pre-test and post-test in both groups, the scores were collected by researcher. To compare the performance of the participants on the post-test, the mean score after the treatment compared through an independent sample t-test to highlight the possible significant difference between the students' achievement in the final examination. Furthermore, the students' attitudes of the experimental group toward CLT method were examined. Therefore, the collected data of the questionnaire were analyzed by SPSS software. That is to say, descriptive statistics, including frequency, mean and percentage were reported to find out the effectiveness of the mentioned method on students' language achievement.

### **Results**

This part aims to provide the results of data analysis based on the proposed research questions. The tables show the participant' responses in detail in terms of frequency, percentage, and mean score.

#### **Examining Pre- and Post-test Results**

First, in conducting this study, the students of control and experimental groups took part in basic Oxford placement test examination as a pre-test. After that, the teacher (researcher) employed CLT activities that were listed before, in the experimental group during a term (15 sessions). However, the EFL learners of the control group received no treatment and they were taught by traditional method of teaching, but they participated in pre and post-test. In other words, his group (CG) did not have any experience of CLT method and activities. After gathering the students' scores, sample

t-tests were run to analyze the quantitative data including pre-test and post-test results. Eventually, the differences between the mean scores in the first examination and then, the difference of the second examination were measured. The null hypothesis for testing two independent samples indicated the equality of means, and the opposite assumptions inferred the inequality of the means. The significant level was considered to be 0.05. If  $p$  value is less than 0.05, it means there is a significant difference between the mean scores of two tests in control and experimental groups.

### Analyzing Pre- and Post-tests' Scores

Table 1 displayed the numbers, mean, and standard deviation of all scores of the two groups, control and experimental. Considering careful analysis, in both groups, the mean scores have increased in the post-test. However, the difference between the means of the pre and post-test in the experimental group is remarkable. In fact, the mean score of the post-test in the experimental group has increased more than the mean score of the control group.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics of T-Test*

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
<b>Control Group</b>	Pre-test	15.25	30	2.180	0.230
	Post-test	15.78	30	2.241	0.310
<b>Experimental Group</b>	Pre-test	15.10	30	2.812	0.478
	Post-test	16.95	30	2.945	0.497

**Table 2**

*Paired Sample T-test*

		Paired Differences								
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
					Lower	Upper				
<b>Con. Group</b>	<b>Pretest - Posttest</b>	-0.53	.061	.08	-0.83	0.23	-1.24	29	0.34	
<b>Exp. Group</b>	<b>Pretest - Posttest</b>	-1.85	.133	.019	-2.48	-1.10	-5.21	29	0.00	

After implementing CLT method and activities, the students' scores of the two groups highlighted different mean scores. In other words, the means of pre-test and post-test in the control group are 15.25 and 15.78 respectively (Table 1), so the difference between the two means is 0.53, which indicates a slight difference between two mean scores (Table 2). However, regarding EG, the difference between the mean scores is observable. Based on the careful analysis, the mean of the pre-test is reported as 15.10, and the mean score of post-tests is 16.95 in the experimental group. Therefore, a remarkable difference between the mean scores of the experimental group is obvious, which is 1.58. Furthermore, p-value in control group is 0.34, but in the experimental group is 0.00 which shows the mean scores of the experimental group has changed significantly (Table 2).

*Descriptive Statistics of Questionnaire*

The following table indicated descriptive data analysis of the questionnaire and the results are presented in the form of table.

**Table 3***Descriptive Statistic of Questionnaire Items*

Item	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
1. The role-play activities help me to have confidence in using new grammar and vocabulary.	3 10%	4 13.33%	3 10%	12 40%	8 26.67%	3.6	.423
2. The role-play activities allow me to be more creative in using new grammar and words.	2 6.67%	5 16.66%	2 6.67%	13 43.34%	8 26.66%	3.66	.513
3. The role-play activities improve my grammar and vocabulary knowledge.	2 6.67%	3 10%	1 3.33%	15 50%	9 30%	3.86	.562
4. The teacher's instruction is to use new grammar and vocabulary in classroom activities.	4 13.33%	4 13.33%	0 0%	12 40%	10 33.34%	3.66	.585
5. I think group discussion activities help me to learn new grammar and vocabulary.	2 6.66%	5 16.66%	1 3.34%	11 36.67%	11 36.67%	3.80	.558
6. I think group discussion is a useful way to improve reading comprehension.	0 0%	5 16.66%	1 3.34%	14 46.66%	10 33.34%	3.96	.592



7. I think English movies help me get familiar with new words and grammar.	3 10%	8 26.66%	0 0%	9 30%	10 33.34%	3.50	.498
8. The role of the teacher as a facilitator to help us learn new words and grammar is very important.	2 6.67%	3 10%	0 0%	14 46.66%	11 36.67%	3.96	.596
9. Role-play, group discussion, and language video help me to gain improvement in grammar and vocabulary.	3 10%	8 26.66%	1 3.34%	9 30%	9 30%	3.43	.473
10. Role-play, group discussion, and language video improve my confidence to have grammar and vocabulary tests.	4 13.33%	6 20%	3 10%	9 30%	8 26.67%	3.36	.428
11. I think using role-play as a way to promote reading skill, is useful method of learning English.	6 20%	3 10%	0 0%	13 43.33%	8 26.67%	3.46	.445
12. I think using group discussion is very useful to get familiar with the main idea of reading comprehension passages.	1 3.34%	6 20%	0 0%	11 36.66%	12 40%	3.90	.598

13. I hope that the teacher implements this teaching method for learners to learn new words and grammar.	2 6.66%	4 13.34%	0 0%	15 50%	9 30%	3.83	.573
14. I prefer to have role-play activities in reading skill.	5 16.66%	1 3.34%	0 0%	12 40%	12 40%	3.83	.586
15. Even though, role-play activities take much more time to comprehend main idea of reading passages, I continue using it.	2 6.66%	8 26.67%	1 3.34%	12 40%	7 23.33%	3.46	.512
16. Even though role-play activities take me a lot of time to comprehend details of reading, I really enjoy them.	10 33.34%	2 6.66%	0 0%	11 36.66%	7 23.34%	3.10	.502
17. Even though, role-play activities take me a lot of time to answer reading comprehension questions, I really enjoy them.	3 10%	5 16.66%	0 0%	10 33.34%	12 40%	3.76	.567
18. I hope that teacher assigns learners to watch videos to improve their vocabulary and grammar.	6 20%	5 16.67%	2 6.66%	9 30%	8 26.67%	3.26	.533
19. It takes me a long time to watch a video about reading comprehension, but I really enjoy doing it.	4 13.33%	4 13.33%	2 6.67%	13 43.34%	7 23.33%	3.50	.564

20. I prefer to use different activities in reading comprehension to improve my reading skill.	7	2	0	10	11	3.53	.572
	23.33%	6.67%	0%	33.34%	36.66%		

Data analysis of the first item indicates that more than half of the students (66.67%) mentioned that role-play activities helped them to have confidence in using new grammar and vocabulary, 10% of them had neutral idea, and the rest disagreed on the mentioned item. Based on data analysis of the second item, exactly 70% of the students stated that role-play activities allowed them to be more creative in using new grammar and words, while about 23.5% of them disagreed and 6.67% had neutral opinion on them above item. Descriptive analysis of the third item displays that a high percentage (80%) of the students mentioned that the role-play activities improved their grammar and vocabulary knowledge. However, a low percentage of them (16.67%) disagreed, and just 3.33% showed their neutral perception. Based on data analysis of the fourth item, about 73.5% of the students declared that the teacher's instruction is to use new grammar and vocabulary in classroom activities, and the analysis of item five showed that most of the EFL learners (73.34%) thought that group discussion activities help them to learn new grammar and vocabulary. According to analysis of item six and seven, a great percentage of the respondents (80%) thought that group discussion was a useful way to improve reading comprehension and more than half of the EFL learners (66.34%) thought that English movies help them get familiar with new words and grammar. Analysis of item eight and nine, a great number of the participants (83.33%) agreed that the role of the teacher as a facilitator helped them learn new words and grammar, and exactly 60% of the students mentioned that role-play, group discussion, and language video help them to gain improvement in grammar and vocabulary, but 36.66% disagreed and 3.34% had neutral idea. Also, descriptive analysis indicated that 56.67% of the subjects uttered that role-play, group discussion, and language video improved their confidence to have grammar and vocabulary tests. Whereas, 33.33% of them disagreed and 10% of them showed their neutral opinion towards the item. As seen in table 3, data analysis represents that exactly 70% of the EFL students thought that using role-play as a way to promote reading skill, was useful method of learning, but exactly 30% of them demonstrated their disagreements and nobody had neutral opinion on the mentioned item.

Moreover, data analysis highlights that 76.66 of the respondents thought that using group discussion was very useful to get familiar with the main idea of reading comprehension passages. The above table showed that most of the respondents, exactly 80% of the subjects hoped that the teacher implemented this teaching method for learners to learn new words and grammar. Also, a great percentage of the participants (80%) preferred to have role-play activities in reading skill, and 63.33% of the students believed that even though, role-play activities took much more time to comprehend main idea of reading passages, they continued using it. Based on the analysis of the above item, exactly 60% the participants of experimental group uttered that even though role-play activities took them a lot of time to comprehend details of reading passages, they really enjoyed them. As the above table reveals, 73.34% of the participants said that even though, role-play activities took them a lot of time to answer reading comprehension questions, they really enjoyed them. Besides, more than half of the EFL learners (56.67%) hoped that teacher assigned learners to watch videos to improve their vocabulary and grammar. Also, more than half of the participants (66.67%) in the experimental group announced that it took them a long time to watch a video about reading comprehension, but they really enjoyed doing it. Analysis of the last item reveals that exactly 70% of the respondents preferred to use different activities in reading comprehension to improve their reading skill, 30% of them disagreed and nobody had neutral view on the last item.

In the following part, mean score of each option of the questionnaire is shown. As table 4 indicates, "Agree" with the highest mean score (39) placed in the first rank of the table. Then, "Strongly Agree" puts in the second rank with the mean score of 31.16, and "Disagree" comes in the third rank with the mean of 15.16. Moreover, "Strongly Disagree" and "Neutral" options with the mean score of 10.33 and 2.33 received the fourth and the last rank respectively. Therefore, as it can be seen in the following table, most of the respondents of the experimental group indicated their agreement on the items of CLT questionnaire.

**Table 4**

*Mean Scores of the Questionnaire Options*

N	Options	Mean Score	Rank
1	Agree	39.00	1 <sup>st</sup>
2	Strongly Agree	31.16	2 <sup>nd</sup>

3	Disagree	15.16	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4	Strongly Disagree	10.33	4 <sup>th</sup>
5	Neutral	2.33	5 <sup>th</sup>

### Discussion

After implementing CLT method and activities, the students' scores of the two groups highlighted different mean scores. As table 1 indicated, in the control group, the mean of pre-test was reported as 15.25 and the mean score of the post-test was 15.78. However, the mean scores of the pre and post-test in the experimental group were achieved as 15.10 and 16.95 respectively. Therefore, a remarkable difference between the mean scores of the experimental group is remarkable, which is 1.58. Moreover, p-value in the control group was 0.34, but in the experimental group was 0.00 which shows the mean scores in the experimental group has changed significantly. This study also focused on the participants' attitude through CLT questionnaire and a great number of the participants (80% and more) agreed that the role of the teacher as a facilitator was very important to help them. They preferred to have role-play activities in reading skill and stated that these activities improved their grammar and vocabulary knowledge. In their views, group discussion was a useful way to improve reading comprehension, and they hoped that the teacher implemented this teaching method for learners to learn new words and grammar. Additionally, a high number of students (70% and more) thought that using group discussion was very useful to get familiar with the main idea of reading comprehension passages and also helped them to learn new grammar and vocabulary. They really enjoyed role-play activities and such activities allowed them to be more creative in using new grammar and words. Based on their views, using role-play activities was useful method of learning. They preferred to use different activities in reading comprehension to improve their reading skill. Furthermore, data analysis of the questionnaire indicated that most of the students (60% and more) agreed that role-play, group discussion, and language video help them to gain improvement in grammar and vocabulary and they really enjoyed them. They also uttered that role-play activities helped them to have confidence in using new grammar and vocabulary, and they thought that English movies help them get familiar with them. They preferred to continued using such activities. Finally, more than half of the EFL learners (50%) mentioned that role-play, group discussion, and language video improved their confidence to have grammar

and vocabulary tests. They hoped that teacher assigned learners to watch videos to improve their vocabulary and grammar.

It is worthy to note that findings of the present study are compatible with a number of studies that were reviewed earlier. For instance, Aalaei (2017) measured the effect of the implementation of CLT method on speaking and listening skills of Iranian students and it was found that the CLT had a positive effect on the students' listening and speaking skills. Also, most of the students of the experimental group indicated their positive views on the CLT. Moreover, in a study by Rahimi and Naderi (2014) on exploring the relationship between EFL teachers' attitudes towards CLT, EFL teachers showed their positive attitudes towards CLT in general and group work in communicative classes in particular. Furthermore, Riazi and Razmjoo (2006) compared the overall attitude of English teachers in high schools and private institutes and the results revealed that both groups of teachers hold a highly positive attitude towards the premises of CLT. Similarly, in a study by Alkhayyat (2009) which explored the extent to which EFL teachers are aware of some characteristics of CLT and their implementation level of these characteristics, using a questionnaire and classroom observation. The results revealed that the study participants had good knowledge in different degrees of the characteristics addressed despite the hindering obstacles EFL teachers had in CLT implementation. Besides, findings of Karim's (2003) study revealed that teachers hold a positive attitude towards the use of communicative activities as well as principles of CLT. Another study conducted by Matsuura et al., (2001) explored the beliefs of students and English teachers about CLT instruction. The researchers reported that students tended to consider functions, speaking, grammar, listening, cultural differences, reading, non-verbal cues, pronunciation, and writing as important for learning communicative English. However, the results of this study are not supported with a study by Humphries and Burns (2015). They showed that there are some barriers to the implementation of CLT which are related to minimizing the importance of the expectations and beliefs of the teachers, not providing opportunities for teachers to understand CLT principles and not developing opportunities for problem-solving meetings between teachers and school managers. Also, Ozsevik's (2010) study indicated that Turkish EFL teachers observed many difficulties in implementing CLT in their classrooms. The results suggest that despite showing keen interest in change and being eager to be identified with CLT, Turkish teachers are not rather optimistic about the complete adoption of CLT, and thus feel that only by

overcoming the difficulties from those four sources, and by establishing more favorable conditions for the implementation of CLT can teachers truly benefit from CLT in their English classrooms.

### **Conclusion**

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method is one of the latest humanistic approaches which emphasizes on the language use and provides more opportunity to students to practice the target language in spite of its limitation (Thamarana, 2014). As mentioned before, the current study probed the effectiveness of CLT method on EFL learners' achievements in their final examination. It also explored the students' attitude towards the use of this method in their language classes. As Gorsuch (2000) noted, the best way to understand the most effective ways of implementing CLT is doing more research to understand teachers' and students' attitude toward it. By conducting this study, it was found that the CLT method had a positive effect on the students' achievements in final examination. This was proved through the higher mean score that the experimental group obtained in the post-test. Additionally, the experimental study has illustrated the positive students' attitude toward this communicative teaching method. As the outcomes suggest, Iranian EFL students have a general positive attitude towards CLT, they know what the group work is and what benefits it offers. That is to say, the findings affirmed that students considered CLT classroom activities useful as supplement instruction. In fact, the participants preferred to employ communicative activities in language classes. More importantly, they agreed that a wide variety of classroom activities helped them to learn new grammar and vocabulary as well as improved their reading comprehension. All the students strongly agreed with the use of CLT for improving their reading skills. Obviously, the CLT method has changed the experimental class atmosphere to be better than before, as the students felt comfortable and enthusiastic during the teaching-learning processes using the CLT activities. This study could be an attempt to contribute to the Iranian educational reform process, encouraging an effective implementation of the CLT method in Iranian educational system. Some changes need to be taken, and the most important one refers to reform the examination system in Iranian educational system.

Some implications emerged from the findings of the current study. It should be noted that the teachers have a significant role in implementing effective classroom activities to improve learning

environment. More importantly, the students should be aware of using the classroom activities in learning English in order to gain the advantages from the effective classroom activities. Also, teachers should clearly provide students with the reasons for applying such communicative method as CLT, and how this method helps them. In fact, the use of effective classroom activities is a reality and will become increasingly important. Maybe the possibility to completely replace the traditional language classes with the communicative one is doubtful, but the results of this work would be beneficial for language teachers and learners to use such activities to practice and learn English language in their classes. On top of that, in order to be effective in using the communicative activities in the EFL classes, teachers must remove themselves from the classroom attention, and focus on the students more, as the nature of the CLT is student-centered learning. More importantly, some factors need to be considered when it comes to implementing CLT activities in the EFL classes. Most of the educational system still follow the traditional way of teaching and focus on book-based teaching method particularly for the beginners. However, it is important to consider other methods of teaching in order to change the teaching style in the language classes. Teachers should be encouraged to employ CLT activities in the classroom to find out whether students prefer this type of teaching or not. Also, they can conduct a needs analysis to discover what type of communicative activities students are comfortable to participate in. The administration of educational institutions is required to provide teachers with suitable materials to be able to implement CLT effectively in the classes, they also need to provide teachers with training sessions on how to conduct these activities efficiently. These training sessions would be helpful to remove their concerns towards applying teacher-centered methods. More importantly, knowing about the possible challenges related to the communicative method and adjusting the new roles, may help teachers who plan to use CLT method in their instruction. In order to prevent some problems which may result from the difficulties in adapting new roles, both teachers and students may be given training on CLT method. In these training sessions, they may be informed about how to work effectively and how they can handle some possible difficulties. In light of the above discussion, some recommendations can be made as; a shift should be made from less communicative to more communicative context of ELT, the educational policy-makers should regard the applicability of the CLT method in Iranian educational system, EFL teachers should receive training in applying CLT principles and techniques, EFL learners should be encouraged to



speak English with their classmates, and ELT textbook authors should work and model more communicative activities.

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## Teaching-Learning Asymmetry: Why Don't Learners Learn What Teachers Teach?



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### Abstract

Teachers of EFL, as well as teacher trainers, have always complained about mismatch between what they do in the language classes and the outcome of it in the real world. There has been much debate as to whether the mismatch results from learner variables, teacher inadequacies, program deficiencies, etc. The present paper reviews some existing learning perspectives and tries to come up with some hypotheses concerning the problem. One hypothesis put forward here to test in a comparative form is that the language learning environment and the strategies used by the teachers and learners do not match and therefore the efforts of both groups go down the drain. Implications of the possible confirmation of such hypothesis for language teachers are discussed and some conclusions are drawn on that basis.

### Available online

### Keywords:

First language acquisition, second language acquisition, language testing

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### Introduction

Experts have proposed different hypotheses about how languages are learned. From the early times in the history of language learning/teaching, it has been a routine procedure to compare the two processes of L1 and L2 acquisition as similar, sometimes identical (e.g. Guinne series in the early years of the 19th century and natural approaches later, specifically the Natural Approach by Krashen et al., or even the Audiolingual Method). Although this assumption has been challenged in recent years (e.g. Gass and Schachter, 1989), the idea that there are similarities between the two processes is still prevalent in many circles, leading many researchers to concentrate on the issue whenever the problems of SLA are discussed. That is, the issue of the comparison between FLA and SLA seems to be one of the major concerns of researchers in the field. Ellis (2021), as one of the prominent researchers in the area of SLA, for instance, holds that:

My initial concern was solely with what and how I should teach English. However, it soon became clear to me that students frequently failed to learn what I taught them and that there was an obvious gap between ‘teaching’ and ‘learning’ (p.1).

A look at the latest research topics in both L1 and L2 investigations illustrates the point. Most papers or books in the area of SLA have at least one section on this issue. Of the more recent works on SLA, one can refer to Cook's (2000) treatment of the problem where he reviews the work done in this area and particularly where he quotes Ellis' (1994) comparison. That, in turn, is based on Bley-Vroman's (1989) assumption of the *Fundamental Difference Hypothesis*. This emphasis shows that there must be something of interest in the phenomenon of L1 acquisition which cannot be ignored when doing research in SLA. The research question addressed here, therefore, is:

**RQ:** What are the possible causes of the existing asymmetry between teaching and learning in the TEFL environment?

Based on the question presented, the following hypothesis was formulated:

**HO:** The mismatch between Teaching/learning environments and strategies used by teachers and learners leads to failure in TEFL environment.

## Method

### Design of the study

This review paper uses a comparative method to find the similarities and differences between teaching and learning environments as well as the strategies used by teachers and learners in TEFL.

### Procedures

The existing literature in the area of language learning/teaching was reviewed to find answer to the question raised and reject or confirm the suggested hypothesis. The premise in this review was the assumption that in the long-term language learning/teaching has always been based on a comparison between L1/L2 similarities and differences. The review, therefore, discusses these points as extracted from the literature as well as personal experience of the authors in their academic endeavor.

### Discussion of Points of Comparison

The first feature usually compared in the two processes is the ability to learn. Children are said to be endowed with a God-given ability to learn a language quickly and effortlessly. Language learning for children is mostly fun, rather than struggle. This ability, however, is said to disappear slowly, and by the time an adult begins the task of learning a second language this ability is completely gone. Ellis (2021, p.2) Ellis (2021, p.2) refers the interested researchers to the initial point of comparison between L1 and SLA as cited in the following sources:

For studies in the areas of interest such as Period Key studies, Key findings, Theoretical influences, Order and sequence of acquisition during 1960s and 1970s in sources like Dulay and Burt (1973), Cancino, Rosansky, Schumann (1978). These sources, according to Ellis (2021, p.2) conclude that just as children acquiring their first language went through clearly marked stages of development, so too do child and adult L2 learners acquire the grammar of an L2 in a more-or-less universal and fixed way. This finding challenged behaviorist accounts of L2 learning and the audiolingual method of teaching. L1 acquisition research (e.g. Klima & Bellugi, 1966; Brown, 1973).

This is interesting since it seems quite plausible in the real world. We see that children really learn their L1s easily, while for most adult learners this is a difficult job. In addition, despite the tremendous effort it takes for the adult learner, the result of second language learning is usually

not very encouraging. The child's language play seems to be superior to the adult's language struggle.

In an attempt to trace the causes of this significant difference in L1 acquisition and SLA, under different conditions, two main features of language learning conditions will be compared and contrasted here to see whether it is possible to draw some kind of conclusion as what may be causing trouble, i.e. bringing about this mismatch between teaching languages and learning them. In a different approach to this comparison, Cook (2000) refers to Ellis's (1994) suggestions on the features that can be compared in L1 and L2. Because of the prescriptive nature of the comparison, direct reference is not made to those suggestions. In doing this comparison from a more realistic point of view, the author has adapted the characteristics of child language from J. Doug McGlothlin (2001). He has observed his own child at work in learning English and has thus come up with certain assumptions which may in the first place seem common sense observations. However, for the purpose of this study such observations are points of departure without which moving ahead will be difficult, if not impossible. From all child language features, I shall take the language environment and the strategies to discuss here

### **The Language environment**

The first, and probably the most significant, cause of mismatch can be traced back to the environment in which language learning takes place. In comparing the two environments, there are ten features of a child's first language environment that can be taken as the basis for comparison.

First, in the child language environment there is no pressure upon the child since there is no test, and therefore no grades. In addition, there is no standard that the child must meet in order to win the parents' approval. This, of course, does not mean that the parents feel no pressure to have their child speak earlier. It is because this pressure is not transferred to the child. Even if the parents try to do so, the child will not be in a position to respond to such pressure. This situation is quite contrary to that of the SLA environment in which there is direct pressure on the learner. The pressure of time, the pressure of test grades, and more than that, the pressure of need for language as a means of communication. The teacher's role, in comparison with that of the parents', is different too. The teacher will feel the pressure to help the learner develop his language skills more rapidly, but this pressure is very often transferred to the learner himself as a motivating factor.



That is why the pressure may sometimes backfire in that it may discourage the learner altogether. The similarity of the two situations is only known to the conscientious teacher. Larsen-Freeman (2001) looks at this feel of pressure in a positive way when she says that for her the most joyous moments of her life are those moments, "... and they don't happen every day, when you can see the penny drop. You've been working on teaching a particular tense or a reading passage, and all of a sudden, there is the moment of awareness. When you can actually see people go "Ahh! I see" Those are the moments I live for as a teacher. Those are the things that keep me going. It's the joy of watching others learn" (p.3).

The second factor in the child environment which affects learning is the factor of time. The child has all the time he needs, since he is not waiting for the bell to ring. There is no given period of time in which the child must learn or fail. Rather, there is enough time even for the child who takes a rather leisurely pace in his learning. In contrast with this is the given period of classroom instruction in SLA which is limited to 50 or 90 minutes at best, three times a week. Outside the classroom, there is little or no contact with the second language. The time pressure is expected to affect the learner in a positive way, but it usually works against the learner. The reason for this being that learner is under a lot of tension and this tense environment raises his anxiety, leading to a higher affective filter (Krashen, 1983). The high affective filter, in turn, affects learning negatively.

A third, and probably the most significant, factor in child language environment is lack of possibility of escaping into a language that the child already knows. It just cannot happen. Though he has no external pressure to study, there is no bell to let him out of class and no vacation when he can get away from the new language.

The importance of this factor can only be recognized when you think about the communicative value of the environment. In SLA, the natural environment is considered the richest source of input. This, however, can hardly be achieved in the classroom environment. The child will have to cope with the linguistic environment around him in order to survive. That is why the result of FLA is so clearly superior to SLA in every respect.

A fourth factor in the child language environment is the lack of any kind of sequence in what the child hears around him. Language as used by the adults around the child is only natural, not sequenced by grammar or vocabulary.

Compare this situation with the SLA environment in which the syllabus dictates the type of language the learner faces. Syllabus, as Widdowson (1990) emphasizes, is by nature sequential in that it puts forward some kind of grading. This grading seems inevitable in classroom teaching, though. What is important is the rationale behind this grading. The material so far presented in the form of EFL texts seeks to start with some kind of step-by-step procedure in which language is treated as disintegrated sequences of items, vocabulary or structure.

The repetition in the language heard around a child is tremendous. The child will not have to go from one chapter to another, or to deal with new material every minute. This repetition reflects the daily life around him. In other words, though a child's language environment might seem too rich, too unstructured, and too confusing, it does contain within itself the ability to tell the child where to begin and how to proceed. In contrast, again, the second language learner's encounter is mostly with new material. Repetition in the form it exists abundantly in the child language environment is scarce, sometimes non-existent in the EFL context.

The sixth point of interest in comparing child and adult language acquisition in terms of the environment is in what forces the child to learn. Both the words and the world around him are new to him. Thus, the child is not only learning a language but also discovering the world at the same time. This discovery brings curiosity, along with it a powerful motivation to learn a language. A very effective explanation for this issue can be found in the new Vygotskian view on language acquisition, specifically in the idea of *the zone of proximal development*. By the ZPD, vygotsky means to explain the difference between the child's capacity to solve problems on his own, and his capacity to solve them with the assistance of others (Schutz, 2002).

In most cases this motivation is either absent in adult classroom language learning, or too weak to have any positive effect. In fact, many classroom teachers demotivate the learners by trying too hard to motivate them.

A very fundamental help in the child first language environment is that language is related directly to the world around him. It is always presented as a living language. The new language is not a translation of something he already understands in another language. Neither is it a secret code that must be translated into another language.

The most effective approach in second language teaching is now considered to be the communicative approach in which rare moments of living language can be simulated, albeit very

artificially. The world knowledge of the adult L2 learner is both an advantage and a disadvantage in this respect. It is an advantage in that it rids the adult from having to rely solely on language, what the child is confined to because of limited cognitive development which allows exploiting symbolic means other than instinctive ones, and use other communication means. The disadvantage, though, is more significant because for many this forms the fundamental difference between the child and adult language environments- what has been referred to as the Fundamental Difference Hypothesis (e.g. Gass and Schachter, 1989). This is particularly important since it deals with issues such as availability or absence of U.G. in adult language learner, cross-linguistic influence (previously known as interference), physiological growth causing problems in speech organs in producing certain sounds in the target language, etc.

Another opportunity which certainly helps in enriching child language environment is the chances a child finds to listen to the new language as it is spoken by naive-speakers. There is considerable variation in this though, i.e. some children have more language around them than others. However, children with the least chances still have a lot more language around them than any non-native speaker has in the formal contexts of language teaching and living in a culture that does not speak the language that he is studying.

In addition to the many opportunities that the child environment provides for the language to be heard around him, it also provides the child with many opportunities to speak the new language and be understood. His parents and older brothers and sisters are native speakers of the language, so that when he speaks, he can immediately get the reinforcement that his words deserve. This may sound a little behavioristic in nature, but in fact it may be explained by the new approaches to language acquisition in which feedback is given a role.

This is an opportunity which a second language learner rarely enjoys. Depending on the type of the context of language acquisition, a learner may have from very little to no chances of speaking a foreign language outside the classroom. Even within the classroom, there is usually little time to allocate to every learner in every session. And when there is, the context is so *devised*, to use Widdowson's (1990) terms, that it is of no value in learning.

Another very controversial difference between the two environments is the type of language that a child hears around him, and the adult non-native learner has access to. Much of what the child hears is simplified for him. When a person is speaking to a young child, he does his best to

get across his meaning in the language that the child can understand. Because the child can communicate by his actions how much he understands, the speaker can tailor his language to the child's level. This is quite different from listening to a person speaking to a group. It is very personal, and the many small problems of communication can be quickly detected and solved before they become real hindrances to real learning.

This fact has brought about a lot of controversy since many L2 researchers have tried to adapt the same attitude towards adult learners and try to simplify their input. Two points are worth bringing up here:

First the input in child language environment is not always the same. This has been shown through the lack of uniformity principle in first language by people such as Bley-Vroman (1989) who has claimed that since input in child language is not uniform in amount and type across languages, one cannot claim that it has any crucial effect in child language development. That is, the uniformity principle itself is being questioned now, even in FLA. The evidence comes from cultures with different traditions concerning child care. Take the Chinese mother for example, who has very little time to spend on talking to the baby, being at work most of the waking hours of the baby. The Chinese baby, therefore, gets much less input than the Russian baby, who enjoys the Babushka system of child care. The Babushka's responsibility is directly to help the baby, much of which comes in the form of language input. Mothers in the world differ in their linguistic behavior towards their babies, though the result is not much different: all normal children learn their first language without much trouble, regardless of the amount of language they hear around them or whether the language is simplified or not.

The second point concerns the concept of simplification itself. As Corder (1981) says, in SLA simplification is a problematic term since it does not tell us much. How could you simplify a language that the learner does not speak? You can simplify what somebody knows and express the idea in easier terms. But when it comes to SLA we are dealing with known ideas but unknown terms. This is what makes the situation more complex than the child environment. The child does not have the concept, nor does he know the terms. The simplified language, or motherese, functions differently from the teacher talk in which he is only trying to help learners express what they know in another language. Simplification is not possible since it is logically impossible to change the unknown! If one means simplified structure of the language, then language teaching will not be

fulfilling its function since the interlanguage the adult develops will be of little help in his real-world communication. We should not forget that the goal of adult second language learning is not similar to that of the child first language acquisition. The adult will have extensive needs which require a more semantically and syntactically developed language than that in child language. That is, child language is not always effective in communicating higher needs, such as reasoning.

### **Learning strategies**

The above ten differences which bring about some of the reasons why there is asymmetry between teaching and learning in SLA have their roots in the environment in which the two, i.e. the child and the adult learn a language. There are, however, other differences which cause this underachievement by the language teachers who try their best with little success. Of these, the learning strategies the child uses will be discussed since they seem to be effective in child-adult communication, though not always readily available in adult second language communication.

A child is not in the least interested in language for its own sake. In fact, a young child never focuses his attention upon language at all. He is too interested in his toys, in his playmates, and in the things that he can find that are not to be played with. Language is always of secondary importance, and all of his early language learning is peripheral learning. To a child, the value of language is measured by its ability to help him better enjoy his primary interests. If he breaks all the imaginable rules of grammar and pronunciation, and yet gets the response he wants, he feels as if he has been completely successful. This explains why children are happy to use words and constructions that they do not hear from anybody else, as far as people around him understand what they say. Such words function for them, and that is all they care about.

In the adult case, though, this is not true. The second language learner language has to be of the type people understand and use routinely. This, of course, does not mean that they have to speak perfectly well, but it has to meet certain standards, otherwise it will be dismissed as incomprehensible. What is usually referred to as global error in IL is probably the language which does not serve the function of communication (The distinction between local and global error has been around since early 70`s. See for example Burt and Kiparsky, (1975; Parupali,2018). That is, incomprehensible language will not serve the purpose and will therefore lead to a breakdown in communication. The parents will have to cooperate with the child to the end, the native speaker faced with a non-native does not feel that kind of responsibility.

Looking at the problem from a different angle, the child does not let the language he does not understand bother him the least. The confusion and frustration an adult experience in contexts he does not understand a language is too much. For the child, however, this is as much disturbance as water disturbs a duck's back. The reason for this is that language is never the center of a child's attention, while for an L2 learner it is the whole thing.

The repetition a child enjoys in his daily life helps him learn a language. These repetitive events give the child a sense of security and order, based on which he understands the order in the events of his life and also begins to understand the order in the language that is associated with those events. This is different from the repetition one observes in the language environment of adult learners. Here, repetition is a negative feature, not much of a help in the learner's developing IL.

Whatever captures the child's attention in the environment will help him learn because he focuses his attention on that one thing, excluding the rest of the world for that moment in time. Thus, the language associated with that object of interest is brought to the front and center, and all the rest of the language around him is temporarily pushed back into the shadows.

Now, if we compare this with the adult case of language acquisition, we can easily detect the great difference. An adult tends to get first confused then discouraged when he receives too much new information at one time. He attempts to take in all that is presented to him, often with the result that he does not learn any of it well. Because of this, care must be taken not to present too much at one time to an adult language learner. The excess causes the adult problems because he may try to take in all that is around him with the result of failing in doing so for the most basic of them. In other words, while the child is in control and selects what he likes best, the adult lacks the ability to focus on the material at hand while excluding the rest of the world.

Another very important point of difference in these two strategies is the child's choice to be picky based on the ease of the language around him. He does not think about the world economy or foreign cultures. He thinks about the people around him, and the things he can understand and can easily be given a name.

Obviously, this choice is not available for the second language learner. He will have to learn a language through a content which may or may not be of any interest to him, nor can he be picky about the subject of his interest, since the type of communication at hand will differ from the unilateral child-parent talk.

A natural joy for the child comes when he can call an object by its name. This natural desire helps him learn the language. Although it may seem strange to the adults around, the child receives real joy from just pointing to something and calling it by name. He never thinks it is stupid or silly to say something that others might consider obvious. If the adult learner acts this way, he might shock people around him. Krashen was probably wise in recognizing this as a crucial factor in SLA, though he has not been able to provide a satisfactory explanation for the appearance of the filter all of a sudden.

A further important point of difference here is the child's natural desire to participate in the life around him to help learn language. He just wants to see what others do and follow them, including using language. He might, of course say things he does not understand and imitate others only out of curiosity, which is natural. But this helps him speak the language in the context of real life. The second language learner, on the other hand, has his life and language learning as two separate things. He is learning a language, but living a natural life which may be quite irrelevant to the language learning experience. Imagine a student doing Persian Literature and learning English as a second language only 3 or 4 hours a week. The two contexts of life and education just don't match, no matter how he tries.

For the child, knowing the pronunciation of the words helps in attaching meaning to sound sequence that he already knows. This is because the word becomes a part of his speaking vocabulary at the same time that he learns the meaning. Clark (1993) believes that the first meanings that appear in the child's lexicon come from a variety of ways. At this stage, semantic fields begin to grow, and new words are added to these fields. This may not be all that significant a process in second language learning. It could, however, be exploited in helping the learners in that the knowledge of lexical pronunciation may be used in cognitive tasks provided for the learners. This has been also supported by SLA researchers such as Rod Ellis. Ellis (2008) has noted that such considerations, i.e. insight coming from first or second language, should only be used in developing tasks for SLA, not as guidelines in teaching.

A characteristic of child language learning strategies which has tempted many language leaning researchers in SLA is that the child immediately puts to use the language he is learning, and uses his success in communication to build up his confidence. He does not try to store up his knowledge for use at a later date. He applies it in context as soon as he can. And every time he uses a piece of

language successfully, it is reinforced in his mind and his confidence grows. This confidence, in turn, encourages him to use the new language even more, thus bringing him more reinforcement, more confidence. This confidence cycle built upon successful usage of the languages is difficult to establish and keep going in an adult learner. A learner without confidence is in trouble from the very beginning, but one who possesses the confidence that comes from success, even though limited, can overcome a host of other learning problems.

A final characteristic of the child language strategies, and probably one which has received the least attention in terms of the L2 learning strategies, is the tremendous ingenuity that a child brings to the task of language learning. He has no fear of failure, neither has he any inhibition. He plunges in head first, attacking the problems with all the resources that he has. Just imagine the case of associations the child makes between objects and words. Many of these associations are obviously wrong (to us), but he does not know they are wrong and he does not care. He sees the world through different eyes, and orders it in different ways. This makes the child different from an L2 learner in that the latter cannot ignore the established conventions and bring ingenuity to the task of real-life communication where he is expected to be using a language which is mutually understandable. For example, adult communication has to follow certain rules without which there will a breakdown of communication or misunderstanding of different types. Grice's (1975) maxims has captured some of these rules.

### Conclusion

The ten differences mentioned in terms of environmental characteristics and strategies that the child uses but the L2 learner does not have access to or is not capable of using, may be a possible reason for the asymmetry between teaching and learning. Thus, the claim that we teach well but the learners don't learn is only based on the assumption that there must be a one-to-one relationship here, a claim which obviously the existing evidence does not support. Learners learn what they want and what they can, not what we try to teach them, even in the best of our intentions. Efforts such as Krashen's Natural Approach or any other natural approach is rendered useless because the environment they try to create and the strategies they try to employ are all devised, not natural in the real sense of it. Perhaps it is time to think about what Caleb Gattegno said years ago: **We need to subordinate teaching to learning!**



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## Simplification: A Case Study of the Persian Translations of *The Little Prince*



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### Abstract

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**Keywords:**

Simplification, Simplification hypotheses, Translation universals

The present study explores the application of ‘simplification, as a translation universal, in three Persian translations of *The Little Prince*, a novel by Saint-Exupery, to find out whether there is any significant difference among them in terms of using this translation strategy. The study also aims to determine which translation is the most successful in simplifying the text in translation. The three translations examined belong to Shamloo, Qazi and Najafi, respectively. To this purpose, Kludy’s (2003) classification is used as the theoretical framework of the study. So, the data regarding simplification are extracted from the three translations on the basis of the categories of this framework. Then, the frequency of simplification strategies present in the three translations is calculated and comparisons are made.

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## Introduction

All over the world, people of various nations have always tried to communicate with each other. They have used different means to achieve the purpose. One of the major means they have utilized is translation. Thus, translation has been important as a medium of international communication and cultural contact, resulting in the development of global communication which has evolved into a more complex system in terms of technology and organization.

According to Toury (1978) "Translation is a kind of activity which inevitably involves at least two languages and cultural traditions" (p.200). Translators are permanently faced with the problem of how to treat the cultural aspects implicit in a source text and of finding the most appropriate technique to successfully convey these aspects in the target language. These problems may vary in scope depending on the cultural and linguistic gaps between the two languages.

Munday (2001) believes that today translation is considered as an original text its own right. Some translation scholars such as Baker (1998) believe that all types of translated texts have a number of common features which are called universals of translation. Simplification is one of them. According to her, it means that translated texts are always longer and simpler than original texts. In doing that, one important issue is the genre of the original text which has to be saved in translation. Every text can be claimed to belong to a particular genre. Colina (2003) has defined genre as "a conventional form of text that reflects features of a social occasion" (p.16). Examples of genres are poems, book reviews, novels, abstracts and recipes. The translator must be aware of the culture – specific features of a genre and the implications for translation. Prior to embarking on translating a text, the translator must be able to recognize genre features of the source language and reproduce them according to the norms of the target language.

Since the present research examines the Persian translation of *The Little Prince* in terms of simplification in translation, and tries to clarify how and to what extent each translator has been successful in this regard, translation students, novice translators and other interested groups may find its results helpful for their future works. It would help them get a better understanding of this strategy, make better translation decisions and render texts more competently in the future. The following questions were addressed in this study:

**RQ1.** Are there any significant differences among the three Persian translations of *The Little Prince* in terms of the application of simplification strategies?

**RQ2.** Which translation is the most successful in applying the simplification strategies?

### Literature Review

After cultural turns in translation studies, a new era has begun in this field. Many researchers have tried to explore the effect of different cultural factors on the process and product of translation. One of these factors is simplification--one of the universals of translation. Chesterman (2004) believes that translation universal is a feature which characterizes all translations and distinguishes them from non-translated texts. As mentioned earlier, different kinds of studies have been carried out to verify simplification hypothesis. Some of these studies and their results are reviewed below.

Øverås (1998) has worked on different cohesion markers in translations between English and Norwegian and has found that two of cohesive ties are added: Connectives and replacement of connectives with more simple ones. In Øverås' research, simplification was considered as potential shifts between STs and TTs with no reference to comparable original TTs. Seguinot (1988) has examined translations from English into French and from French into English. According to her, French makes grammatical gender simple which leads to simpler anaphoric reference. French has no choice but to express logical links with prepositions or relatives where English creates noun strings. English, on the other hand, prefers overt linking words to French absolute constructions. English verbs are generally more precise and descriptive, and in directions and procedural writing, English is simpler than French. She has found that use of the semi-colon which shortens the text is more typical of English than French, as are the use of the dash and the highlighting of technical terms which enhance the readability of the text. She has stated while there is an overwhelming tendency to simplification of these text-related types, there was no evidence of a tendency to simplification on the level of lexical choice: the English –to-French translations generally used less precise vocabulary than the source text, the opposite of what was found in the studies of French-to-English translations. This was partly due to the dropping of jargon and partly to the use of more general vocabulary. Olohan and Baker (2000) have analyzed the omission and inclusion of ‘that’ in translated and non–translated English texts. They have found that there is a preference for the use of ‘that’ in translated texts. Vehmas-Lehto (1989) has compared the frequency of

connective elements in Finnish journalistic texts translated from Russian with their frequency in texts in the same genre, originally written in Finnish. She has found that the Finnish translations are simpler than the texts originally written in Finnish. Is it possible, therefore, that simplification strategies inherent in the translation process cause translated texts in a given genre to be simpler than texts of that genre originally composed in the target language for the translations. Puurtinent (2004) has investigated simplification of clausal in translation and non-translated Finnish children literature. The results of study have not fully supported the hypothesis nor have they rejected it. Some connectives are more frequent in TTs and some are more frequent in non-translated texts. Eskola (2004) also has supported this finding for non-finite constructions in Finnish. Mesa-Lao (2011) has conducted a study to show the impact of translation editing environments on one of the most studied translation phenomena: simplification. The finding of the study has approved the effect of allocated time, software and organizational aspects on the simplification of translation.

### Method

A descriptive corpus-based approach has been adopted in this study to compare the first chapter of an English novel and its three Persian translations. Full details of the source text and its translations are as follows:

*The Little Prince* (de Saint-Exupery, 2018)

قاضی، محمد. (1389). شازده کوچولو. تهران: انتشارات امیرکبیر  
 نجفی، ابوالحسن. (1379). شازده کوچولو. تهران: انتشارات نیلوفر  
 شاملو، احمد. (1388). شازده کوچولو. تهران: انتشارات نگاه

### Procedure

The unit of analysis in the present study was 'sentence'. According to Longman (2002), it is defined as "the largest unit of grammatical organization within which parts of speech (i.e. nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives) and grammatical classes (e.g., word, phrase, and clause) function.

The major source based on which instances of simplification strategies were extracted was Klaudy's (2003) Classification. Following Klaudy's (2003) model, first, translation units, i.e. sentences which have traces of the application of simplification strategies were identified in the three target texts. Then, their English counterparts were identified). The abbreviations TR1, TR2 and TR3 refer to Najafi, Ghazi and Shamloo, respectively. Moreover, T1, T2 and T3 refer to the

sentences taken from the translation of these three translators, that is, Najafi, Ghazi and Shamloo. For the sake of clarity, the analysis of each sentence was shown in a table. The first row of the table shows the abbreviation for the five categories of Klaudy's (2003) framework:

1. G.M S.M: A more general meaning of SL (source language) unit is replaced by a TL (target language) unit with more specific meaning.

2. W.N.W: The complex meaning of a SL word is distributed over several words in TL.

3. Add: New meaningful elements added in the TL text.

4. S.N.S.: One sentence in the SL is divided into two or several sentence in the TL.

5. Ph Cl: SL phrases are extended into clauses in TL.

Different cases of simplification were listed under the respective headings.

Example 3.1: E.T: She didn't wish to go out into the world all rumped.

\*نمی‌خواست مانند گل شقایق با جامه پر چین و شکن بیرون آید. می‌خواست با تمامی جلوه جمالش تجلی کند.

1. S X. S	Ph Cl	G.M S.M	1. W N. W	Add
نمی‌خواست مانند گل شقایق با جامه پر	نمی‌خواست مانند گل		پر چین و شکن	می‌خواست با
چین و شکن بیرون آید می‌خواست با	شقایق با جامه پر چین			تمامی جلوه
تمامی جلوه جمالش تجلی کند.	و شکن بیرون آید			جمالش تجلی کند

After extracting the data and classifying them based on the model and listing them in tables, the frequency and percentage of each simplification strategy in the three translations were calculated separately and presented via tables and figures. Finally, a total comparison of the three translations was done to see which translation is the simpler and which simplification strategy has been used more frequently in the process of translating the English novel into Persian.

### Results and Discussion

First, the corpus -the source and target texts- were divided into sentences and the sentences of the three Persian translations were matched with their English counterparts. It was revealed that there were 191 cases of the application of simplification strategies at work. Some of these cases are presented below:

**ST: They are malicious creatures.**

T1: مارها موزی‌اند.

T2: مارها بدجنسند.

T3: مارها خبیثند.

According to Millennium Dictionary (2001) 'malicious' means "مغرض"، "بدخواه" (p.986). Both translations have applied simplification strategy and have rendered it as "موزی" and "بدجنس"، but T2 is more successful to convey the simple meaning of 'malicious'.

**ST: It has done me good, "said the fox" because of the color of the wheat fields.**

T1: چرا دارد. رنگ گندمزارها.

T2: به سبب رنگ گندمزارها گریه به حال من سودمند خواهد بود.

T3: برای خاطر رنگ گندم.

T1 has applied general meaning of ST but T2 applied specific meaning to avoid ambiguity which makes the sentence simpler. Therefore, T2 is preferable.

**ST: She is so naïve.**

According to *Millennium Dictionary* (2001) *naïve* means "ساده"، "معصوم"، "بی آرایش"، "ساده" (p.1085) "لوح" "زودباور"

Both translations have applied the strategy quite plausibly to avoid misunderstanding.

**ST. I'm very busy with matters of consequences.**

T1: من دارم کارهای جدی می‌کنم!

T2: آخر من کارهای جدی‌تری دارم!

T3: آخر من گرفتار هزار مساله مهم‌تر از آنم!

To translate the sentence, TR1 and TR2 both applied the strategy of 1. S→N.S to make their translations simpler.



**ST. My hairs are still disarranged.**

T1: موهایم را هنوز شانه نکرده‌ام.

T2: گیسوانم چقدر آشفته است.

T3: موهایم اینجور آشفته است.

To translate this sentence, all the three translators applied the strategy of  $W \rightarrow N.W$ . In this way, they have made the meaning of the source text sentence simpler for TT readers. Also, T1 applied  $G.M \rightarrow S.M$ . So, T1 would be more preferable.

**ST. This time, one more, I had the sheep to thank for it.**

T1: این بار هم گوسفند بانی این تصادف بود.

T2: این بار نیز به سبب گوسفند بود که فهمیدم.

T3: این بار هم بره باعثش شد.

All of the three translators applied the strategy of  $G. M \rightarrow S.M$ . The source text is complicated. So, they used simpler words to avoid ambiguity. As a result, all translations are acceptable.

**Translation 1 (A. Najafi)**

In the analysis of this translation, 89 cases of simplification were found. The frequency and percentage of these cases are presented below in Table 1.

**Table 1**

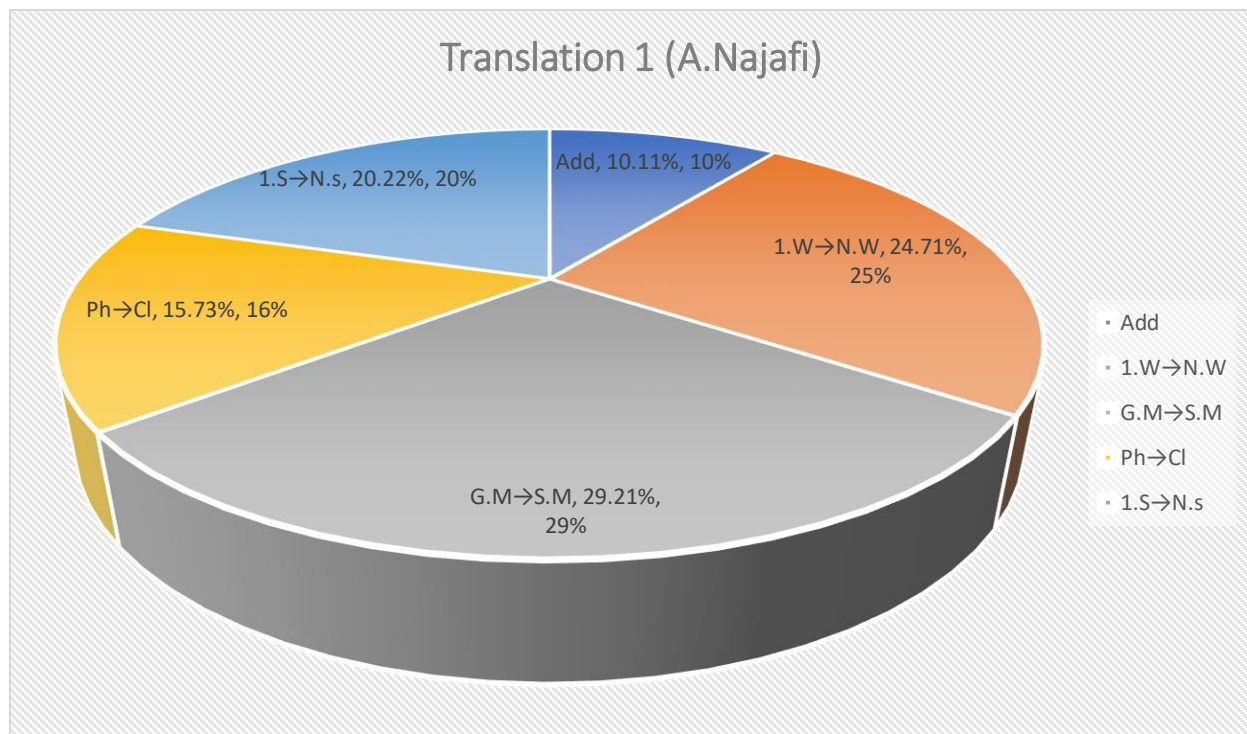
*Frequency of Simplification Strategy in T.1*

Strategies	Frequency	Total Frequency	Percentage
Add	9	89	10.11
1. $W \rightarrow N.W$	22	89	24.71
G. $M \rightarrow S.M$	26	89	29.21
Ph $\rightarrow$ Cl	14	89	15.73
1. $S \rightarrow N.s$	18	89	20.22

As the table shows, 9 out of 89 cases of simplification belong to the application of ‘addition’ strategy by which new meaningful elements have been added in the TT text. This strategy was the most frequent strategy in translation. In 22 cases, one word in the ST has been replaced by several words in the TT. There were 26 cases in which the translator has used more specific meaning instead of general meaning of TT unit. There were also 18 cases in which one sentence in the ST has been changed into two or more sentences in the TT and 14 cases in which ST phrases have been replaced by TT clauses. The following figure shows the percentage of each simplification strategy.

**Figure 1**

*Percentage of simplification strategies in T1*



### Translation 2 (M. Ghazi)

There were 73 cases of the application of the strategy of simplification in T2. The frequency of these cases is presented Table 2 below.

**Table 2**

*Frequency of Simplification Strategy in T2*

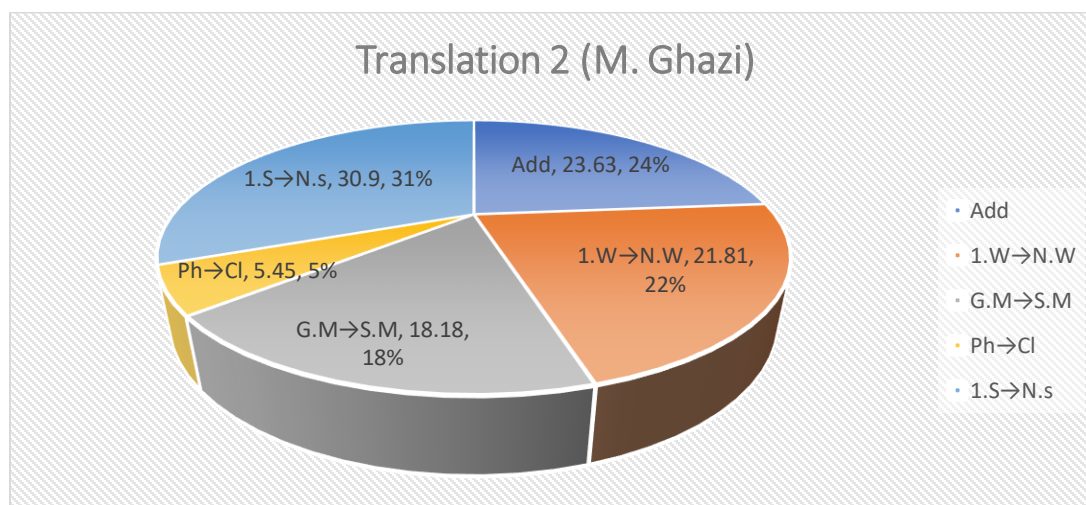
Strategies	Frequency	Total Frequency	Percentage
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Add	13	55	23.63
1.W→N.W	12	55	21.81
G. M→S.M	10	55	18.18
Ph→Cl	3	55	5.45
1.S→N.s	17	55	30.90

As Table 2 shows, 13 out of 55 cases of simplification belong to the application of ‘addition’ strategy by which new meaningful elements have been added in the TT text. This strategy was the most frequent strategy in translation. In 12 cases, one word in the ST has been replaced by several words in the TL. There were 10 cases in which the translator has used more specific meaning instead of general meaning of TL unit. There were also 17 cases in which one sentence in the ST has been changed into two or more sentences in the TT, and 3 cases in which ST phrases have been replaced by TT clauses. Figure 2 shows the percentage of each simplification strategy.

**Figure 2**

*Percentage of simplification strategies in T2*

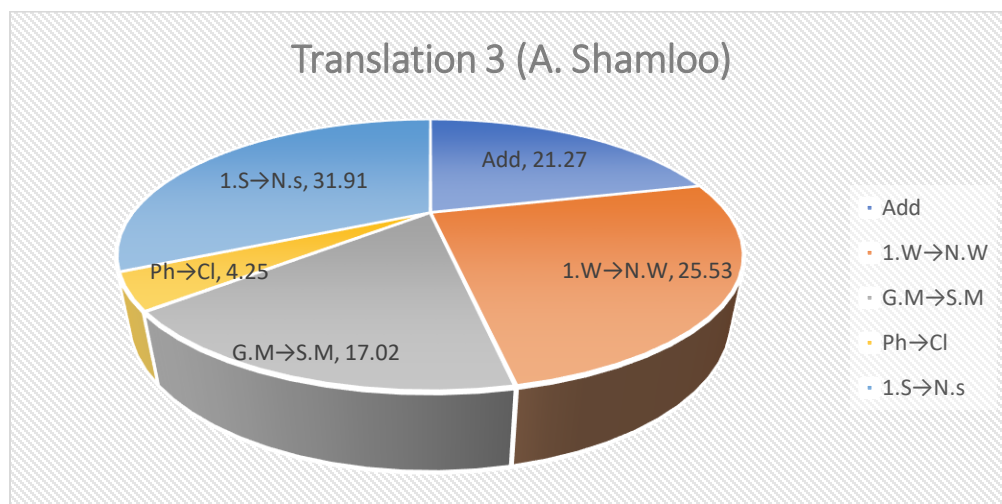


In this translation, 47 cases of the application of the strategy of simplification were found. The frequency of these cases is presented below in table 3

**Table 3***Frequency of Simplification Strategy in T3*

Strategies	Frequency	Total Frequency	Percentage
Add	10	47	21.27
1.W→N.W	12	47	25.53
G. M→S.M	8	47	17.02
Ph→Cl	2	47	4.25
1.S→N.s	15	47	31.91

As Table 3 reveals, 10 out of 55 cases of simplification belong to the application of ‘addition’ strategy by which new meaningful elements have been added in the TT text. This strategy was the most frequent strategy in translation. In 12 cases, one word in the SL has been replaced by several words in the TL. There were 26 cases in which the translator has used more specific meaning instead of general meaning of TT unit. There were also 2 cases in which one sentence in the ST has been changed into two or more sentences in the TT, and 15 cases in which ST phrases have been replaced by TT clauses. Figure 3 shows the percentage of each simplification strategy.

**Figure 3***Percentage of simplification strategies in T3*

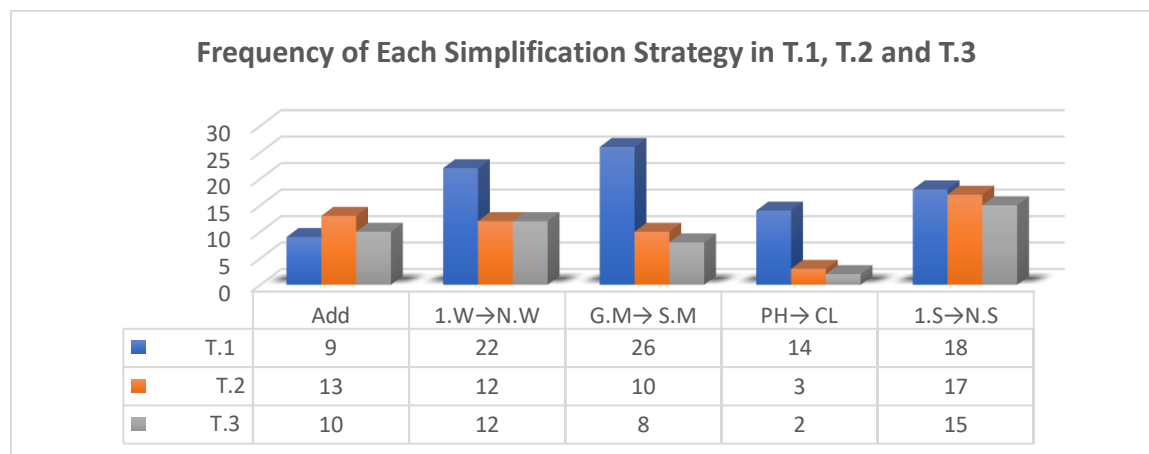
**Table 4***Frequency of Each Simplification Strategy in T1, T2 and T3*

Strategies	T.1	T.2	T.3
Add	9	13	10
1.W→N.W	22	12	12
G.M→S.M	26	10	8
PH→CL	14	3	2
1.S→N.S	18	17	15

Table 4 compares the frequency of each simplification strategy in T1, T2 and T3. TR1 has recorded the highest number of application of strategies. For example, He has used the strategy of G.M→S.M 26 times, while TR2 and TR3 have applied it 10 and 8 times, respectively. The table also shows that T2 has used the strategy of ‘addition’ the most. However, T1 has higher records for the strategies of 1.W→N.W, PH→CL and 1.S→N.S. Figure 4 shows the data graphically.

**Figure 4**

Frequency of Each Strategy in T1, T2 and T3



According to the table, TR1, TR2 and TR3 have applied 89,55 and 47 cases of simplification strategies, respectively.

**Table 5***Total Number of Simplification Strategies in T1, T2 and T3*

	T.1	T.2	T.3
Total Number	89	55	47

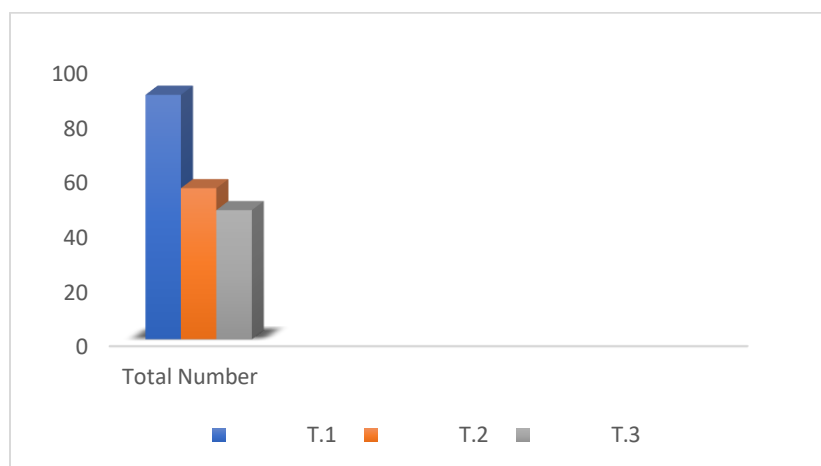
**Figure 5***Total Number of Simplification Strategies in T1, T2 and T3*

Table 6 below shows the average of each simplification strategy in the three translations.

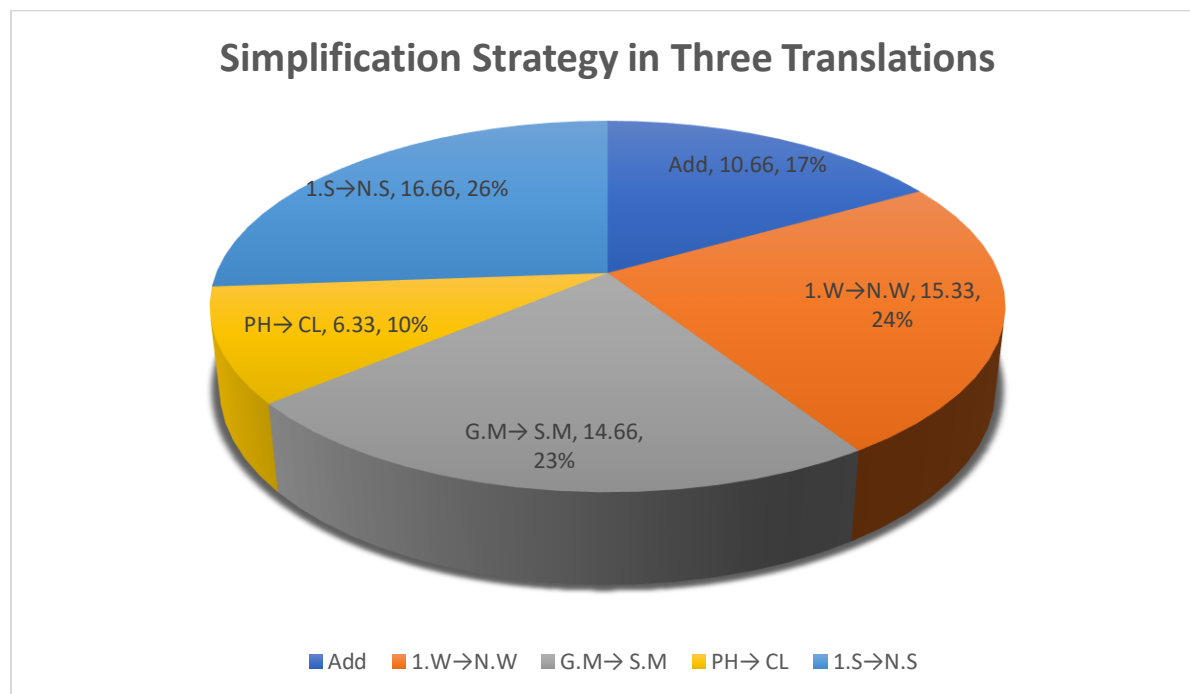
**Table 6***Average frequency of Each simplification Strategy in T1, T2 and T3*

Strategies	Frequency Average	Total Frequency	Percentage
Add	10.66	32	16.75
1. W→N.W	15.33	46	24.08
G.M→ S.M	14.66	44	23.03
PH→ CL	6.33	19	9.94
1.S→N.S	16.66	50	26.17

This table shows that the average frequency of the strategy, i.e., 1. S→N.S, was 16.66. It was the most frequently used strategy by the three translators. In the second place, the strategy of 1. W→N.W was the most frequent one. In the third place, G.M→ S.M and Add strategies have obtained the third and fourth ranks, respectively. The strategy of PH→ CL has the least average frequency. Figure 6 below shows the percentage of average frequency of each simplification strategy in the three translations.

**Figure 6**

*Percentage of average frequency of each simplification strategy in T.1, T.2 and T.3*



### Conclusion

Translation is not an activity taking place in a vacuum with no factor influencing it. Translation teachers and trainers should make the students familiar with the universal and cultural-specific features of different text types, so that they would be able to recognize them in the source and transfer them more skillfully while translating a text. Familiarity with translation universals including simplification would help translation students and novice translators render texts simpler in the future. They could also approach translation criticism more skillfully. It seems necessary for translators to be aware of all kinds of simplification strategies to apply them consciously when needed. Also, it seems necessary for the course designers to incorporate teaching simplification strategies in the curriculum for translation students.

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